

**Highlights:**

To minimize the risk of teens getting hurt while working, employers should:

1. Adequately train teen to perform designated job or tasks.
2. Follow the Fair Labor Standards Act.
3. Enforce a strong safety and health program.

Source(s):

Department of Labor, (2002). *Work Safe This Summer: Employer's Guide to Teen Worker Safety*, Washington, DC: Department of Labor. www.dol.gov

Safety on Summer Jobs

Summer jobs provide learning experiences as well as extra cash for teens. The danger, however, is many of the jobs and working conditions are simply not safe for young, inexperienced workers.

Annually, up to one-third of all occupational injuries happen to persons with less than one year's experience (U.S. Department of Labor). Of these, more than 200,000 are teens. Many of these accidents are fatal. Enforcement of federal job safety laws and child safety laws provides limited help.

Employers have the responsibility for adequately training and helping their young employees learn to work safely. The advantages of training teens to perform a task correctly and safely are: First, the rejection or error rate for products produced, resulting in an increase in the bottom line. Second, there are fewer accidents, costing employers less in lost workdays, lost production and compensation costs. Third, supervisors and co-workers, as well as the teen workers, are less frustrated.

Employers can minimize the risk of teens getting hurt while working by:

1. Taking time to adequately train the teen to perform the designated job or tasks.
 - Give clear, step-by-step instructions.
 - Demonstrate appropriate safety precautions to take.
 - Require them to demonstrate the job or task as you carefully observe and correct mistakes.
 - Allow for questions or feedback.
2. Following the Fair Labor Standards Act which restricts the types of jobs and the number of hours minors can work.
 - Schedule youth to work only during the hours and for the number of hours approved by law.
 - Assign youth only to jobs allowed by law.
 - Make sure safety equipment is available.
 - Show how to correctly use protective clothing and safety gear.

- Demonstrate how to use the safety features of equipment or safety facilities.
 - Be sure teens understand emergency procedures for all situations they may encounter.
3. Enforce a strong safety and health program in place.
 - Establish emergency procedures in congruence with work environment.
 - Practice safety and emergency procedures.
 - Set a good example by maintaining a safe work environment.

The Department of Labor has produced a series of publications addressing the issue of teen employment. This guide helps both employers and parents better understand child labor laws and advice for preparing teens who have no prior work experience. For more information, go to www.dol.gov; go to search, and click on young workers.

Free assistance is available. *There is no cost for the services of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Assistance with the development of workplace training programs are available free through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Job search seminars can be tailored to meet the needs of the audience. Workshops may be two or four hours.*

**FOR FREE ASSISTANCE
TO COMMUNITIES AND
COMPANIES, CONTACT:**

Dr. Jacquelyn P. Robinson
Workforce Development Specialist
233 Duncan Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849
Telephone (334) 844-5353
FAX (334) 844-9022
jrobinso@aces.edu