

**Highlights:**

- Teens have rights under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to a safe working and healthy environment.
- Teens have a responsibility to take an active role in assuring their own safety.

**Source(s):**

U.S. Department of Labor (2001). A quick Look at the Fair Labor Standards Act. [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).  
 National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (2002). Are You a Working Teen? What You Should Know About Safety and Health on the Job. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/adoloc.html>.

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

# The Workplace

## Rights and Responsibilities of Working Teens

Employed teens, just like their adult counterparts, have rights under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Every employed teen has the right to expect a safe working environment and a job assignment that is appropriate for their age and experience. The FLSA lists 17 hazardous jobs for persons below the age of 18. Specific limitations may apply to employed persons below the age of 16. A partial list of jobs in which teens should not be allowed to work include:

- Driving a motor vehicle.
- Running many types of power tools, such as many wood-working equipment or meat slicers.
- Any place that manufactures or stores explosives.
- Working in coal mining, logging or sawmilling.
- Working where radiation exposure is a possibility.

Teens (as well as parents and employers) should check with the Department of Labor for a complete list of jobs that teens should not be doing. In Alabama you may call 205-348-7136, or you may visit the U.S. Department of Labor on-line at [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).

In addition to being guaranteed a safe and healthy working environment, teens also have a right to refuse to perform any job that poses an immediate danger to their life or health, and work with freedom from racial or sexual harassment. Failure to provide safety training and equipment should be reported to the office of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). According to OSHA regulations, it is illegal for employers to fire or punish persons who report any problem in the workplace.

Just as teens who work have a right to expect safe working conditions, they also have a responsibility to take an active role in assuring their own safety while performing their jobs. The single most important thing teens can do to remain safe while working is to make a special effort to become thoroughly familiar with safety rules and regulations and to use appropriate safety equipment and protective gear as needed. Being aware of safety rules and regulations tend to increase their alertness to possible dangers, including what may be happening to co-workers. The more

teens understand about the standards for worker safety, the more likely they are to follow recommended emergency procedures if a problem situation should occur.

**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. Additional information on teen employment or other employment issues is available at the addresses below.*

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

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