



# CONNECTICUT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH e-NEWS



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CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Keeping Connecticut Healthy

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## SPECIAL ISSUE FOR YOUNG WORKERS



### A CONNECTICUT YOUNG WORKER TIME CAPSULE

#### Picking Tobacco

Young Worker Picking Tobacco  
Gildersleeve, Connecticut 1917

# OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES IN CONNECTICUT'S YOUNG WORKER POPULATION

Young workers are generally believed to be more at risk for occupational injury due to various developmental factors as well as limited job knowledge, training, and skills. According to the US Department of Labor, approximately 70 teenage workers die on the job each year, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates that 230,000 teenagers suffer from non-fatal occupational injuries annually. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) forecasts that 17.8 million teens aged 16-19 years will be in the labor force in 2010, an increase of over 10% from the year 2000. Labor force data are unavailable for workers less than 16 years of age, though BLS does collect occupational fatality data and non-fatal injury and illness data on workers in these age groups.

Recently, the Connecticut Department of Public Health analyzed data on young worker injuries reported to the Connecticut Worker's Compensation Commission (WCC) between 1997 to 2001. A total of 1,418 cases were reported to WCC during this time period. Among young workers less than 18 years of age, strains and sprains, and lacerations (each 22%) were the two most frequently reported conditions, followed by contusions (17%), burns (9%), and fractures (3%). Strains/sprains, lacerations, burns, and fractures were more frequently reported in males (59%, 72%, 52%, and 59%, respectively), while contusions were more frequently reported in females (52%).

Eating and drinking establishments (i.e. restaurants) accounted for nearly one-quarter of all young worker injuries reported to WCC from 1997-2001, followed by general merchandise stores (13%), and food stores (12%). Lacerations and burns accounted for 45% of young worker injuries occurring in eating and drinking establishments, and for 40% of those injuries in food stores. Lacerations also accounted for nearly one-quarter of the injuries reported from general merchandise stores.

As a result of these findings, the Connecticut Department of Public Health has begun a focused intervention and training program for restaurant workers in our state. In addition, we are in the process of developing intervention and educational materials focused on the avoidance of laceration injuries for young workers employed in food stores. For more information on the findings from this analysis, or other health and safety information for young workers in Connecticut, please contact Deborah Pease at (860) 509-7771.

## References:

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2002). Current population survey. BLS releases new 2000–2010 employment projections. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections

DOL (2000). Report on the youth labor force. Chapter 6. Occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

NIOSH (2004) Worker Health Chartbook 2004. Chapter 5: Special Populations. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational safety and Health (NIOSH) Publication No. 2004-146.

NIOSH (2003). NIOSH Alert Preventing Deaths, Injuries, and Illness of Young Workers. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational safety and Health (NIOSH) Publication No. 2003-128.



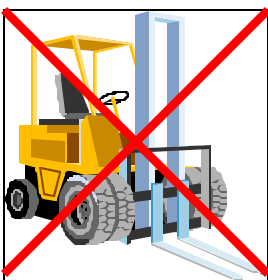
# Know Your Rights!



**The hours of work and types of jobs that young workers may perform are regulated at both the State and Federal levels by a variety of agencies.** The principal Federal law that addresses the protection of children at work is the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This act allows for the regulation of the hours and types of work performed by individuals under the age of 16 so that their employment “is confined to periods which will not interfere with their schooling and to conditions which will not interfere with their health and well-being.” The FLSA does not authorize the regulation of the hours worked by 16 and 17-year-olds, but it does permit the Secretary of Labor to specify certain jobs as hazardous and prohibit 16 and 17-year-olds from working in those jobs.

## **Individuals Under 18 Years of Age May Not Work in the Following Occupations:**

- Manufacturing and storing of explosives
- Driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle
- Coal mining
- Logging and sawmilling
- \*Power-driven wood working machines
- Exposure to radioactive substances
- Power-driven hoisting apparatus
- \*Power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines
- Mining, other than coal mining
- Meat packing or processing (including the use of power-driven meat slicing machines)
- Power-driven bakery machines
- \*Power-driven paper-products machines
- Manufacturing brick, tile, and related products
- \*Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shear
- Wrecking, demolition, and ship breaking operations
- \*Roofing operations and all work on a or about a roof, or
- \*Excavation operations

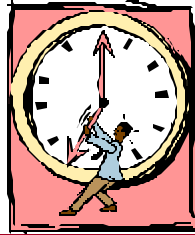


Those occupations marked with an \* have limited exemptions for apprentice/student-learner programs. More detail about the above listings can be obtained by reviewing the US Department of Labor’s *Child Labor Regulations*. Please note that different rules apply to farms and individual states may also have stricter rules.

**The State of Connecticut has laws in place restricting the number of hours teens (less than 18 years of age) are permitted to work.** The following information summarizes some of these restrictions, which are designed to protect the health and well-being of young workers.

### School Weeks

Maximum 6 hours per day on school days  
 Maximum 8 hours per day on weekends  
 Limited to 6 days/32 hours per week



### Non-school Weeks

Maximum 8 hours per day  
 Limited to 6 days/48 hours per week

### Eligible Working Hours

- In Restaurants/Recreational/Amusement/Theaters  
6am-11pm (midnight if no school the next day)
- In Retail/Mercantile/Manufacturing/Mechanical  
6am-11pm (11pm if no school the next day)
- In Hairdressing/Bowling Alley/Pool Hall/ Photography  
6am-10pm



### 14- and 15-Year Olds May Not Work the Following Hours:

- During school hours
- Before 7 a.m. or after 7 p.m. (extended to 9 p.m. between July 1<sup>st</sup> and Labor Day)
- More than 3 hours on school days, 8 hours on non-school days
- More than 18 hours in school weeks, 40 hours in non-school weeks

### How Can Young Workers Protect Themselves from Hazards at Work?

- **Learn about and follow safe work practices:**
  - Recognize the potential for injury at work
  - Seek information about safe work practices from employers, teachers, school counselors, parents, State labor or health departments, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
  - Visit [www.youthrules.dol.gov](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov) or call 1-866-4-USWAGE
- **Ask about training:** Participate in training programs offered by your employer or request training if none is offered.
- **Ask about hazards:** Don't be afraid to ask questions if you are not sure about the safety of a task you are asked to do. Discuss your concerns with your supervisor or employer first.
- **Know your rights:** Be aware that you have the right to work in a safe and healthful work environment free of recognized hazards. Visit [www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html) for more information.
  - You have the right to refuse unsafe work tasks and conditions
  - You have the right to file complaints with the Department of Labor ([www.ctdol.state.ct.us](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us) or call 1- 800-842-9710) when you feel your rights have been jeopardized
  - You are entitled to workers' compensation for a work-related injury or illness
- **Know the law:** Before you start work, learn what jobs young workers are prohibited from doing. State laws may be more restrictive than Federal laws, and they vary considerably from state to state. Visit [www.youthrules.dol.gov](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov) or call 1-866-4-USWAGE for more information.

Information abstracted in part from the US Department of Labor, National Research Council Institution of Medicine, Connecticut Department of Labor, and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.



# Working at Summer Camps



Presently in Connecticut there are over 450 operational summer camps for children. Teenage workers comprise a substantial number of the workforce employed in these camps. There are many hazards associated with working in summer camps, however illnesses and injuries can be avoided by taking proper precautions. Below are some tips and suggestions that can help to make the experience of working at a summer camp or any other outdoor summer job a safe one.

## Always Wear Sunscreen When Working Outdoors

Sun damage causes premature aging of the skin. In addition, studies have shown that sun exposure to the skin during the teenage years can lead to an increased risk of skin cancer later in life.

- Use a sunscreen with a high sun-protective value (SPF 30 or higher).
- Avoid sun exposure during peak sunlight hours (10:00 AM – 2:00 PM).
- Reapply sunscreen every few hours (as directed) or after swimming or showering.
- Remember, the sun can damage your skin even on cloudy days so apply sunscreen as part of your daily routine.



## Avoid Insect Bites

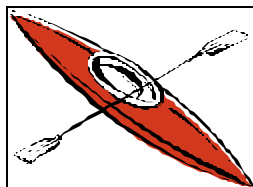
Bites from ticks and mosquitoes have the potential to infect you with diseases such as West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease. Use the following tips to avoid insect bites.

- Apply insect repellent with DEET, especially during dawn and dusk hours.
- Wear light colored long pants when working in tall grass or the woods. Light colored pants allow ticks to be spotted easily.
- If you do receive a tick bite, watch the area carefully for signs of a rash; call your physician if you experience a rash or begin to feel ill.

## Get Proper Training for Activities

Many summer camps support activities such as rock climbing, boating and swimming, biking, and industrial arts. Make sure you receive all necessary trainings and certifications prior to performing these job duties and be aware that Federal and State laws prohibit workers under 18 years of age from performing certain hazardous job tasks. Become familiar with and always use appropriate safety equipment when performing any potentially dangerous job activities.

- Always wear a safety helmet when riding on a bicycle; even crashes at slow speeds can cause serious injury or death.
- Wear safety harnesses and appropriate safety gear while engaging in activities such as rock climbing. Even falls from heights under 8 feet can be deadly.
- Before engaging in any boating or swimming activities, enroll in an accredited water safety course. Make sure you are up-to-date on your CPR and first aid certifications as well.



### **Be on the Lookout for Poison Ivy and Allergies**

Allergic reactions to insect stings and poison ivy can occur in some people. This is particularly important to summer camp workers who are often in isolated areas without access to immediate medical care.



- Identify what poison ivy looks like and stay out of areas where it grows.
- Make sure a first aid kit is always located in an accessible area or carried along. Medications should always be administered by a medical professional except in extreme emergencies. Be aware of your camp's policy on workers administering medications and be aware of any campers that have severe reactions to bee stings. If campers have severe allergies, make sure appropriate medications are accessible or have campers carry appropriate medications with them.

### **Stay Cool and Remember to Drink Plenty of Fluids**

It is important to keep yourself hydrated and cool during hot summer days while working outside. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can occur quickly, and could potentially lead to a life-threatening emergency. The following tips can help to keep you cool during hot summer weather.

- Take frequent breaks while working in the heat.
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Work on strenuous tasks early in the day when it is cooler or remain in the shade to avoid overheating.
- Get medical attention immediately if you experience symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke; they include fatigue, nausea, headache, dizziness, muscle cramps, extreme thirst, and high body temperature.

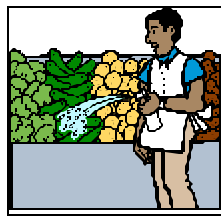
Following these simple safety rules will help to make your summer work experience a safe and healthy one.

Special thanks to Mary Emerling, RN of the Connecticut Department of Public Health's Youth Camp Section for her valuable information.

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## **CONNECTICUT YOUNG WORKER SAFETY TEAM**

The Connecticut Young Worker Safety Team is a collaboration effort among State, Federal, Local and regional agencies. Our members include the CT Departments of Education, Labor and Public Health, the US Department of Labor, the Capitol Regional Education Council, and the City of Middletown Health Department. The goal of this collaborative effort is to improve the health and safety of teens in the workplace through awareness, education, training and advocacy.



Effective injury prevention requires coordinated efforts among groups with an interest in the health and safety of youth. The Connecticut Young Worker Safety Team works to increase awareness among teens, parents, educators, youth program operators and youth serving organizations, employers, healthcare providers, and the general public.

For more information on the CT Young worker Safety Team contact: Marian Storch at 860-509-7791, Judith Andrews at 860-713-6766 or Deborah Pease at 860-509-7771.