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CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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Safe Jobs for Young Workers

By the Connecticut Young Worker Health and Safety Team

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that 160,000 young American workers suffer occupational injuries every year, and 54,800 of these injuries are serious enough to warrant emergency room treatment. Workers between 15-24 years old are up to 2.3 times more likely to get injured on the job than workers who are over 25 years old. As discussed in this issue's Hazard Corner (see page 6), young workers have died on the job.

United States Department of Labor (USDOL) investigations have uncovered a significant increase in children illegally employed in hazardous jobs. In 2023, the USDOL Wage and Hour Division launched a National Strategic Enforcement Initiative on Child Labor to put additional emphasis on addressing this critical issue. Several child labor cases in fiscal year 2023 revealed severe child labor violations that resulted in tragedy, such as those uncovered during a federal investigation of Packers Sanitation Services Inc. (PSSI). During this investigation it was found that children were working with hazardous chemicals and cleaning meat processing equipment including back saws, brisket saws and head splitters. At least three minors suffered injuries while working for PSSI.

The violations uncovered during the PSSI investigation are part of a larger nationwide uptick in substantive child labor violations. Child labor laws restrict the types of jobs, hours worked, and equipment used by youth under age 18. If one searches the USDOL's news releases site and selects "child labor" as a filter, significant violations are seen across a gamut of industries, from meat processing to restaurant establishments to trampoline parks and more.

In the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, the USDOL Wage and Hour Division conducted 955 investigations, identifying child labor violations affecting nearly 5,800 children. Penalties assessed for these violations exceeded $8 million. As noted in the table below, child labor violations have been on the rise prior to 2023 as well.

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Young Workers – You have rights! *osha.gov*

Minors employed in violation of child labor laws and hazardous occupation orders, fiscal years 2015–2022.

FY Year	Minors employed in violation of child labor laws	Minors employed in violation of hazardous occupation orders
2015	1,012	355
2016	1,756	486
2017	1,609	491
2018	2,299	596
2019	3,073	544
2020	3,395	633
2021	2,819	545
2022	3,876	688

Notes: Minors are workers under 18 years old. Hazardous occupations orders ban minors from working in nonagricultural and agricultural occupations that the Secretary of Labor defines as being particularly hazardous for minors or detrimental to their health or well-being.

Source: EPI analysis of Department of Labor (DOL) child labor violations data

Labor shortages across the country are putting our youngest and most vulnerable workers at risk. In Connecticut, some employers have unlawfully hired younger and younger workers to fill positions deemed hazardous. Child labor violations vary in severity, from operating heavy equipment under the age of 18 to working excessive hours during a school week.

Federal OSHA's Young Workers website has a great deal of useful information concerning injury and illness prevention in the sectors that employ young workers.

How to Subscribe

Contact robert.hunt@ct.gov and in the subject line type "Subscribe" and then provide your e-mail address in the body of the message.

The Connecticut Young Worker Health and Safety Team was formed in 1997 to train youth, teachers, parents, and businesses on how to protect young workers and obtain and maintain the necessary records needed to employ youth. The group includes representatives from state and federal agencies, as well as local and state partners who want to help employers safely hire youth. Each year, the team educates and trains thousands of Connecticut youth at health and safety events, in classrooms and at career fairs. Some of the young worker employment topics the team addresses are summarized below:

- The youth employment provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) were enacted to ensure that when young people work, the work does not jeopardize their health, well-being, or educational opportunities. By knowing, understanding, and complying with these provisions, employers, parents, and teachers can help working teens enjoy those safe, positive, early work experiences that can be so important to their development. In Connecticut, minor employment falls under two sets of laws – the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and the Connecticut General Statutes. When both are applicable, the law with the stricter standard must be obeyed.

- Employers should be aware of Connecticut's "Certificate of Age" and "Promise of Employment" requirements, and they should understand which tasks are age-appropriate based on the business's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Understanding your business's NAICS code is the first step in recognizing whether you may employ youth under the age of 18 or 16. In addition, employers should proactively identify any potential workplace hazards and take steps to eliminate or control the hazards using engineering controls, administrative controls, or personal protective equipment (PPE) as part of an ongoing effort to protect all workers employed in Connecticut.

- In Connecticut, all employers must have on file the ED-301 Certificate of Age, known as "Working Papers," for each minor employed. This document must remain on file until the minor turns 21, even if the minor is no longer employed. The first step in that process is to provide the minor with a Promise of Employment letter. Detailed information on what must be included in a Promise of Employment

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letter and other topics concerning the employment of minors, including allowable job locations and tasks, is provided on the CTDOL website and in the Working Papers Manual.

- In Connecticut, for most employment a minor must be at least 16 years of age. Employment for younger minors is restricted to specific jobs and only allowable during periods of school vacation, defined as when school is out of session for five days or more, and never allowable on a day followed by a school day. The only exception to this restriction is for a 15-year-old to work in a grocery store – Saturdays only and for no more than eight hours.

It is the goal of the Connecticut Young Worker Health and Safety Team to ensure that everyone in the hiring process is provided the educational resources to protect everyone, especially our minors who are in the nascent stages of their working lives. Interested parties may also contact any of us via the Connecticut Young Worker Health and Safety Team website.

M. Lynders

Remember! OSHA Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements

1 **Post** your 300A Summary at your workplace February 1 through April 30.

2 **Submit** your Injury and Illness data to the Injury Tracking Application by March 2.

Learn More

Fall and Rigging Hazards for Performing Arts Theater Workers

By Lisa Kortfelt, Safety Consultant

In construction, the top 4 most fatal hazards are falls, being struck by an object, being crushed under objects, and electrocution. Common performing arts activities present similar safety hazards, resulting in safety and risk management challenges even though they are covered under OSHA's General Industry standards. Safety hazards including physical, chemical, and mechanical hazards are found in the shops, working at heights both on stage and backstage, as well as material handling risks during set construction, load in, and strike activities.[1] The focus of this article is on fall hazards and rigging hazards. It is not all inclusive.

Mitigating Hazards

A Job Hazard Assessment (JHA) should be performed for all tasks. A JHA describes a task in a detailed step-by-step format, identifies potential hazards with each step, and outlines health and safety controls to minimize injuries or illnesses associated with these steps. The form for documenting a JHA can be as simple as three columns entitled "task," "hazard," and "control." This flexible process and systematic approach can be applied to tasks both large and small. Once completed, the document can be used as a training tool and can be incorporated as part of the written operating procedures for designated jobs or tasks within the facility.

Fall Exposures

Personnel are required to be protected from falls greater than 4' to a lower level by appropriate means (OSHA CFR 1910.28(b)(1)(i)). Fall hazards are present when working on ladders, on the catwalks, outside of the catwalks, near an orchestra pit, in elevated storage areas of the shops, scissor lifts, and on unprotected elevated work platforms such as the open edge of the stage. Fall exposures must be identified in the planning stages and where necessary, appropriate fall protection measures (guardrails, toe boards, fall arrest gear, etc.) need to be in place and used. Employees must be trained on potential fall exposures and the presence or use of required fall protection. For example, the procedures for hanging and focusing lights may require work from significant heights on catwalks, scaffolding, tension grids, aerial work platforms, or other

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elevated work surfaces. The procedure for hanging and focusing lights must be evaluated and procedures must be developed to protect the employee from fall exposure(s). Documented training must be completed by any worker prior to using an active fall protection system.

When it is impractical to use conventional fall protection systems or the fall protection system presents a greater hazard, special steps must be taken to protect employees from falls. The special steps start with the creation of a Fall Protection Plan that is developed by a qualified person and developed specifically for the site where the set construction is being performed (OSHA CFR 1910.28(b)(1)(ii)).

Rigging

Rigging is the use of hardware to lift, lower, and hold performance equipment on or above the stage above people's heads.[2]

Risks of being struck by and crushed under are associated with rigging hazards. A variety of rigging hardware may be used for various tasks and understanding the load capacity for each piece of equipment is critical. It is critical that the people using the rigging know how to safely operate it and that the rigging equipment is maintained in good working order. General safety guidelines for the use and maintenance of rigging equipment include but are not limited to:

- Inspect rigging equipment before use, after any alterations, and at regular intervals.
- Only use materials that are load rated for rigging.
- Make sure the counterweights are secured with a lock plate to keep the counterweights in place.
- Know your load limits, remember every line has a specific load capacity.
- Report and remove any damaged or defective ropes from service.
- Never shorten chains and ropes by knotting.
- Never exceed the safe load capacity of the system
- Remember that rope locks are intended to lock arbors and loads that are balanced.
- Warn people on the stage and grid before moving any rigged scenery or other object.
- Maintain control of moving pieces at all times.
- Secure rigging equipment when it is not in use.
- Follow safe procedures when loading, unloading, or operating rigging systems.
- Enforce use of hardhats in rigging area and below.
- Enforce use of "rigging communication" before moving batten or arbor (i.e. saying out loud "batten X coming in" or "batten Y flying out" and having the statement repeated back).
- Keep your mind on the job.
- Wear heavy duty gloves and composite/steel toed safety shoes

Using counterweight rigging is a process of understanding some basic laws of physics, especially the ones involving gravity, and taking every precaution to use the correct materials and ensure that the load is in balance, so that it will not come crashing down when you least expect it.[2] If you have to struggle to move the load, the load is not in balance. When the load is not in balance, it has the potential to be extremely dangerous. Remember that you are hanging heavy weight over people's heads both onstage and backstage.

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1 Hinkamp D. The hazards of work in the visual and performing arts. Ind Health. 2022 Oct 1;60(5):405-406.

2 Glerum J, Kelly S, Shanda M. (2007) Stage Rigging Handbook, Third Edition. Southern Illinois University Press.

Requesting a Consultation

To learn more or request your free consultation from CONN-OSHA:

Call us at 860-263-6900, or visit our webpage

Virtual Training Schedule

Noise and Hearing Conservation *2/7/24*	OSHA requires a hearing conservation program whenever employee noise exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level (TWA) of 85 decibels measured on the A scale (slow response) or, equivalently, a dose of fifty percent. This class will provide an overview of 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise standard.
OSHA Reporting and Recording Requirements *3/19/24*	This workshop will introduce the requirements and procedures related to OSHA Injury & Illness Recordkeeping, including the electronic reporting of injuries and illnesses requirements. The class will help develop skills to accurately report occupational injuries and illnesses. If you are responsible for completing the documents required by this rule (OSHA 300, OSHA 300A and OSHA 301), or if you supervise the person that completes the forms, or if you are a safety committee member, this class is a must!
Work Zone Safety *4/16/24*	Basic guidelines for work zone traffic control and the requirements of Part VI of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) with particular emphasis on short term work sites on roads and streets in rural and small urban areas will be presented.
Fall Protection *5/7/24*	This class is being held in support of the National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction! Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths. OSHA requirements for the various fall protection options will be covered. The special requirements for scaffolding and residential construction will also be touched upon.
New England Roundtable *Every Wednesday of the Month*	Bringing business together to network and share ideas in the occupational safety and health community. The roundtable meetings are held from 9:00 am to 10:15 am every Wednesday. For more information on the New England Roundtable visit: oshaedne.com/roundtables

Visit this link for more info and to sign up.

Hazard Corner: A Young Worker's Death

On June 29, 2023, a 16-year-old worker employed by Florence Hardwoods LLC became trapped in a stick stacker machine as he tried to unjam it. The young worker remained trapped until he was found, freed, and then transported to the hospital where he passed away two days later.

Investigators with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) concluded that the Wisconsin company failed to train teenage and adult workers in safety procedures to prevent dangerous equipment from moving during service and maintenance tasks. Because minors were exposed to these dangerous hazards, the USDOL's Wage and Hour Division initiated an investigation as well.

"It is incomprehensible how the owners of this company could have such disregard for the safety of these children," said Assistant Secretary for OSHA, Douglas Parker. "Their reckless and illegal behavior tragically cost a boy his life, and actions such as theirs will never be tolerated."

As noted in their news release, OSHA investigators also found fall, machine guarding and electrical hazard violations at the Florence sawmill, similar to infractions they were cited for in 2020.

Young workers between the ages of 15–24 experience higher rates of job-related injuries than do adult workers. The Center for Disease Control reports that in 2020, 352 workers under the age of 25 died from work-related injuries; 26 of these workers were under 18 years of age. Studies show that young workers have a high risk of on-the-job injury due to factors such as attitude (invincibility), lack of safety training, low job control (fear of speaking out, replaceability), unfamiliarity with workplace rights, inexperience, and working dangerous jobs.

It is always sad when you hear that someone was injured. Family and friends ask questions like: "How did it happen?" and, "Will they be okay?" The tragedy is magnified when the injury was sustained while the victim was working and can be even more tragic when the victim was a teenager. "How can similar tragedies be prevented?", you ask. The application of industry specific safety policies and procedures, increasing situational awareness, site specific training and supervision are just some techniques that should be applied.

As noted on Federal OSHA's Young Workers website, employers should:

- Understand and comply with the relevant federal and state child labor laws, especially the laws that prohibit youth from working certain hours and from performing dangerous/hazardous work.
- Ensure that young workers receive training to recognize hazards and are competent in safe work practices.
- Implement a mentoring or buddy system for new young workers.
- Remember that young workers are not just "little adults." Employers must be mindful of the unique aspects of communicating with young workers.
- Ensure that equipment operated by young workers is both legal and safe for them to use. Employers should label equipment that young workers are not allowed to operate.

Fatality & Casualty Reporting

State & Town:

- **Report to CONN-OSHA**
- **(860) 263-6946**

Private Employers:

- **Report to Federal OSHA**
- **(800) 321-OSHA (6742)**

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