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Summer is Approaching: Missouri Child Labor Law Reminders

With the school year winding down, countless teenagers will begin seeking summer work. As job applications from young workers come pouring in, employers need to be aware of Missouri's youth employment laws.

Missouri's Child Labor Law applies to children under the age of 16. Generally, children under the age of 14 are not permitted to work, but there are some exceptions. For instance, children of all ages may work in the entertainment industry (with a work permit), and children over 12 years of age may engage in "casual" work including babysitting, delivering newspapers, occasional yard work performed with parental consent, coaching or refereeing.

For 14- and 15-year-olds, acceptable work includes: office/clerical work; retail work (e.g., cashier, price marking, bagging, selling, packing, shelving); maintenance/janitorial services for private residences; food services (e.g., preparing and serving); and vehicle cleaning services (e.g., polishing and washing). However, there are a number of restrictions on the different categories of work in which teens may engage. Unacceptable types of work and workplaces for youth under age 16 include door-to-door sales, the operation of hazardous equipment (including motor vehicles), the use of radioactive substances, jobs in hotels, motels or resorts, and jobs in liquor stores, among others. There are also special rules for hours and wages.

Depending on the circumstances, a youth worker may need to obtain a work permit or certificate. A 14- or 15-year-old must acquire a "work certificate" prior to starting any job (other than the aforementioned "casual" work or work in the entertainment industry) during the school year. Similarly, these workers must also obtain a work certificate if they choose to continue a summer job into the school year. For youth under age 16 working in the entertainment industry, a "work permit" must be obtained regardless of the time of year. Detailed requirements relating to the acquisition of these work permits or

certificates can be found on the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations website.

Contact Us

For more information on how to comply with Missouri Child Labor Laws and how they may impact you, contact Labor & Employment team members, Brian Stair at 314.345.6277 or Julianne Story at 816.983.8230