

# YOUTH ON THE JOB



DO YOU KNOW THE  
LAWS THAT PROTECT  
YOU ON THE JOB?

## YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- **GET PAID:** You have a right to a fair and full day's pay for a full day's work. The minimum wage (the *lowest* you can be paid) is \$5.15 per hour!
- **OVERTIME PAY:** You have the right to be paid for time and  $\frac{1}{2}$  your regular pay for every hour you work over 40 hours in one week.
- **BE SAFE:** You have the right to a safe workplace and to file a complaint if your job is unsafe.
- **FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT and DISCRIMINATION:** You have the right to equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin or disability. You have the right to work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination.
- **ORGANIZE:** You have the right to get together with your co-workers to improve working conditions and to organize a union.

**#1 YOUR RIGHTS**

# WORK CAN BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

**Grim Report<sup>®</sup> on Child Labor:  
OVER 200,000 YOUNG WORKERS HURT ON THE JOB THIS YEAR**

**When was this headline written? 1800? 1900?**

**NO. This was the title of a report on child labor violations in the US in 2000.**

**DID YOU KNOW?** Young people who work get cuts, bruises, broken bones, burns, aching backs and wrists and **worse**.

- 200,000 young workers are injured annually on the job,
- 70,000 end up in the hospital with serious injuries, and
- one teen worker dies every 5 days

## **JOBS YOU CAN NOT DO IF YOU ARE UNDER 18:**

- You can not DRIVE A FOUR WHEEL VEHICLE —**car, van, SUV** (or an eighteen wheeler)
- You can not SLICE MEAT OR BREAD (with a machine)
- You can not use POWER TOOLS
- You can not work on a ROOF
- You can not do DEMOLITION WORK
- You can not MINE COAL
- You can not work with NUCLEAR MATERIALS
- You can not MAKE BOMBS
- You can not STORE EXPLOSIVES
- You can not manufacture BRICK or TILE

And, if you go to Florida, you can't WRESTLE AN ALLIGATOR if you are under 16.

**CONTACT:** For information on NY State laws concerning employment of minors contact:  
New York State Division of Labor Standards 212-352-6700 [www.labor.state.ny.us](http://www.labor.state.ny.us)



## TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST COMPANY TRAGEDY

On Saturday, March 25, 1911, just before quitting time, fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in downtown New York City. The company had locked the doors to keep workers – mostly young immigrant girls and women – from leaving early. The workers were trapped. A total of 146 people died – some leapt to their death from the 9th floor window, rather than be burned alive. This terrible tragedy became a rallying point for the public and labor unions to pressure the government to create laws to protect workers—such as the workers' compensation system and OSHA (which wasn't made a law until 1970!).

# PROTECTION FOR YOUNG WORKERS

## WHAT IS OSHA?

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) is the federal government agency that develops and enforces job safety laws. Filing an OSHA complaint is complicated and should only be done when you and your co-workers believe that an OSHA inspection will be effective in eliminating the hazard. Complaints may be made anonymously upon your request. Please call NYCOSH for advice before you contact OSHA.

**CONTACT:** To file an OSHA complaint, call 1-800-321-OSHA. [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

## Here are your rights under OSHA:

- **YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW.** Employers must provide information about chemicals you work with, and at certain workplaces, they must provide the log of injuries and illness for your workplace. You and your co-workers or union can also ask for a copy of your employer's chemical safety plan.
- **YOU SHOULD BE TRAINED TO WORK SAFELY.** The law says that you must be trained to work safely and properly when you perform certain types of work. If you work with chemicals, machines, or in health care settings, where you may be exposed to dangerous substances or equipment, you must receive health and safety training.

• **YOU CAN REFUSE WORK THAT IS UNSAFE— UNDER VERY LIMITED CONDITIONS.** The law says that if you're asked to do work that is really dangerous (**it MUST be life threatening**), you have a right to **SAY NO**. However, you should talk to your employer about this and must offer to do other work in that workplace to maintain your rights.

• **YOU SHOULD NOT GET FIRED.** The law says you *should* not get fired for demanding training, refusing unsafe work (see above) and reporting hazards, but you will need to be well organized to take your issues to your employer in order to make your workplace safe, and protect your job at the same time. (See **#3 Stand Up for Your Rights**)

## **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR CO-WORKERS TO IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS!**

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) is a law that protects you from being fired for organizing *with your co-workers*. The law specifically protects “concerted activity,” meaning that you must join with other workers to make change. In other words, try never to go it alone! You can get together with your co-workers to:

- Protest unsafe working conditions
- Ask for a raise or refuse overtime hours
- Join a union

**CONTACT:** The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is the agency that protects workers who are fired illegally for organizing activity. Call 212-264-0306. [www.nlr.gov](http://www.nlr.gov)

## **CAN YOU SUE YOUR BOSS IF YOU GET HURT ON THE JOB?**

No, but you are covered by Workers Compensation, something all employers must carry to cover the costs of employees' injuries on the job. Benefits include: cash to cover lost time, medical care, medicine, etc. You have two years from when you were injured to file a claim, **BUT YOU MUST REPORT YOUR INJURY TO YOUR EMPLOYER WITHIN 30 DAYS** of when it happened.

**CONTACT:** Workers Compensation Board, 800-877-1373 [www.wcb.state.ny.us](http://www.wcb.state.ny.us)

# HOURS YOU CAN WORK

## IF YOU ARE 14 or 15 and SCHOOL IS IN SESSION:

- You can NOT work the hours you're supposed to be in school (**DUH!**)
- You can NOT work more than 3 hours on any school day, or more than 8 hours on a Saturday or a non-school day
- You can NOT work more than 18 hours a week
- You can NOT work at night (between 7pm and 7am)

## BUT, DURING SCHOOL BREAK or THE SUMMER:

- You CAN work up to 8 hours a day
- You CAN work up to 40 hours a week
- You CAN work until 9pm (late June through Labor Day)

## IF YOU ARE 16-17 and SCHOOL IS IN SESSION:

- You can NOT work more than 4 hours on any day before a school day (Monday-Thursday)
- You can NOT work more than 8 hours on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or a holiday
- You can NOT work more than 28 hours a week
- You can NOT work past 10pm

## BUT, DURING SCHOOL BREAK or THE SUMMER:

- You CAN work up to 8 hours a day
- You CAN work up to 40 hours a week
- You CAN work until 12 midnight (late June through Labor Day)

## SCHOOL IS COOL

Even though working may give you cash, there are benefits to staying in school:

- Higher paying jobs require education
- Jobs that require a college degree are growing faster than other jobs
- College grads earn 70% more than high school grads



# GETTING HELP!!

**CALL NYCOSH.** The New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) is a worker-friendly organization that will provide advice to you about where to go for help. NYCOSH is a non-profit coalition of 250 local unions and more than 400 individual workers, physicians, lawyers and other health and safety activists — all dedicated to the right of every worker to a safe and healthful workplace.

**CONTACT: NYCOSH 212-627-3900 [www.nycosh.org](http://www.nycosh.org)**



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