

## Child Labor

***What is the minimum age for employment?***

Both federal and state law generally prohibit the employment of minors under the age of 14, with limited exceptions for special jobs such as newspaper delivery (for which state law provides that the minor must be at least 11), work as a youth program referee, babysitting and home chores, acting, and modeling. There are also exceptions for some types of agricultural employment and for employment by a parent. State law provides that the Commissioner of Labor and Industry may grant an exemption for a particular minor if it appears to be in the minor's best interests.

***What kinds of work are prohibited for minors under the age of 16?***

Federal law generally prohibits employment of children under 16, unless (1) the employment is by a parent in a nonhazardous occupation, or (2) the occupation is one that the U. S. Secretary of Labor has determined not to constitute oppressive child labor. These occupations are specified by regulations that permit 14- and 15-year-olds to do many types of retail, food service, and clerical work, but limit their employment in occupations including (but not limited to) construction, communications, warehousing, and storage.

These minors are also, of course, subject to the limitations on employment of minors under 18, discussed below.

***What kinds of work are prohibited for all minors under the age of 18?***

Both federal and state law prohibit the employment of minors under 18 in any occupation that has been determined to be hazardous. In the case of the federal law, these determinations are made by the Department of Labor, and in Minnesota, they are made by the Department of Labor and Industry.

Many of the kinds of work prohibited for minors under 18 are not particularly surprising, and include work with explosives, work as a motor vehicle driver, certain coal mine and logging work, work with powerful cutting equipment, work that entails exposure to radiation, work with certain kinds of machinery such as bakery machines and paper products machines, and work in wrecking and demolition. Also, state law prohibits minors under 18 from serving alcohol, and limits their ability to work in places where alcohol is served. Again, this is not an exhaustive list of prohibitions, and the regulations or the agencies involved are the best source of information on any particular occupation.

***How many hours may a minor under age 16 work?***

Both state and federal law generally limit children under 16 to 40 hours of work in a week and eight hours of work in a day. Federal law further specifies that minors under 16 may not work more than 18 hours in a school week or three hours in a school day. The combined federal and state laws also limit these children to working only between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. during the school year, with the evening limit extended to 9:00 p.m. over the summer. Finally, Minnesota law provides that a child under 16 cannot work on school days during school hours except in special situations in which the child obtains an employment certificate

from the Commissioner of Labor and Industry. The certificate may only be issued with parental consent and with a finding by the commissioner that the child is capable of performing the job and that it serves his interests for him to do so.

***How many hours  
may a minor at least  
16 but under 18  
work?***

Minnesota law also provides that a child under 18 cannot work after 11:00 p.m. on any day before a school day or before 5:00 a.m. on any school day, unless employed by a parent, as a babysitter, or to do home chores. These limitations can be extended to 4:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. if the child presents the employer with a note signed by a parent giving permission.

***Who enforces child  
labor laws?***

Child labor laws are enforced by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry and the U.S. Department of Labor.

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