



THE ULTIMATE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST



Summer brings an excellent opportunity for small to medium-sized businesses to hire seasonal help and support their communities. However, before placing minors on your schedule, you must ensure their duties and hours comply with youth-employment laws.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division enforces strict guidelines under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These rules protect young people's health, well-being, and educational opportunities. Common employer violations include scheduling minors for too many hours or accidentally assigning them to dangerous tasks. Navigating these rules can feel complex, especially when state and federal regulations overlap.

This straightforward checklist provides clear guidance to help you create safe, legally compliant roles for young workers. By following these steps, you can reduce operational risks, streamline your HR processes, and focus on empowering your growing team.

1. Verify Permitted Working Hours

Federal and state regulations strictly dictate when and how long minors can work. Always check your specific state regulations, as they often have stricter rules than the federal baseline. For instance, if you are wondering how many hours can a minor work in Texas versus how many hours can a minor work in California, you will find distinct differences in local enforcement and break requirements.

- **For 14- and 15-year-old employees:**

- Ensure they work only outside of school hours.
- Limit shifts to no more than 3 hours on a school day and 18 hours during a school week.
- Limit shifts to no more than 8 hours on a non-school day and 40 hours during a non-school week.
- Schedule work exclusively between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (Extended to 9:00 p.m. between June 1 and Labor Day).

- **For 16- and 17-year-old employees:**

- Review your state's specific scheduling laws. While federal law does not restrict the total hours for this age group, local regulations like the child labor laws in Illinois or New York may limit late-night shifts during the school year.

2. Restrict Prohibited Tasks by Age

The FLSA prohibits young workers from performing hazardous duties. Protecting your teenage staff from dangerous equipment is critical for compliance and workplace safety.

- Confirm that 14- and 15-year-olds are excluded from manufacturing, mining, operating power-driven machinery, or working in hazardous conditions.
- Ensure 14- and 15-year-olds only perform permitted retail, food service, or clerical tasks.
- Verify that 16- and 17-year-olds are kept away from the 17 designated hazardous occupations. This includes banning them from operating meat slicers, paper balers, forklifts, or participating in roofing and excavation operations.

3. Secure Proper Documentation and Work Permits

Accurate record-keeping is your best defense during an employment audit. Many states require specific documentation before a minor can begin work.

- Verify the legal age to work in NY, California, Texas, or your specific state of operation.
- Obtain and file all required state work permits. For example, ensure you have a valid California work permit for minors or a Maryland work permit on file before their first shift.
- Collect documented parental or guardian permission if mandated by your local jurisdiction.
- Maintain accurate, easily accessible records of each minor's date of birth, daily starting and quitting times, and total hours worked each week.

4. Supervise Teen Workers Effectively

Young workers often lack job experience. Providing a supportive environment ensures their safety and improves overall employee satisfaction.

- Provide comprehensive, easy-to-understand safety training before they begin their duties.
- Clearly define their roles, explicitly stating which equipment they are not allowed to touch.
- Train your adult supervisors on child labor restrictions so they do not accidentally ask a minor to perform a prohibited task.
- Establish an open-door policy, encouraging young employees to ask questions or report unsafe conditions without hesitation.

Simplify Your Compliance and Empower Your Growth

Managing seasonal hiring and navigating state and federal compliance does not have to drain your resources. We seamlessly integrate into your team, offering the necessary expertise, services, and tools to manage your employees efficiently.

Whether you are expanding into new states, adjusting to compliance regulation changes, or looking for cost-effective solutions to complex payroll issues, solveHR is here to help. Our comprehensive HR solutions streamline your operations and reduce costs, allowing you to focus on achieving remarkable business success.

Contact solveHR today to discover how our expert HR management can transform your onboarding, payroll, and compliance processes.