



NEWS

JB Pritzker, Governor

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Back to School, Back to Work – But First Get a Permit

It's the law that children under 16 need a permit to work at most jobs in Illinois

SPRINGFIELD -- School either has or is about to start for Illinois students. Lots of those young people will do more than homework. They'll get a job. And if you're under 16 years old and you get a job, you also need to get a work permit.

Minors who are 14 or 15 may work in Illinois, but they must first obtain an employment certificate. Illinois' child labor law is designed to protect the physical safety of children on the job as well as to make their education a priority.

"It's very admirable to see young people who want to go to work, but child labor laws are necessary to make sure kids stay safe and don't let their jobs get in the way of their school work," said Michael Kleinik, director of the Illinois Department of Labor.

Fourteen- and 15-year-olds seeking employment need to start by getting a letter of intent to hire from their prospective employer. The letter should describe the type of work and the hours to be worked.

The young person and a parent or guardian must take the letter to their school or school district office to request an employment certificate. The issuing school administrator will review criteria and any safety issues to determine whether to issue the work permit.

Employers who employ teens under 16 without having a work permit on the premises are subject to fines by the Department of Labor.

Children 14 and 15 years of age may work up to three hours per school day and up to 24 hours per week when school is in session. The combined hours of school and work cannot exceed eight hours per day. When school is not in session – summer vacations, holidays and weekends – the restrictions are no more than eight hours per day, no more than six days per week and no more than 48 hours per week.

These young people can work between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. except between June 1 and Labor Day when the evening hours can be extended to 9 p.m.

Some exceptions to the Illinois Child Labor Law do exist. The law does not apply to the sale and delivery of magazines and newspaper outside the hours that school is in attendance. Likewise, jobs in private homes such as baby-sitting or yard work are exceptions and do not require a work permit.

The law also seeks to keep younger workers safe. It prohibits 14- and 15-year-olds from working in businesses where alcohol is served, on construction jobs, at service stations and other places that might include dangerous work or machinery.

Employers or anyone else with questions about the Illinois Child Labor Law can call IDOL's Child Labor Hotline – 800-645-5784. The entire contents of the Child Labor Law can also be found at www.ilga.gov