

The Colorado Youth Employment Act spells out employment rules for minors

The Colorado Youth Employment Opportunity Act of 1971 was enacted to “foster the economic, social, and educational development of young people through employment.” It also protects minors from hazardous working conditions and limits the number of hours they can work, especially on school nights. A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

From a workers’ compensation perspective, many tasks should not be assigned to minors because of the risk of injury to the minor. If a minor is injured, the county could end up with a long-term workers’ compensation responsibility to that minor. Like all employees, minors should always be properly trained and supervised when performing their jobs.

Restrictions by Task

The act restricts the tasks that minors can perform by age. Minors age 14 and older can work in non-hazardous construction, retail food service, retail, office and clerical, janitorial service, warehouse and storage, and parks and recreation occupations. Each job assigned to a minor should be evaluated to determine that it is not hazardous. The act specifically prohibits minors from:

- Operating a high pressure steam boiler or high temperature water boiler.
- Operating power-driven machines including: woodworking machines, metal-forming machines, punching or shearing machines, bakery machines, shears, and automatic pin-setting machines.
- Working where the employee could fall more than 10 feet to the ground (such as on a ladder or roof).

- Manufacturing, transporting or storing of explosives.
- Mining, logging, oil drilling, excavating, or quarrying.
- Working in any job involving exposure to radioactive substances or ionizing radiation.
- Wrecking or demolition.
- Slaughtering or rendering livestock.
- Manufacturing bricks, clay construction products, or silica refractory products.
- Roofing.

Restrictions on Working Hours

The hours and days that minors can work are also restricted by age. The act states that:

- A minor cannot work more than 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week.
- On school days, a minor under the age of 16 cannot work during school hours.
- A minor under 16 cannot work between the hours of 9:30 pm to 5:00 am if the next day is a school day.
- A minor under 16 cannot work over 6 hours in a day if the next day is a school day.

For details, a copy of the act is available online at www.coworkforce.com/LAB/ColoYouthOpportunityAct.pdf. Please contact CTSI at 303-861-0507 for questions about the act.

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