

## Teen Work Hours

### Teen-labor Violators Come Under Scrutiny

The U.S. labor department has become proactive in looking for teen labor violators. The Labor Department has set up stings and nabbed several smaller and mid sized employers.

The Labor Department keeps a watchful eye on businesses that hire large numbers of teens including asking school districts to identify local companies. The Labor Department's tactics for nabbing violators is likely to get more creative. Therefore, it would be prudent for businesses to be familiar with the federal law in this regard.

The penalty for violators is very expensive. One Utah theater chain keeps teens working too late into the evening and for this they were slapped with a \$22,230 fine. The Labor Department is looking to increase the maximum penalty and they are likely to get their wish. The current maximum child labor penalty is \$11,000 per violation; the agency is looking to increase that to \$50,000. For willful or repeat violations the penalty will be \$100,000.

To begin with, children 13 and under are off-limits to employers, except for certain odd jobs such as delivering newspapers or baby-sitting.

Youths ages 14 and 15 can work outside school hours in certain non-hazardous jobs, but their hours are limited to 3 hours on a school day. Youths ages 16 and 17 can work unlimited hours, but not in certain hazardous jobs. Once workers reach age 18, they can work any job for unlimited hours.

To teach teens and their parents how to report child-labor violations, the agency has started a YouthRules campaign which includes a Web site, [www.youthrules.dol.gov](http://www.youthrules.dol.gov).

#### What This Means For Counties

With the labor department looking for teen labor violators, it would be in the best interest of the counties to make sure that they are complying with federal and state work laws for teen employees. If the Labor Department gets their way, the maximum penalty could be \$50,000 for violators. A child labor coordinator should be assigned to make sure the county complies with state and federal laws to minimize risk to the pool.

For more information, contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.