



Employing teens under 18 in food service?

L&I's fact sheet of permitted and prohibited work activities for youth ages 14 to 17 in food service

Here's what's permitted for minors:

Work activities ALL minors can do:

- Use of knives and non-powered slicers.
- Occasional walking in and out of coolers and freezers to retrieve or store products in the course of other routine work in a restaurant, grocery store, or other retail setting.

Machines ALL minors can operate:

- Dishwashers
- Toasters
- Popcorn poppers
- Waffle irons
- Espresso machines
- Blenders
- Coffee grinders
- Coffee machines

For 16- and 17-year-olds ONLY:

- Use of electric hand-mixers that are ½ horsepower or less.
- Use of table top food mixers and food processors that are ½ horsepower or less, or 5 quarts or less.

- Cooking or baking and use of microwaves.
- Handling and wrapping meat, poultry or seafood in a grocery store, restaurant or other retail setting.

Here's what's prohibited for all minors:

Minors are NOT permitted to do ANY work involving:

- Slaughtering animals, meat packing, processing, or rendering in commercial packing and processing facilities.
- Powered food slicers, including slicers for meat, poultry, seafood, vegetables, cheese and bread. Student-learner exemption may apply (see next page).
- Power-driven bakery machines. Using and cleaning are both prohibited. This includes large Hobart mixers, powered bread-slicers and pizza dough rollers.

Are teen workers allowed to drive as part of their job?

Limited, occasional driving on public roadways is permitted for 17-year-olds only as long as it's not a regular job duty. Workers aged 14-16 are prohibited from driving on public roadways.

See policy *Driving by Minors in Non-agricultural Jobs* at **ES.C.4.3**, www.Lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/files/policies/esc43.pdf.

- Garbage compactors, trash compactors or other compactors, paper balers or other balers. Loading, unloading and operating are prohibited.
- Exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Activity done more than ten feet above ground or above floor level such as on a ladder.
- Freezers and coolers, if the work in these environments is prolonged. Entry to retrieve or store products is permitted. Fourteen- and 15-year-olds may not enter meat coolers.
- After 8:00 p.m. without an adult employee, who is on the premises at all times.

Student-learner exemption for powered food slicers

Powered meat, poultry, seafood, vegetables, cheese and bread food slicers may be used under student-learner exemptions, which are permitted only if:

1. The student-learner is enrolled in a course of study and training in a cooperative vocational training program under a recognized State or local educational authority or in a course of study in a substantially similar program by a private school.
2. The student-learner is employed under a written agreement which provides that:
 - a. The work of the student-learner in the occupations declared **particularly hazardous** must be incidental to the training.
 - b. The work must be intermittent, for short periods of time, and under the direct and close supervision of a qualified and experienced person.
 - c. Safety instruction must be given by the school and combined with on-the-job training by the employer.

- d. The employer must prepare a schedule of organized and progressive work activities the student-learner will perform on the job; and
- e. Both the student's school and employer must have copies in their files of all relevant agreements they have made.

Summary: The prohibited work activity may be performed only under certain circumstances and only if it is incidental to the student-learner's training. The student-learner may not be the principal operator of the prohibited machinery. The student-learner may operate the machinery only during their training experience, not for an entire work shift, and must be supervised while performing the task.

Hours of Work

Restrictions: Based on age, there are different restrictions for the hours of work for 14- and 15-year-olds vs. 16- and 17-year-olds. The hours of work permitted for youth vary during school weeks and non-school weeks.

Student variances: Limited variances are permitted for employers with students involved in work-based learning placements, during the time the student is participating in the internship. Some variances may include more than one student placed at the same location for the same period of time. Employers must submit a variance application and Parent/School permission form to L&I. Link to variance form and instructions at:

www.Lni.wa.gov/Forms/pdf/700076af.pdf

For more information and resources

www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov

Other formats for persons with disabilities are available on request. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.