

## OSHA Launches Campaign on Young Worker Safety

By Raymond Perez, II

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Promoting the message, “Young workers! You have rights!” the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has launched a campaign on workplace safety among youth workers.

OSHA outlined employer responsibilities for keeping young workers safe, noting, “Young workers are those new to the workforce, even up to age 24. Young workers can be an asset to your workforce. However, it may be their first job or the first time they are operating equipment.”

The federal agency also reminded employers that child labor laws restrict the types of jobs, hours worked, and equipment used by youth under age 18.

OSHA offered guidelines for protecting young workers who are temporary workers, including:

- Host employers must treat temporary workers as they treat existing workers, especially including adequate training to young temporary workers.
- Temporary staffing agencies and host employers share control over the employee and are jointly responsible for the temporary employee’s safety and health.

OSHA said in its campaign, “[Employers] can prevent or reduce workplace injuries and make work safer for all workers, including youth.” It pointed out that first-line supervisors have “the greatest opportunity” to protect young workers and influence work habits and they should stress safety.

In addition, the agency noted that employers should:

- Understand and comply with the relevant federal and state child labor laws. For example, these laws prohibit youth from working certain hours and from performing dangerous or hazardous work.
- Ensure that young workers receive training to recognize hazards and are competent in safe work practices. Training should be in a language and vocabulary that workers can understand and should include prevention of fires, accidents, and violent situations and what to do if injured.
- Implement a mentoring or buddy system for new young workers. Have an adult or experienced young worker answer questions and help the new young worker learn the ropes of a new job.
- Encourage young workers to ask questions about tasks or procedures that are unclear or not understood. Tell them whom to ask.
- Remember that young workers are not just “little adults,” and employers should be mindful of the unique aspects of communicating with young workers.
- Ensure that equipment operated by young workers is legal and safe for them to use. Employers should label equipment that young workers are not allowed to operate.

Jackson Lewis attorneys are available to assist clients with safety compliance.

### Meet the Author



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