



New Law Changes in Effect for Employers Hiring Minors

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With summer right around the corner, teenagers will soon be out of school—and out looking for a place to work. If you're planning on hiring teenagers during the summer months and beyond, be sure you're familiar with the recent labor law changes that will impact employers that hire workers under 18 years old to avoid costly penalties.

Minor Work Hours

On April 2, 2025, amendments to the Youth Employment Standards Act (Act) went into effect changing when teenagers are allowed to work. For example, if you're hiring minors under the age of 16, from June 1 until Labor Day, they're only allowed to work between 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. During this period—as well as other times when school is not in session—teens are prohibited from working more than 40 hours per week.

After Labor Day, when school is in session, minors under the age of 16 may work between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. for no more than three hours per school day outside of regular school hours, not to exceed a total of 18 hours per week.

Regarding all minors under 18 years of age, the Act has provided additional guidance addressing deviations in established employment standards or work hours. Currently, a deviation may be granted if doing so is in the best interest of the minor and the community. Now, however, such deviation may not be granted if it would permit a minor to work between midnight and 5 a.m. or in an environment that is hazardous or injurious to their health or personal well-being.

Minor Work Permits

The amendments to the Act also include significant changes to how minor work permits are issued. Presently, minors can receive work permits through their school district or intermediate school district, as well as from a public school academy or nonpublic school. Work permits are kept by the employer, but must be returned to school

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administrators when the minor stops working for an employer.

Effective October 2, 2026, minors will have to get work permits from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). This will require that they register with LEO by submitting their contact information and details about any physical limitations they may have. Moreover, employers will also have to get approval from LEO to hire minors. This change to the Act, which is being made to streamline and modernize the work permitting process, means employers need to learn how to use LEO's online system to submit information about their company and the prospective employee.

After a submission, LEO is expected to approve a work permit within five days. If the permit is not issued in this timeframe, the minor is allowed to begin working immediately. When the employee leaves, companies must notify LEO.

Stiff Penalties for Non-Compliance

There are stiff penalties for non-compliance to keep in mind. In general, employers who are in violation of the Act or obstruct LEO in the enforcement of the Act shall be found guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year imprisonment, a fine of up to \$500, or both. Penalties differ in severity, however, for employers employing minors pursuant to Section 12a and Section 14a, two sections which were not revised by recent amendments adopted by the Legislature, ranging from fines between \$2,000 and \$20,000 and imprisonment from one year to 20 years.

As such, it is imperative to keep comprehensive, up-to-date records—not only to prove that you're in compliance with permitting and hour mandates, but also with the new laws on minimum wage increases and sick leave accruals. Contact a member of Foster Swift's Employer Services Practice Group if you need guidance on how to adjust to these new revisions.