

State and Federal Child Labor Laws for Co-op Students

Below is a summary of the state and federal child labor laws most relevant to students enrolled in Massachusetts Chapter 74-approved vocational technical education programs. As all co-op students must be at least 16 years of age, laws related to teens under 16 are not included in the summary below.

Prohibited Jobs for Minors

Persons under 18 may NOT:

(student learner exemptions are starred and highlighted in red)

- Drive a vehicle (except golf carts in certain circumstances)
- Drive a forklift
- Operate, clean or repair power-driven meat slicers, grinders or choppers *
- Operate, clean or repair power-driven bakery machines
- Work 30 feet or more above ground or water *
- Handle, serve, or sell alcoholic beverages
- Use circular or band saws, or guillotine shears *
- Use power-driven woodworking machines *
- Use hoisting machines
- Operate paper balers, paper box compactors, or other power-driven paper products machines *
- Use power-driven metal-forming, punching, or shearing machines *
- Use buffing or polishing equipment *
- Manufacture brick, tile, or kindred products
- Manufacture or store explosives
- Work in excavation *
- Work in wrecking, demolition, or shipbreaking
- Work in logging, sawmilling, or mining
- Work slaughtering, packing, or processing meat *
- Work in railway operations *
- Work in roofing or on or about a roof *
- Work in foundries or around blast furnaces *
- Work manufacturing phosphorus or phosphorus matches *
- Work where they are exposed to radioactive substances
- Work as a firefighter or engineer on a boat *
- Oil or clean hazardous machinery in motion *
- Work in any job requiring the possession or use of a firearm

Legal Work Hours for Minors

16 & 17 Year Olds

Work Hours (all year round)

- Only between 6 am & 10 pm on nights preceding a regularly scheduled school day
- If the establishment stops serving customers at 10 pm, the minor may be employed until 10:15 pm
- Only between 6 am & 11:30 pm on nights *not* preceding a regularly scheduled school day, except in restaurants and race tracks until midnight

Maximum Hours (all year round)

48 hours per week
9 hours per day
6 days per week

Supervision

After 8 pm, all minors must be directly supervised by an adult who is located in the workplace and who is reasonably accessible (with the exception of minors who work at kiosks in the common areas of some malls).

Work Permits

All teens under 18 must obtain a work permit from the school district where they live or go to school. For more information, visit the website of the Division of Occupational Safety at: www.mass.gov/dos/youth.

In place of the standard work permit, a special **Cooperative Education Employment Permit** must be obtained by all minors who will be employed in cooperative education. These permits are issued by the superintendent of the school district where the minor is enrolled in a Chapter 74 program.

** For all child labor law exemptions for student-learners, the work shall be incidental to his or her training, shall be intermittent and for short periods of time, shall be under the direct and close supervision of a qualified and experienced person, and shall include safety instruction by the employer as part of the training.*