

TEEN TOPICS

Tips To Make Sure Teens Get The Most Out Of Summer Employment

(NAPSA)—Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics figures from 2000, more than two million teens will be taking summer jobs this year.

The American Payroll Association, the nation's leader in payroll training, offers these helpful tips to teens starting summer jobs:

“No cure for the summer-time blues.”

Although the minimum wage is set at \$5.15 per hour, teens can earn almost a full dollar less. It's called the *Opportunity Wage*, and it means that for the first 90 days on the job, any employee hired under the age of 20 can be paid a minimum of \$4.25 per hour.

Tip-Off Time!

If you're working in the food service industry or in any job where employees accept tips—be wary. Unless you make less than \$30 a month in tips, your employer doesn't have to pay you minimum wage.

The least they can pay you is \$2.13 an hour by federal standards. If your salary and tips at the end of the week don't add up to the minimum wage, your employer must make up the difference.

PG, PG-13, or NC-17?

Jobs have age restrictions too. If you are age 16 or over, the number of hours you can work during any given week isn't limited.

If you are under 16 there are major restrictions as to how many hours you may work per week. Minors age 14 or 15 can work only



Teens should know the rules of the work world so they don't get taken advantage of.

between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. during summer months. During the school year, they may work only between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

“Nine to Five, Workin' Overtime.”

For those 16 and older, hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week are considered overtime hours.

For these hours, you must be paid at least 1½ times your regular pay. If you are under 16, you cannot work more than 40 hours in one week.

Gimme a break!

There is no federal law that sets up a standardized break for workers. This is a matter left to individual states to decide.

But if your employer gives you a meal break, it can only dock your

pay for a continuous break that lasts 30 minutes or more. As long as you are not doing any work during the break, they do not have to pay you. Rest periods or coffee breaks are different, since they are shorter than meal periods—the employer is not permitted to dock your pay for them.

An offer you must refuse.

Getting paid “off the books” is illegal and potentially dangerous. “Young workers need to be particularly careful of this. You have no insurance, no unemployment benefits, and are not covered by workers' compensation. It's very risky. Plus, no earnings are being credited to your Social Security account,” said Dan Maddux, executive director of the American Payroll Association.

Baby you can drive my car.”

If you're 17, have no moving violations on your driver's license, and have taken a state-approved driver's education course, you can drive for your employer up to one-third of your workday and 20 percent of your workweek. You may only drive during daylight hours and may not drive a vehicle that weighs more than 6,000 pounds.

All the preceding information deals with federal laws and standards. Many of these areas are also regulated by individual states, which may have different requirements.

For more information about employment laws in your state, visit www.americanpayroll.org.