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Commissioner, NJDOL



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY | TAHESHA L. WAY
Governor | Lieutenant Governor



JEFFREY A. BROWN
Acting Commissioner, NJDOH

Subject: Essential Compliance with New Jersey Labor Laws for Young Workers in Summer Camps

New Jersey Summer Camp Operators,

We, the Commissioners of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) and the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH), are reaching out to emphasize the importance of adhering to our state's labor laws, particularly concerning the employment of minor workers. It is vital to recognize that young workers have rights, and all employers, including those managing summer youth camps, must comply with these legal standards. NJDOL is proactively providing free educational resources to businesses that hire minors to support their compliance with the law.

New Jersey's youth camps provide a safe, fun, and enriching experience for children, and are a critical pillar of the community that many families rely on. A successful youth camp fosters personal growth, community trust, and long-term sustainability. Youth camps are also crucial to our state's workforce, providing an important first job for thousands of New Jersey minor workers.

While certain exemptions exist for minors, they do not override the fundamental legal obligations regarding employment practices. New Jersey employers are required to follow all applicable labor laws concerning the employment of all workers, including minors. This encompasses regulations concerning working hours, wages, and working conditions specific to workers under the age of 18. Minors working for summer camps operated by religious or nonprofit organizations may have limited exemptions; however, for-profit summer camps are required under state law to ensure fair wages and safe working conditions year-round.

Just as each Youth Camp must comply with the New Jersey Youth Camp Safety Standards to ensure the safety and health of campers, they must also abide by applicable labor laws, particularly surrounding young workers.

To facilitate a compliant and supportive work environment for young workers, please take note of the following key elements of New Jersey's Wage and Hour laws:

1. **Age Requirement:** Minors must be at least 14 years old to be employed at a summer camp.
2. **Working Papers:** Employers are required to complete the registration process for working papers before hiring any minors. Each minor employee must apply for working papers prior to commencing employment.
3. **Meal Breaks:** Minors are prohibited from working more than six consecutive hours without a documented 30-minute, uninterrupted meal break.
4. **Work Hours:** Although working restrictions for minors are more relaxed in the summer, there are still limitations on the daily and weekly hours they may work during the summer months.
 - » Minors aged 14 or 15 cannot work more than eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, or more than six consecutive days. Their work hours must be scheduled between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.
 - » Minors aged 16 or 17 cannot work more than 10 hours per day, 50 hours per week, or more than six consecutive days. Their working hours must be scheduled between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m.
 - » These work hour restrictions do not apply to employment in June, July, August, or September for youth camps operated by a religious or nonprofit organization, unless the employment primarily involves maintenance or food service.



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5. **Fair Compensation:** Minors must be compensated for all hours worked, with payment provided on regularly scheduled paydays at least twice per month. Each paycheck must include a detailed pay stub outlining any deductions. Once a job offer is made to a minor, employers are expected to hold to the pay rate promised.
6. **Extra Hours:** Minors should be compensated for all work hours, including mandatory activities required by their employer that occur before camp starts or outside of regular camp hours, such as training sessions or orientation.
7. **Earned Sick Leave:** All employees, including minors, are entitled to earn up to 40 hours of paid sick leave annually, accruing one hour for every 30 hours worked. Employers must meticulously track and record all hours accrued and used by each worker and provide this information to each employee.
8. **Record-Keeping:** Employers are responsible for maintaining accurate daily and weekly time records for all employees. Records for minors must include the start and end times of work each day, as well as the start and end times of meal periods.
9. **Know Their Rights:** Minors have the right to file complaints with the NJDOL Division of Wage and Hour Compliance if their rights related to payment and hours worked are compromised or if they face retaliation for exercising their wage and hour rights.

We urge you to familiarize yourself with New Jersey labor laws and ensure full compliance, as the NJDOL is steadfast in its commitment to ensuring all employers compensate our young workers for every penny they have rightfully earned. For detailed guidance, please visit nj.gov/labor/youngworkers.

Thank you for your attention to these critical matters, and for your commitment to fostering a lawful and supportive working environment for the Garden State's young workforce.

Sincerely,

Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Jeffrey A. Brown, Acting Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health