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Illinois Department of Labor issues guidelines to employers and teenage summer job seekers

Department outlines requirements under Illinois Child Labor Law for thousands of teenagers planning to work statewide over the summer

CHICAGO –Thousands of Illinois teenagers will soon be on summer break and heading out to find jobs, and the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) is reminding students and employers about Illinois’ law that provides protections for children in the workplace.

“It is vital that employers as well as young teenagers searching for summer jobs are aware of the rules under Illinois law that ensure children under 16 are healthy and safe in the workplace. Employers and the youngest of job-seekers should familiarize themselves with the law’s requirements and its protections, which include restrictions on the number of work hours and type of work that may be performed,” said IDOL Director Catherine Shannon.

IDOL enforces the Illinois Child Labor Law, which regulates the employment of workers who are younger than 16 years old. The law requires that minors, ages 14 and 15, obtain employment certificates from their local high school or school administration office. The certificate confirms that a minor is old enough to work, is physically capable to perform the job, and that the job will not interfere with the minor's education. The law prohibits work in hazardous occupations, limits working hours and requires that minors working five or more continuous hours receive a 30-minute meal period.

Procedures for teenagers:

- When a student finds a job, he/she will need a “letter of intent to hire” from the prospective employer. It must outline the hours the student will be working and the type of work as well.
- After checking the safety of work and for any conflicts in school schedule, the school must issue an employment certificate in order for the student to work.

Procedure for employers:

- Employers who employ 14 or 15 year-olds must require them to provide an employment certificate which the employer must maintain on the premises.

The Illinois Child Labor Law allows children ages 14 and 15 to work during the school year:

- Between 7am and 7pm
- Up to three hours per school day, but not more than eight hours per day when school and work are combined
- Up to eight hours on a non-school day
- Up to 24 hours a week, but not more than six consecutive days

During summer break (June 1st through Labor Day):

- Between 7 am and 9 pm
- Up to 48 hours a week, but not more than six consecutive days

Work is prohibited in any capacity:

- On premises where liquor is served
- In occupations at filling or service stations, including the retail portion thereof
- In occupations requiring the use of power-driven machinery
- In most occupations in logging and saw milling
- Any occupation in construction, including demolition and repair
- Occupations involving the use of ladders, scaffolds, or their substitutes
- Occupations involving contact with moving vehicles
- Occupations involving laundry, dry-cleaning or rug cleaning

There are a few exceptions to the Child Labor Law, such as babysitting, yard work, and other work in private homes. Children under the age of 14 generally are not employable, with the exceptions noted above, however 13 year-olds can work as golf caddies and 12 and 13 year-olds can officiate certain youth sports activities.

For a complete list of hazardous occupations, please contact IDOL at 312-793-2804. If you wish to file a child labor complaint, please call the Child Labor Hotline: 1-800-645-5784 or print out a complaint form from the Department website at:

www.state.il.us/agency/idol.

In another effort to help teenage job seekers, the State of Illinois has launched a Summer Job Central website, www.ILWorkInfo.com/icrn, run by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), to help high school and college students find summer jobs. The site provides useful hints for job searches and links to additional sites for

finding summer job openings. Jobs range from internships to part-time positions, government jobs and international opportunities.