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State Reminds Employers and Summer Job Seekers to Follow Child Labor Law Requirements

Illinois Department of Labor Highlights Safety Guidelines for Young Teen Workers

CHICAGO—May 26, 2011. As working families recover from a difficult economy and many young Illinois teenagers will look for jobs this summer, the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) is reminding employers and students under the age of 16 about Illinois' law that provides protection for children in the workplace.

"We should encourage our youngest job seekers to be part of the workforce but also ensure that they are adequately protected and safe in the workplace," said IDOL Director Joseph Costigan. "The Child Labor Law limits the number of hours a child can work and includes restrictions on certain types of work. Employers, parents, caregivers and children should be aware of the law's requirements and protections."

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 of performing 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.

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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, but no more than eight hours per day
- Up to 48 hours a week, but not more than six consecutive days

Work of the following nature is expressly prohibited by 14 and 15 year-olds:

- Working at establishments where liquor is served
- Working at gas or service stations, including the retail portion thereof
- Work requiring the use of power-driven machinery or contact with moving vehicles
- Logging and saw milling work
- Construction work, including demolition, repair and jobs involving the use of ladders or scaffolds
- Laundry, dry-cleaning or rug cleaning work
- Operation of amusement rides or amusement attractions.

There are several 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 some youth sports activities.

For more information regarding Illinois' Child Labor Law, 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.

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