Youth Worker Safety
The Construction Industry

Late spring and early summer is the beginning of the busy construction season for many construction contractors and employers in Michigan. At the same time many high school and college youth become available for summer jobs. Construction employers may hire some of these young workers to help them through the busy construction season. **Many construction activities are restricted for workers under the age of 18.**

Work Environment:

Activities that may be restricted

- Excavation, highway, bridge, or street construction, roofing, wrecking, or demolition
- New commercial or new residential construction including clean up.
- Contact with hazardous substances, chemicals, explosives or radioactive substances
- Operating large construction equipment such as cranes and bulldozers
- Operating power driven woodworking equipment, tools, saws, or machinery
- Brazing, welding, soldering or heat-treating

Activities typically permitted

- Painting with latex paint in residential construction using a stepladder
- Maintain/distribute tools and materials
- Conduct office activities in jobsite trailer

Primary Hazards

- Heights greater than six feet
- Electric shock
- Caught by rotating and moving equipment
- Struck by moving vehicles and equipment
- Trench and excavation cave-in
- Chemical burns and excessive exposure
- Thermal burns from hot metal
- Lifting heavy objects
- Exposure to extreme temperature

Solutions:

Clothing & Protective Equipment

- Wear appropriate work boots, long pants, sleeves and gloves
- Wear head protection (hard hat) and eye protection in all construction zones
- Wear hearing protection when around noisy equipment
- Wear lightweight/light-colored clothing in hot environments

Tools & Equipment

- Inspect tools and equipment before use
- Maintain a safe distance from rotating and moving equipment

Other Job Safety Issues

- Get help lifting/use safe–lifting devices
- Provide appropriate training to recognize workplace hazards
- Train on any chemicals that will be used
- Read and obey all warning signs
- Keep the job site clean
- Ensure adequate ventilation when exposed to airborne contaminants
- Use sunscreen when outdoors
- Drink plenty of water in hot environments
- Replace salts and minerals in a hot environment
- When unsure, ask questions
- Do not perform work if you have not been trained

Employers must be aware that certain construction work is restricted for workers under the age of 18 by the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education. For more information, visit the Michigan Department of Education website at; www.michigan.gov/mde, **click; Youth Employment; or call (517) 335-6041.**

Or contact:

Consultation Education & Training Division
Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration
530 W. Allegan Street, PO Box 30643, Lansing, Michigan
517-284-7720 or www.michigan.gov/miosha

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
www.youth2work.gov

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Youth Fatal Facts In Construction

Don't Let This Happen to You!

- A 19 year old roofer was working with an eight man crew repairing a roof. The employee was retrieving buckets of hot tar to apply to the roof. He had just poured out the buckets of hot tar and was returning to get more. As he walked across the roof, he fell through a skylight approximately 27 feet to the floor below.

- An 18 year old rigger was working with heavy steel girders that were being lifted into place by a crane. The crane lowered the load line to pick up the first girder. When the employee threw a sling over the girder which was resting on its narrow edge, the girder fell over on the employee, crushing the employee to death.

- A 19 year old carpenter was working with a residential home construction framing crew installing roof trusses. The trusses had been stored beneath energized 7200-volt electrical lines. While attaching trusses to the load line, the crane made contact with the energized power line electrocuting the 19 year old employee. When the crane operator (age 25) jumped off the crane to help the employee, he was also electrocuted when he made contact with the first employee.

- An 18 year old laborer was working in an excavation installing a four-inch sewer line at a residential home construction project. The excavation was approximately 10 feet deep and the sides were vertical. Soil conditions were heavy damp soil and clay over sand. The side of the excavation caved in and buried the employee.

- A 19 year old carpenter was working on a parapet wall on the roof of a five story building. The wind began to pick up so employees were gathering up their tools and materials to ensure they were secure and would not blow off the roof. There were equipment curbs covering holes in the roof. When the employee picked up one of the equipment curbs to move it, he fell through the duct hole more than 60 feet to his death.

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