



# Youth Worker Safety

## Restaurant/Fast Food Industry

In late spring and early summer, many high school and college youth start summer jobs. Restaurants and other eating and drinking businesses employ more than 421,000 people in Michigan and 11.6 million nationwide. Nearly 30 percent or approximately 125,000 of Michigan restaurant industry employees are under 20 years of age. Many teens' first work experience is in the restaurant industry. In fact, more than one in four adults found their first job in the restaurant industry. This fact sheet helps identify potential hazards and provide solutions to specific activities within the restaurant industry.

### Work Environment:

#### Activities

- Serve food
- Bus tables and clean up
- Drive-thru service
- Food Preparation/Cooking
- Work at cash register

#### Activities That May Be Restricted

- Power driven meat slicers and grinders (Under 18)
- Power-driven bakery equipment, including mixers (Under 18)
- Contact with hazardous substances, chemicals, explosives or radioactive substances (Under 18)
- Driving and work as an outside helper (pizza delivery, etc.) (Under 18)
- Selling, serving, or furnishing alcoholic beverages (Under 18)
- Baking or cooking, except at servicing center (Under 14-15)

### Primary Hazards and Solutions:

#### Lifting and Carrying Heavy Objects

- Get help lifting; use your legs, not your back
- Avoid twisting while lifting
- Don't overreach
- Use wheeled carts to serve food or transport objects

### Primary Hazards and Solutions:

#### Slippery Floors

- Wear sturdy non-slip, footwear; water proof in wet areas
- Use non-slip mats when provided
- Use caution signs on wet floors

#### Sharp Objects-Knives, Graters, Shredders, or Slicers

- Wear steel mesh or kevlar gloves when cutting
- Let a falling knife fall
- Store sharp knives in racks or sheaths
- Use broom or dust pan to clean up broken glass

#### Deep Fat Fryers, Hot Liquids or Heated Surfaces

- Do not stand too close or lean over hot oil
- Do not spill water or ice into hot oil
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants
- Use oven mitts or pot holders for hot items
- Wait until oil is cool to move container

#### Electrical Shock from Damaged Electrical Cords or Faulty Appliances

- Do not plug in electrical equipment with wet hands
- Do not use frayed cords or defective equipment

## Primary Hazards and Solutions:

### Cleaning Chemicals

- Ask for training before using chemicals
- Read labels before using
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and eye protection

### Prolonged Standing

- Wear shoes with well cushioned instep and soles
- Use foot rest bar or stool to continually shift weight from one foot to the other
- Use anti-fatigue mats when provided

### Carbon Monoxide from Car Exhaust in Drive-Thru

- Keep the drive-thru window closed as much as possible, to limit exposure to exhaust
- Use fan when provided

### Exposure to Temperature Extremes

- Wear cool, comfortable, breathable clothing like cotton
- Request a break from the hot environment if needed, to allow your body to cool down
- Drink plenty of water in hot environments
- Observe safety procedures or wear protective equipment (such as gloves or protective aprons)

## Primary Hazards and Solutions:

### Workplace Violence

- Don't count cash or close till in front of customers
- Ask supervisor what to do in an emergency
- Have emergency telephone numbers handy
- Do not resist during an attempted robbery

### Noisy Environments

- Fit drive-thru headsets properly to your head
- Don't turn head-set volumes up excessively high

## Other Job Safety Issues:

- Follow workplace training and procedures
- Do not perform the work if you have not been trained to do the job
- Report potential hazards
- Read and follow all warning signs and postings
- When unsure, ask questions
- Keep your work area clean

Employers must be aware that certain work activities are restricted for workers under the age of 18 by the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth, Wage Hour Division. For more information, visit the Wage & Hour website at: [www.michigan.gov/wagehour](http://www.michigan.gov/wagehour)

**Or contact:** Consultation Education & Training (CET) Division  
Michigan Occupational Safety & Health Administration  
7150 Harris Drive, PO Box 30643, Lansing, Michigan 48909-8143  
517-322-1809 or [www.michigan.gov/miosha](http://www.michigan.gov/miosha)

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)  
[www.youth2work.gov](http://www.youth2work.gov)

