

MIOSHA Fact Sheet

Youth Worker Safety

The Construction Industry



Late spring and early summer are 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 season. Employers need to know that many construction activities are restricted for underage workers by State and Federal laws.

Work Environment:

Activities that are prohibited or restricted for Underaged Workers

- 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

Employers must be aware of work activities restricted for workers under the age of 18 by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Wage and Hour Division. For more information visit the Wage and Hour Division website: www.michigan.gov/wagehour.

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 and 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 and Equipment

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

Other Job Safety Issues

- Get help or use safe lifting techniques
- Get training to recognize workplace hazards
- Get training 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
- During long periods of heat exposure drink an electrolyte-replacement beverage
- When unsure, ask questions
- Do not perform work if you have not been trained

LEO is an equal opportunity employer/program.



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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.

For additional assistance, please contact the Construction Safety and Health Division at 517-284-7680 or the Consultation Education and Training Division at 517-284-7720. Construction Safety and Health Standards can be viewed on the MIOSHA website at www.michigan.gov/mioshastandards.