

MIOSHA Fact Sheet

Youth Worker Safety Retail Industry



In late spring and early summer, many high school and college youth start summer jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, homicide and assault are the leading cause of death among youth in the retail industry, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the youth fatalities in the industry. Many teens' first work experience is in the retail industry. This fact sheet helps identify potential hazards and provide solutions to specific activities within the retail industry.

Work Environment:

Many activities are done by youth working in retail environments, including, work at cash registers, stocking shelves, merchandise displays, greeting customers, cleaning, customer service, merchandise preparation, and sales.

Primary Hazards and Solutions:

Workplace Violence

- Post emergency telephone numbers
- Ask supervisor what to do in an emergency
- Do not resist during an attempted robbery
- Do not work alone at night
- Do not argue with irate customers – use conflict management skills

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 transport boxes and merchandise

Slippery Floors

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

Cleaning Chemicals

- Ask for training before using chemicals
- Minors should not use chemicals marked “DANGER” or “HAZARD”
- Read labels before using/follow Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and eye protection when required
- Keep your work area clean

Handling Cash

- Don't count cash in front of customers
- Close till right after each transaction
- Don't keep large bills in till, do a cash drop frequently
- Keep cash register in line of sight of other employees
- Have proper posture at check-out stands to avoid neck, shoulder, and elbow discomfort

Other Job Safety Issues

- When unsure, ask questions
- Follow workplace training and procedures
- Do not perform the work if you have not been trained
- Keep walkways free from clutter
- Report potential hazards
- Read and follow all warning signs and postings
- Use stress management techniques in a fast-paced environment
- Do not confront a potential shop lifter – call your supervisor
- Learn proper use of ladders

Employers must be aware that certain work activities are restricted for workers under the age of 18 by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Wage and Hour Division. Call 855-464-4623 or visit www.michigan.gov/wagehour.

LEO is an equal opportunity employer/program.



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