

## FIRM NEWS

# WITH SUMMER ON THE WAY, MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS SHOULD KNOW THE RULES ON HIRING TEEN WORKERS

Article

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*June marks Michigan's Youth Employment Month, recognizes youth worker benefits to economy and teens*

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Detroit – May 11, 2023–Summer employment can start teens on a lifelong path of good work habits and solid financial footing, provide skills training, and even career exploration and networking opportunities. With an estimated 235,000 Michigan teens entering the workforce this summer, it is important that both employers and parents understand the legal and safety considerations for teen workers set forth in the Michigan Youth Employment Standards Act, according to Nick Huguelet, a partner at Detroit-based management-side labor and employment law firm Nemeth Bonnette Brouwer PC.

“There are state laws governing the hours minors (teens under age 18) can work, permit requirements, limits on accessibility to alcohol, use of motorized equipment and handling cash in the evening, just to name a few,” Huguelet said. “In general, they are common sense rules that help keep teens safe at work while also protecting employers from potential liability.”

Michigan celebrates Youth Employment Month in June, recognizing the mutual benefits that youths bring to the state economy and the experience they gain from working. Huguelet offers a quick rundown of key guidelines for young workers and their employers:

- A work permit is required for minors and can be obtained through the child's school. There are two permits depending on the age of the minor.
- In the summer, minors aged 16-17 may work between 6 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. During the school year, minors aged 16-17 may only work between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. except on Fridays and Saturdays (or during school vacation periods), when they can work until 11:30 p.m.
- Minors under 16 years of age may only be employed between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.
- Minors cannot handle cash after 8 p.m. or sunset (whichever is earlier) unless there is another employee present who is at least 18.
- Minors cannot sell or serve alcoholic beverages, but a minor over the age of 16 (or age 14 in a retail setting) can work where alcohol is being sold if alcohol doesn't exceed 50% of sales.
- Employers must ensure that a minor is provided with at least one 30-minute meal or rest period for every five hours of continuous work.
- The Improved Workforce Opportunity Wage Act (minimum wage law) allows employers to pay minors 85% of the established minimum wage. This means the minimum wage for minors is currently \$8.59 (85% of \$10.10).

- Teens under the age of 20 may be paid a “training hourly wage” of \$4.25 for the first 90 days of employment.
- Teens working in amusement or recreational establishments are not entitled to overtime pay if the establishment does not operate for more than seven months in a calendar year.
- Summer camp employees are exempt from Michigan’s minimum wage and overtime requirements as long as they are employed for four months or less.
- Individuals must be at least 18 to operate power-driven equipment such as meat slicers, mixers, saws and motor vehicles, including OSHA and MIOSHA regulated equipment such as forklifts.

Summer also creates employment opportunities for tweens and younger teens to work in a family business because immediate family members are exempt from minimum age laws when their parents own the business. There are also exceptions for minors working in farming. Caddying is considered a safe job, and minors as young as 11 are legally allowed to be caddies; however, some golf course jobs, such as mowing the greens with huge tractors or retrieving golf balls in a motorized vehicle, can and do result in serious injury or death and individuals must be 18 and trained to perform those jobs.

For more information governing youth employment, please visit the State of Michigan website.

#### **About Nemeth Bonnette Brouwer PC**

Celebrating more than 30 years, Nemeth Bonnette Brouwer specializes in employment litigation, traditional labor law, workplace investigations, and management consultation and training for private and public sector employers. The firm also provides arbitration and mediation services. Woman-owned and led since its founding, Nemeth Bonnette Brouwer exclusively represents management in the prevention, resolution and litigation of labor and employment disputes.