



Child Labor Laws

September 2025

Employing minors can be a tricky endeavor. Both federal and state law restrict the time and work minors can be assigned, and those restrictions vary depending on the employee's age. This document will cover some of the different rules concerning minor employees. This is general information compiled from various sources and is not definitive legal advice. If you have specific questions about labor laws, please reach out to our legal vendor partners.

FOR ALL MINORS

They must receive a minimum 30-minute break period if their shift is longer than 5 straight hours. Employers must also maintain a list of all minor employees and retain information on the actual hours worked, including start, stop, and break times. Additionally, all minors must have a work permit.

MINORS YOUNGER THAN 14

Anyone younger than 14 cannot be employed in any job covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the law that establishes minor labor protections. The only way for a minor under 14 to be working for any hospitality business would be if they are working for their family's business.

MINORS AGES 14 – 15

For minors ages 14 or 15, they have a few more restrictions on their duties and hours compared to minors ages 16 or 17

Below are a few of the restrictions on hours for this age group.

MINORS OF THIS AGE GROUP CANNOT

- During the school year
 - Work during school hours.
 - Work for more than 3 hours during a school day.
 - Work over 18 hours during a school week.
 - Work before 7am or after 7pm.

- From June 1 to September 1*
 - Work more than 8 hours during the day.
 - Work over 40 hours during the week.
 - Work before 7am or after 9pm.

**Ohio law differs from Federal law and says that these rules also apply while school on holiday for at least 5 days. Federal, being more stringent than state, applies over state law.*

AGES 14 – 15, CONTINUED

Additionally, there are some duties that this age group cannot perform beyond what is already prohibited for minors.

MINORS OF THIS AGE GROUP CANNOT

- Work in freezers for extended periods of time. Going inside of one to retrieve stock or items is allowed.
- Perform any part of the baking process. This includes measuring or mixing ingredients to assembling or placing the item in/removing it from the oven.
- Operate or otherwise clean/fix any electric slicers, grinder, mixers or other similar machinery.
- Use cooking equipment unless it is a grill that does not have an open flame, or unless it is a fryer that automatically lowers and raises the baskets.

This age group is still subject to the same restrictions for 16- and 17-year-olds.

MINORS AGE 16 – 17

While minors of this age range have less restrictions on their duties and time, they are still subject to some restrictions, and still subject to all rules relating to minors of any age.

REGARDING HOURS, MINORS OF THIS AGE GROUP CANNOT

- Work before 7am on a school day or 6am if the person was employed after 8pm the prior night
- After 11pm on a night preceding a school day

Regarding duties that minors overall cannot perform, all minors cannot operate, adjust, or clean electric slicers, grinders, mixers, or most common machines in baking. Minors of all ages additionally cannot be employed in hazardous occupations; however, the bulk of applicable occupations fall outside of the scope of hospitality businesses.

EMPLOYEES AGE 18

Once an employee is 18 years old, all the restrictions on hours and types of work no longer apply to them. However, there are still a few restrictions on certain activities in a restaurant setting, not from the labor perspective but from liquor law. 18-year-olds and all minors cannot serve alcohol of any kind to a customer.

AGES FOR SERVING ALCOHOL

An employee must be 19 years old to serve alcohol. A 19-year-old is free to serve the customer any kind of alcohol, but they cannot be the bartender (a 19-year-old can serve beer from the bar). An employee must be 21 years old in order to bartend wines or cocktails.

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS

Below are the various resources that this information was pulled from. If you have any further questions, please reach out to the Government Affairs team or your membership manager and they will find you an answer, or connect you with one of our legal partners for help.

[Ohio Law Refresher: Summer Employment of Minors](#)

[Ohio Minor Labor Laws](#)

[What jobs are off-limits for kids?](#)

[Non-Agricultural Jobs - 14-15](#)

[Child Labor Provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act for Nonagricultural Occupations](#)

[Cooking and Baking under the Federal Child Labor Provisions of Fair Labor Standards Act](#)

[Minimum Ages for On-Premises Servers and Bartenders](#)