THINKING OF EMPLOYING YOUNG CONSTRUCTION WORKERS?
HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

LAW

Under federal law, no one under the age of 16 can work in construction.

16-17 year olds are forbidden from certain tasks including:
- Roofing
- Excavation
- Demolition
- Other hazardous tasks

Some state laws may be stricter for workers under 18.

IMPACT

Construction is the 2nd deadliest industry for minors in terms of worker fatality rate.

Workers aged 16-19 had the highest non-fatal injury rate of any age group in the construction industry from 2013-2015, at 139.3 injuries for every 10,000 FTEs.

This is well above the non-fatal injury rate for most adults in construction (107.6-116.7/10,000 FTEs), and almost twice the injury rate for adults who are 65 or older (73.8/10,000 FTEs).

THE VULNERABILITIES

As teenage bodies grow, risk of fractures is increased.

Adolescent workers may be physically smaller than the intended users of construction equipment, which has been shown to increase risk of injury.

Brain development and hormonal changes may affect risk-taking and decision-making.

Younger worker injuries are more likely to occur when there is not adequate training and supervision.

HOW TO PLAY IT SAFE

Consult your state’s labor department to learn about your local laws and regulations regarding child labor.

Instruct teens to observe a work task being safely performed and demonstrate they can safely do it, before they independently perform it.

www.osha.gov/youngworkers has resources to help you understand and comply with the law to employ young workers safely.

SOURCES:

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