

[Home](#) / As Summer Approaches, New Jersey Departments of Health and Labor Remind Employers of Young Workers' Rights

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TRENTON** – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) are reminding summer camp operators, employers, and managers across New Jersey of their legal obligations when hiring workers, including young camp counselors. With summer recruitment currently in full swing, NJDOL and NJDOH have issued a bulletin to put camps across the state on notice that young workers are entitled under state law to fair pay, meal breaks, and earned sick time. In addition, NJDOL is proactively providing free educational resources to businesses that hire minors to help support compliance with the law.

“Our most important responsibility is protecting our children, especially when they take the leap to land their first job,” **said Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. “Our youngest workers are dedicating their summer breaks to gain valuable skills—they deserve their first job experience to be a positive one. Employers must protect the safety and well-being of young workers by paying them for the time they work; providing uninterrupted breaks; and scheduling shifts and job duties that are age-appropriate.”

New Jersey’s summer camps provide safe, fun, and enriching experiences for children across the state. They enhance our communities by bringing together families, local businesses, and organizations. Successful youth camps foster educational and personal growth for participants, as well as community trust. Summer camps also play a critical role in bolstering the state’s economy and workforce, often serving as an important first job for thousands of New Jersey minors every year.

“A summer camp job is often someone’s first step into the workforce, and that experience should be safe, supportive, and fair,” **said Jeff Brown, Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health**. “Creating these environments is a shared responsibility. By working closely with the Department of Labor, we’re reinforcing the standards that protect minors, both as campers and as workers.”

The New Jersey Department of Health (DOH), Public Health and Food Protection Program, Youth Camp Safety Project is the principal authority on matters relating to health and safety conditions at summer youth camps within the state. All summer youth camps must obtain a license issued by NJDOH prior to operating. The NJDOH and NJDOL joint effort aims to promote employer compliance with minor workers’ rights and protections under the law.

Minor workers receive special protections under state law including regulations around their wages; the number of days, hours, and times they can work; as well as restrictions around hazardous work and environments. All summer camps are required to ensure fair wages and work conditions for young workers under the age of 18 years, although religious and nonprofit camps receive certain exemptions under state law during seasonal months.

Under New Jersey’s Wage and Hour laws, key protections for young workers under the age of 18 years include:

- **Age Requirement:** Minors must be at least 14 years old to be employed at a summer camp.
- **Working Papers:** Employers are required to complete the registration process for [working papers](#) before hiring any minors.
  - Each minor employee must apply for working papers prior to beginning employment.
- **Meal Breaks:** Minors are prohibited from working more than six consecutive hours without a documented 30-minute, uninterrupted meal break.
- **Work Hours:** Although working restrictions for minors are more relaxed in the summer, there are still limits on the daily and weekly hours they may work during the summer months.
  - Minors aged 14 or 15 years old cannot exceed eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, nor work more than six consecutive days. Their working hours are restricted to the hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.
  - Minors aged 16 or 17 years old cannot exceed working more than 10 hours per day, 50 hours per week, nor work more than six consecutive days. Their working hours are restricted to the hours between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m.
    - Religious and nonprofit organizations are exempt from these work hour restrictions from June through September, unless the employment primarily involves maintenance or food service.
- **Fair Compensation:** Minors must be compensated for all hours worked, with payment provided on regularly scheduled paydays at least twice per month.
  - Each paycheck must include a detailed pay stub outlining any deductions.
  - Once a job offer is made to a minor, employers are expected to stick to the pay rate promised.

- **Extra Hours:** Minors should be compensated for all work hours, including mandatory activities required by their employer that occur before camp starts or outside of regular camp hours, such as training sessions or orientation.
- **Earned Sick Leave:** All employees, including minors, are entitled to earn up to 40 hours of paid sick leave annually, accruing one hour for every 30 hours worked.
  - Employers must meticulously track and record all hours accrued and used by each worker and provide this information to each employee.
- **Recordkeeping:** Employers are responsible for maintaining accurate daily and weekly time records for all employees.
  - Records for minors must include the start and end times of work each day, as well as the start and end times of meal periods.
- **Know Their Rights:** Minors have the right to file complaints with the NJDOL Division of Wage and Hour Compliance if their rights related to payment and hours worked are compromised, or if they face retaliation for exercising their wage and hour rights.

While certain exemptions exist for minors at religious and nonprofit summer camps, these exemptions do not override the fundamental legal obligations regarding the State's employment practices. For-profit summer camps are required under state law to ensure fair wages and safe working conditions year-round for all employees.

NJDOL is committed to protecting the rights of workers, New Jersey employers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with New Jersey's labor laws and regulations to ensure full compliance. For more information on work rights for minors visit: <https://www.nj.gov/labor/youngworkers>.

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