

Fact-sheet – Management of young workers



What is the objective?

Understand how to manage and protect young workers.

The main objective is to understand the precautions which need to be taken to successfully employ young workers and avoid risks.

Minimum age to work: The minimum age should not be inferior to 15 years old as per ILO Convention 138*. However, if the local legal minimum age is set at 14 years of age in accordance with ILO Convention 138 developing country exceptions, this lower age may apply.

Young workers: Designate children (under the age of 18), authorized to work (above the age of 15 or 14 when applicable).

*http://ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138



How to achieve the objective?

What are the risks associated with young workers?

- 1- **Risk of child labor** – if the facility does not have a properly functioning age verification system, a person whom they consider to be a “young worker” could be a child and thus violate local law or the buyer’s requirements if they are employed.
- 2- **Interfering with education** – like child workers, young workers should not miss educational opportunities due to work. Young workers’ hours must be restricted in order to ensure they are able to attend classes and prepare schoolwork.
- 3- **Higher vulnerability** – because young workers are likely a minority population in the facility, they are more likely to be a vulnerable group and less likely to speak up if they have an issue, problem or suggestion.
- 4- **Harmful work** – young workers are usually prohibited from performing hazardous work as well as prohibited from working overtime.

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How to take proper precautions for young workers?

1 – Have a functioning age verification system – the facility needs to not only ask new recruits for their identification card, showing their age, but also needs to assess those documents for validity to ensure that young workers are not actually child workers.

2 – Establish a policy for young workers– the policy should ensure that young workers are still able to fully maintain their academic commitments and that they are not exposed to hazardous work or unlawful overtime. The local regulation may require the facility to perform certain medical exams for young workers.

3 – Functioning oversight system – the facility will have special rules related to working hours and the type of work that young workers can perform, they also need to have a system to track young workers’ working hours and areas of work.

4 – Provide special training – all staff in the factory should be aware of the restrictions for young workers, particularly the management and supervisors. A training should also be implemented specifically for young workers.

5 – Capacity management and production planning – proper management and forecast of production volumes and proper capacity planning should ensure that young workers won’t be required to work overtime, which is prohibited.



Common non-compliances

- Lack of policy around the types of work that young workers can perform. This non-compliance can lead to the violation of local regulations and ILO Convention 138;
- After proper age verification, workers considered by the factory as young workers are found to be children below the legal working age and should not have been hired. This non-compliance indicates a lack of management process to effectively verify the age or at least important failures in the process;
- Records related to young workers are not properly maintained;
- Young workers are not provided with legally required medical tests.



Good practices

- Conduct a special meeting with young workers to get their feedback on working conditions in the facility;
- Provide extra benefits flexibility to support their educational efforts.

