

The work environment for young people

Objective

Young people are a special employee group that requires extra protection to ensure they also experience a safe and healthy work environment. Therefore, the employer has an increased responsibility when it comes to training and instruction obligations as well as supervision duties.

The rules for young people under 18 years old are divided into four categories:

- Young people under 13 years old
- Young people between 13 and 15 years old, or who are still subject to compulsory schooling
- Young people who are 15 years old and not subject to compulsory schooling
- Young people under 13 years old are not allowed to work at all, unless a special permit has been obtained from the police. This can, for example, apply if the young person is participating in radio, TV, or concerts.

| | 13–15-year-old or those who are still subject to compulsory education (Compulsory education ends no later than 30 June in the calendar year in which the child turns 17) | 15–17-year-old who have completed 9th grade |
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| Work tasks | Young people are allowed, among other things, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacuum and mop floors • Receive goods, unpack them, and put them in place • Collect used dishes, place them in a dishwasher, and start the machine • Peel, cut, slice, and chop vegetables • Make smoothies and milkshakes, and operate a soft-serve ice cream machine <p>The work must also not expose young people to an increased risk of conflicts with customers, violence, or threats.</p> | Young people are allowed to perform almost the same tasks as adults; however, the work must not be dangerous. |

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| Machines | <p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>There is no longer a prohibited list of machines that young people are not allowed to operate. The employer must carry out a risk assessment, which must, among other things, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the machine have hazardous properties – e.g., rotating parts • What is the surrounding environment like • The young person's experience and ability to recognize risks • The young person's physical and mental capabilities • What preventive measures are in place <p>Young people are, among other things, allowed to operate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Espresso machines • Industrial dishwashers • Soft-serve ice cream machines • Smoothie machines (blenders) • Milkshake machines • Panini machines • Juice machines <p>A risk assessment must be carried out in ALL cases.</p> | <p>The same rules apply as for young people subject to compulsory education. Young people who are no longer subject to compulsory education will likely be able to assess and understand risks in such a way that they can operate more machines.</p> |
| Ergonomics | <p>Young people may lift a maximum of 12 kg at a time.</p> <p>If the lifting is carried out under good lifting conditions, they may exceptionally lift heavier loads, but never exceeding 25 kg.</p> | |
| Hazardous substances and materials | <p>Young people must not work with, or in close proximity to, hazardous substances and materials.</p> <p><u>Examples:</u> cleaning solvents, certain types of oven cleaners, and toilet cleaners.</p> | |
| Working hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School days | 2 hours | 8 hours* |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other days • School weeks • Other weeks • Break • Daily rest period • Rest day • Holiday | <p>7 hours (13–14-year-old) and 8 hours (15-year-old)</p> <p>12 hours per week</p> <p>35 hours per week and 40 hours (15-year-old)</p> <p>30 minutes when working hours exceed 4.5 hours</p> <p>14 hours</p> <p>2 days within each week (one of which is usually a Sunday).</p> <p>As far as possible, a full period off work during the summer school holidays.</p> | <p>8 hours*</p> <p>40 hours**</p> <p>40 hours**</p> <p>30 minutes when working hours exceed 4.5 hours</p> <p>12 hours</p> <p>2 days within 7 days (one of which is usually a Sunday)</p> <p>*When the daily working hours are 8 hours, they must be continuous. **Working hours must not exceed the working hours of an adult in the same occupation. This means that if an adult works 35 hours, the maximum working hours for a young person can also only be 35 hours.</p> |
| Evening and night work | May not work between 8 PM and 6 AM | May not work between midnight and 6 AM |
| Working alone | <p>As a general rule, young workers are not allowed to work alone for an entire shift, but they may be alone for a short period, for example during breaks. It is unclear exactly how long a young worker may be alone, but in all cases, the following requirements must be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective supervision of the young worker must be maintained. In practice, this means that the manager must observe and ask questions to ensure that the employee performs the work in a safe and healthy manner, and that the training and instruction provided have been sufficient. • The young worker must have the possibility to call for help from someone over 18 years old. The possibility to call for help from a colleague can now also be facilitated through technical aids. | |

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| | <p>Thus, it is the specific risk assessment that determines the possibility and extent of working alone for young workers under 18.</p> <p>Different rules apply in large shopping centers, where young workers may be alone or together with other young workers during the shopping center's normal opening hours: 18:00–20:00 on weekdays and 14:00–20:00 on weekends and public holidays, provided that security guards are patrolling.</p> |
| Serving of alcohol | <p>No</p> <p>Young people may work in a restaurant whose main purpose is the serving of food.</p> <p>During the period from 6 AM to 10 PM, young people may perform the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing tables • Setting tables • Cleaning • Taking orders • Serving alcohol, when it is done in connection with serving food and under the supervision of persons over 18 years old with the necessary knowledge of the work <p>Supervision means that the adult must be present.</p> <p>From 10 PM to midnight, young people may work in areas other than the cloakroom, restroom, and serving area. This could, for example, be in the kitchen. Young people must not have contact with guests.</p> |

This table cannot replace legal advice. HORESTA members are advised to contact our call center for further guidance regarding young people's work environment issues.

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