

Be careful when employing minors.

In December 2005, a 17 year old boy was killed when he was crushed by a car he was lowering from a tow truck while working at his job as part of an automotive apprenticeship through Waukesha West High School. This accident drew special attention because the company involved and the high school were unaware of the state law that prohibited him, being a minor, from operating the truck. The issue of hiring minors comes up with many of our customers who have summer help or just want to hire someone's son or daughter.

The above accident, which occurred at a towing company's lot in Brookfield, drew lots of attention from OSHA, the WI Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and the Brookfield Police Dept. This is an extreme example of what can happen when minors are allowed to perform hazardous tasks, but any injury to a minor can result in penalties to the employer.

The DWD has very specific rules on what minors can and can't do. Most dangerous tasks are prohibited including operating a motor vehicle of any size, most construction tasks, and working with mechanical equipment and climbing. They also spell out that employers can be penalized for double or triple the benefit workers compensation provides if they violate the rules for work permits, hours of employment, job duties and requirements of the code.

To learn more, feel free to talk with your Murphy Insurance Group Account Executive or read the entire Department of Workforce Development statute on child labor at: www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/dwd/dwd270.pdf