

Young Workers: Prohibited Working Conditions

Description

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The Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No 115/2019 incorporates general working conditions of young workers from Article 89-91. Young workers are those natural persons between the age of 15-18 years. It is prohibited to hire persons below the age of 15 years. In line with Article 89 Sub Article 4 of the Labour Proclamation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (now the Ministry of Labour) has issued as of August 24,2021 a registered Directive No 813/2021 (the Directive) that lists activities that are prohibited for young workers. A previous directive issued in April 2013 on the Lists of activities prohibited for young workers is repealed by this Directive. A look at those prohibited activities for young workers shall be the focus of this article.

Prohibited Activities

Around fourteen activities are listed as prohibited jobs for young workers. These include:transporting persons and goods by land, air, and water and fishing; lifting, pulling heavy goods or works related to these in ports and warehouses; works directly related to electric power generating stations, transmission lines, and power distribution centers; subterranean works like deep mineral extraction, stone quarries, or related works; work on high places on scaffolding, moving materials up or down using machines, or moving materials from one place to another on cranes and lifts using electric or motorized energy.

The list goes on to include work in undertakings that produce alcohol, tobacco or other substances that induce addiction or are poisonous; work in extremely cold places, warehouses, freezers; work in extremely hot places; jobs that expose young workers to harmful ionizing and non-ionizing radiations like x-rays, ultra-violet rays, gamma rays etc; work in production areas that use dangerous and poisonous chemicals like arsenic, lead, cadmium, manganese, cyanide and other such metallic substances and solvents; works which produce or utilize explosive and incendiary substances and elements; jobs which involve preparation, mixing, or spraying of various pesticide and herbicide chemicals; jobs which bring the worker into direct contact with biological hazards like fungi, bacteria, and viruses that cause contagious diseases and jobs that can harm the physical, mental, and psychological well-being of young workers.

Weight Limits

Weight limits are categorized under continuous work and non-continuous work. Continuous work has been defined as uninterrupted and repetitive work that causes physical stress. Consequently, for activities that are fully manual: for continuous work: 7 kgs and for non – continuous work: 11 kgs. Where the activity is wholly manual, but involves climbing up and down a slope: for continuous work: 5 kgs, for non – continuous work: 9 kgs. Where the movement is on a onewheel barrow: where the floor is bumpy and not smooth: 16 kgs and where the floor is smooth: 20 kgs.

Exception

The prohibited activities shall not be applicable to Youth who are engaged in training and practice under educational and vocational institutions authorized and supervised by the given authority which have responsibility.

Limits of Hours of Work

Normal hours of work for young workers shall not exceed seven hours a day. It is prohibited to assign young workers on night work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m, overtime work and work done on weekly rest days or work done on Public Holidays.

Conclusion

The Labour Proclamation and the Directive has been issued in order to protect young workers from serious occupational injuries or damages to their health in the course of their work. It is prohibited to assign young workers on work, which on account of its nature or due to the condition in which it is carried out endangers their lives or health. The responsibility is laid upon the employer to implement the Directive.

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Date Created

May 22, 2022

Author

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