

§ 95-25.5. Youth employment.

(a) No youth under 18 years of age shall be employed by any employer in any occupation without a youth employment certificate unless specifically exempted. The Commissioner of Labor shall prescribe regulations for youths and employers concerning the issuance, maintenance and revocation of certificates. Certificates will be issued by the Commissioner.

(a1) During the regular school term, no youth under 18 years of age who is enrolled in school in grade 12 or lower may be employed between 11 P.M. and 5 A.M. when there is school for the youth the next day. This restriction does not apply to youths 16 and 17 years of age if the employer receives written approval for the youth to work beyond the stated hours from the youth's parent or guardian and from the youth's principal or the principal's designee.

(b) No youth under 18 years of age may be employed by an employer in any occupation which the United States Department of Labor shall find and by order declare to be hazardous and without exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act, or in any occupation which the Commissioner of Labor after public hearing shall find and declare to be detrimental to the health and well-being of youths.

(c) No youth 14 or 15 years of age may be employed by an employer in any occupation except those determined by the United States Department of Labor to be permitted occupations under the Fair Labor Standards Act; provided, such youths may be employed by employers:

- (1) No more than three hours on a day when school is in session for the youth;
- (2) No more than eight hours on a day when school is not in session for the youth;
- (3) Only between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M., except to 9 P.M. during the summer (when school is not in session);
- (4) No more than 40 hours in any one week when school is not in session for the youth;
- (5) No more than 18 hours in any one week when school is in session for the youth; and
- (6) Only outside school hours.

Notwithstanding the above, enrollees in high school apprenticeships or in work experience and career exploration programs as defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act may work up to 23 hours in any one week when school is in session, any portion of which may be during school hours.

(d) No youth 13 years of age or less may be employed by an employer, except youths 12 and 13 years of age may be employed outside school hours in the distribution of newspapers to the consumer but not more than three hours per day. An employment certificate shall not be required for any youth under 18 years of age engaged in the distribution of newspapers to the consumer outside of school hours.

(e) No youth under 16 years of age shall be employed for more than five consecutive hours without an interval of at least 30 minutes for rest. No period of less than 30 minutes shall be deemed to interrupt a continuous period of work.

(f) For any youth 13 years of age or older, the Commissioner may waive any provision of this section and authorize the issuance of an employment certificate when:

- (1) He receives a letter from a social worker, court, probation officer, county department of social services, a letter from the North Carolina Alcohol Beverage Control Commission or school official stating those factors which create a hardship situation and how the best interest of the youth is served by allowing a waiver; and
- (2) He determines that the health or safety of the youth would not be adversely affected; and
- (3) The parent, guardian, or other person standing in loco parentis consents in writing to the proposed employment.

(g) Youths employed as models, or as actors or performers in motion pictures or theatrical productions, or in radio or television productions are exempt from all provisions of this section except the certificate requirements of subsection (a).

(h) Youths employed by an outdoor drama directly in production-related positions such as stagehands, lighting, costumes, properties and special effects are exempt from all provisions of this section except the certificate requirements of subsection (a). Positions such as office workers, ticket takers, ushers and parking lot attendants have no exemption and are subject to all provisions of this section.

(i) Youth under 18 years of age employed by their parent, guardian, or other person standing in loco parentis are exempt from all provisions of this section, except for all of the following:

- (1) The certificate requirements of subsection (a) of this section.
- (2) The prohibition from hazardous or detrimental occupations of subsection (b) of this section.
- (3) The prohibitions of subsection (j)(2) of this section if the youths only work at the establishment when another employee at least 21 years of age is in charge of and present at the licensed premises.

(j) No person who holds any ABC permit issued pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 18B of the General Statutes for the on-premises sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages, including any mixed beverages, shall employ a youth:

- (1) Under 15 years of age on the premises for any purpose, unless the youth is at least 14 years of age and each of the following conditions is met:
 - a. The person obtains the written consent of a parent or guardian of the youth.
 - b. The youth is employed to work on the outside grounds of the premises for a purpose that does not involve the preparation, serving, dispensing, or sale of alcoholic beverages.
- (2) Under 18 years of age to prepare, serve, dispense or sell any alcoholic beverages, including mixed beverages, except for sale of alcoholic beverages at the point-of-sale for only off-premises consumption.

(k) Persons and establishments required to comply with or subject to regulation of child labor under the Fair Labor Standards Act are exempt from all provisions of this section, except the certificate requirements of subsection (a), the provisions of subsection (a1), the prohibition from occupations found and declared to be detrimental by the Commissioner of Labor pursuant to subsection (b), and the prohibitions of subsection (j). In addition, employment certificates will not be issued if such person's employment will be in violation of the applicable child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Such employers may also be assessed civil penalties pursuant to G.S. 95-25.23 for each violation of the provisions of this section or any regulation issued hereunder from which there is no exemption.

(k1) Youth, who are at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age, who participate in a supervised, practice experience in an occupation with an employer are exempt from the prohibition from occupations found and declared to be detrimental to the health and well-being of youth by the Commissioner of Labor pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, if the Commissioner of Labor finds all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The youth is enrolled in a public school or a nonpublic school that meets the requirements of Part 1 or Part 2 of Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes that is partnering with the employer to offer the supervised, practice experience for the occupation.
- (2) The employer submits to the Commissioner of Labor the written agreement between the employer and the public or nonpublic school where the youth is

enrolled that governs the operation of the supervised, practice experience for the occupation. The written agreement shall include at least the following:

- a. The work is incidental to the youth's supervised, practice experience for the occupation.
- b. The work is intermittent and for short periods of time.
- c. The work is performed under direct and close supervision of a qualified and experienced person.
- d. The employer shall give safety instructions and training to the youth before performing the work.
- e. The employer has prepared a schedule of organized and progressive work processes to be performed by the youth.

The terms of the written agreement required by subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be consistent with the guidance provided in Child Labor Bulletin 101, *Child Labor Provisions for Nonagricultural Occupations under the Fair Labor Standards Act*, published by the United States Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, effective November 2016, and any subsequent revisions published for that document.

(l) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any youth who holds a North Carolina driver's license valid for the type of driving involved may be assigned as part of his employment to drive an automobile or truck not exceeding 6,000 pounds gross vehicle weight within a 25-mile radius of the principal place of employment, provided that the youth has completed a State-approved driver-education course, and provided that the assignment does not involve the towing of vehicles. "Gross vehicle weight" includes the truck chassis with lubricants, water and full tank or tanks of fuel, plus the weight of the cab or driver's compartment, body and special chassis and body equipment, and payload.

(m) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, youths who are enrolled at an institution of higher education may be employed by the institution provided the employment is not hazardous. As used in this subsection, "institution of higher education" means any constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, any North Carolina community college, or any college or university that awards postsecondary degrees.

(n) Nothing in this section prohibits qualified youths under 18 years of age from participating in training through their fire department, the Office of State Fire Marshal, or the North Carolina Community College System. As used in this subsection, the term "qualified youth under 18 years of age" means an uncompensated fire department or rescue squad member who is at least the age of 15 and under the age of 18 and who is a member of a bona fide fire department, as that term is defined in G.S. 58-86-2(4), or of a rescue squad described in G.S. 58-86-2(6). A qualified youth under 18 years of age under this subsection may be permitted to enroll in courses, including certification-eligible courses, in fire training at a community college on a specialized course list approved by the State Board of Community Colleges pursuant to G.S. 115D-30.20(4). (1937, c. 317, ss. 1-3, 6, 9, 18; 1943, c. 670; 1951, c. 1187, s. 1; 1967, cc. 173, 764; 1969, c. 962; 1973, c. 649, s. 1; c. 758, s. 1; 1977, c. 551, ss. 1-4; 1979, c. 839, s. 1; 1981, c. 412, ss. 3, 4; c. 489, ss. 1-7; c. 747, s. 66; 1985, c. 97, s. 1; 1987, c. 154; 1991, c. 492, s. 2; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 991, s. 1; 1993, c. 239, s. 1; 1995, c. 214, s. 1; 1999-237, s. 14.1; 2001-312, s. 3; 2001-515, s. 5; 2005-453, s. 15; 2009-21, s. 2; 2010-97, s. 9; 2015-221, s. 3.1; 2017-211, s. 14(a); 2019-166, s. 1; 2021-82, s. 5; 2022-69, ss. 1(b), 3(a); 2024-41, s. 34; 2025-56, s. 2(h).)