SOLD on SAFETY:

A Safety and Health Guide for Young Workers in Retail

DO YOU WORK in a grocery, department, convenience, or other store?
This guide gives you important information about how to work safely and protect yourself from injury.

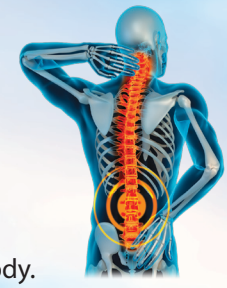
How old do I have to be to work in retail?

Generally, you have to be at least 16-years-old. If you are under the age of 18, you cannot perform dangerous jobs such as using a baler, compactor, or meat slicer. 14- and 15-year-olds can only work in certain jobs for limited periods of time. **State laws** may include additional rules.

How can I get hurt?

Sprains and Strains

Lifting or handling heavy or bulky objects can cause back, neck, and shoulder injuries. Standing for long periods can cause pain.



TO WORK SAFELY:

When lifting or carrying:

- Use wheeled carts.
- Ask for help.
- Bend your legs, not your back.
- Keep the item close to your body.
- Keep your back straight and don't twist.

When standing for long periods:

- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Stand on a mat.
- Change position often.

Struck by Objects

You can get cuts, bruises, or broken bones at work if you're struck by things like tools, carts, hand trucks, or doors.

TO WORK SAFELY:

- Keep your workspace neat.
- Open doors slowly. Use caution around corners and when carrying items.
- Stack materials carefully so that they won't slide or fall.
- Be aware of people, equipment, and vehicles in your work area.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Injuries—sometimes very serious ones—at work are common from slips, trips, and falls.

TO WORK SAFELY:

- Avoid running or rushing.
- Report or clean up spills and trash.
- Report potentially dangerous situations, such as uneven flooring.
- Keep walkways clear.
- Wear shoes with non-skid soles.
- Avoid distractions.
- Use a ladder to reach high objects. Never stand on the top step of a ladder or climb racks or shelves.

Bleach and Disinfectants

Unprotected or accidental exposure can cause **skin irritation, burning of the throat, nose, eyes, as well as headache, dizziness, and nausea**.

TO WORK SAFELY:

- Always **read and follow the labels** on all cleaning and disinfectant products before you use them.
- Wear label-required clothing—gloves, eye protection, shoes, and protective clothing.
- **Never mix cleaning products!** When mixed, chemicals can produce dangerous fumes.
- **Never reuse the container!**

What are my rights at work?

A safe and healthy workplace.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Tell your employer or OSHA about unsafe or unhealthy work conditions.
- Refuse to work if you are in serious danger, you asked your employer to fix the problem and they haven't, and you don't have time to call OSHA.
- File a complaint with OSHA within 30 days about retaliation, like being fired, because you complained about workplace safety or health or used other OSHA rights.

Fair pay and worker compensation.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Earn at least the federal minimum wage of $7.25/hour (the minimum wage might be higher in your state).
- Fair pay and financial help if you got hurt or sick on the job. May include compensation for medical care or work you missed when you were hurt.

Organize with your co-workers.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Join or refuse to join a union without being punished.
- Work in a group to try to improve working conditions, pay, and benefits, which may include talking about working conditions and bringing concerns to supervisors or others without being punished.

Work free of discrimination and harassment.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Work without being discriminated against or harassed because of race, skin color, religion, gender, pregnancy, national origin, disability, or genetic information.
- Ask for reasonable changes at your workplace because of your religious beliefs or disability.

Report concerns without punishment.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Report concerns about workplace health or safety, discrimination, or harassment to a manager, parent, teacher, or a government agency.
- Help someone else report these concerns.
- Participate in an investigation or lawsuit about these concerns.

REMEMBER: It is illegal for you to be punished for taking any of these actions!

Who can I contact for help?

For more information or to file a complaint, contact the agencies or organizations listed below. Their services are free.

Concern	Contact
Wages, hours of work, types of jobs you can do	**WHD**—Wage & Hour Division 866-4US-WAGE TTY: 877-889-5627 www.youthrules.dol.gov
Safety and health information, inspections, investigations, and complaints	**OSHA**—Occupational Safety and Health Administration 800-321-OSHA TTY: 877-889-5627 www.osha.gov
Safety & health information, statistics & research	**NIOSH**—National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health 800–CDC–INFO TYY: 888–232–6348 www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth
Employee group action or union activity	**NLRB**—National Labor Relations Board 866-667-NLRB TTY: 866-315-NLRB www.nlrb.gov
Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation	**EEOC**—Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 800-669-4000 TTY: 800-669-6820 www.youth.eeoc.gov
Safety and health information on bleach and disinfectants	**AAPCC**—American Association of Poison Control Centers 800-222-1222 www.aapcc.org

*This project was funded by NASDA Research Foundation under cooperative agreement #X8-83456201 with the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** and created by the Federal Network for Young Worker Safety & Health, an inter-agency group dedicated to protecting the health and safety of young workers.*