



# Sports Teams and Youth Workers

*Sports organizations that engage young people to referee, assist or work for the organizations may have obligations to provide workers' compensation coverage and comply with the work regulations for minors. This Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) fact sheet explains what is required when young people work for a sports organization.*

## Can an organization use referees under the age of 14?

Yes. Under most circumstances the minimum age for employment is 14. In limited circumstances, organizations may employ a minor under age 14 with permission from the county Superior Court. However, there is one exception. Those who are employed in a youth soccer organization and are under age 14 do not require court permission. Information on how to [hire a teen under 14](#) can be found at L&I's teen worker web site at [www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov).

## What are the regulations for referees?

Referees, regardless of age, are considered employees. They must be paid at least the minimum wage required for their age. They are covered by all wage-and-hour laws, as well as by child-labor laws. Employers are also required to cover them under workers' compensation insurance, if they are paid. Referees' hours must be reported on the *Employer's Quarterly Report*. Please note: The requirements for workers' compensation coverage differ depending on whether the organization has volunteers, for instance, a charitable organization.

Child-labor rules require the employer to have a minor work permit endorsement as part of the business license for each business location; this may include the local chapters or referee organizations.

## How many hours can young referees work?

Young referees can work varying hours depending on their ages and the scheduling of events. The rules for hours of work are described on L&I's [teen worker web site](#).

## What are the steps in hiring a young referee?

L&I's [teen worker web site](#) provides the basic steps needed to hire a teen, and additional links, as well as information on the hours of work, prohibited duties, and teen safety resources.

## Need help?

If you have questions or need help with minor work permit endorsements or a workers' compensation insurance account, contact Patrick Shanahan at 360-902-4575 or [shah235@Lni.wa.gov](mailto:shah235@Lni.wa.gov). If you have questions about hiring teens, contact Mary Miller at 360-902-6041 or [mmar235@Lni.wa.gov](mailto:mmar235@Lni.wa.gov).

### Reminder

Only those working in youth soccer organizations may be employed under age 14 without court permission.

 **On the Web:** Visit the L&I web site at:  
[www.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.Lni.wa.gov)

Visit L&I's teen worker web site at:  
[www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.TeenWorkers.Lni.wa.gov)

*Other formats for persons with disabilities are available on request. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.*