

# LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

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## B.C. EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT & YOUTH WORKERS

In the spring of 2019, several changes to the *B.C. Employment Standards Act* (“ESA”) were passed, including amendments to the ESA addressing children and youth (see: Legislative Briefing published on [May 1, 2019](#) and [May 31, 2019](#)). On July 21, 2021, the B.C. Government issued a [news release](#) regarding new changes to employment standards for young people at work by raising the general working age in B.C. from 12 to 16, and defining the types of jobs appropriate for those under 16. In keeping up with the legislative changes to the ESA, the Employment Standards Regulations will be amended, and the new rules will come into force on **October 15, 2021**.

### Occupations / Situations Appropriate for Youth Based on Age

A Backgrounder in the [news release](#) identifies (1) occupations that are prescribed as “light work” appropriate for youth 14 and 15, and (2) occupations or situations that are now generally treated as unsafe for youth under 16.

Light Work (Age 14 & 15)	Unsafe Work (Under Age 16)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cashier</li><li>2. Golf caddy</li><li>3. Messenger or courier</li><li>4. Performing artist</li><li>5. Referee or umpire</li><li>6. Server of food or drink, other than alcohol</li><li>7. Summer or day camp leader</li><li>8. Visual artist or graphic designer</li><li>9. Computer programmer</li><li>10. Lifeguard or lifeguard assistant</li><li>11. Peer counsellor</li><li>12. Recreation or community program attendant</li><li>13. Salesperson, other than door-to-door</li><li>14. Sports or recreational coach or instructor</li><li>15. Tutor or instructor</li><li>16. Writer, editor or similar</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. repairing, maintaining or operating heavy machinery;</li><li>2. places where a minor is not permitted to enter;</li><li>3. construction sites, heavy manufacturing and heavy industrial work;</li><li>4. sites designed to retain an oxygen-deficient or toxic atmosphere;</li><li>5. walk-in freezers or coolers, other than to place or retrieve an item;</li><li>6. handling substances that minors cannot legally purchase, use or distribute;</li><li>7. lifting, carrying or moving heavy items or animals; and</li><li>8. using, handling or applying hazardous substances, such as pesticides.</li></ol>



## Other Youth Work

The news release outlines other scenarios regarding youth work, such as the following:

- babysitting or delivering newspapers part time;
- students working in a work study or work experience class;
- young performers in recorded and live entertainment; and
- youth employed in a business or on a farm owned by an immediate family member.

Regulatory changes to bring the legislation into force regarding the definition of “hazardous work” for 16 to 18 year olds is expected later this year.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any comments or questions about this update, please e-mail [RES360@metrovancover.org](mailto:RES360@metrovancover.org) or call 604-451-6558.

## SOURCES

“*New rules protect young workers.*” Government of British Columbia. July 21, 2021.  
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021LBR0027-001400>