

Friday 6 January

Five ways young workers get ripped off in summer

The Australian Council of Trade Unions says young people starting their first jobs need to know their rights and make sure they get the entitlements and working conditions they deserve.

Thousands of secondary students and young people will start their first jobs this summer. It's an exciting time, but also a time when young people are vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace. Parents can help their children learn about their rights, and help teenage children keep written records of their shifts, pay, starting and finish times and roster arrangements.

We have set up a service that allows young workers to check what pay they are owed: go to www.checkyourpay.com.au

Five ways young workers get ripped off in summer jobs:

1. Unpaid trials
2. Underpayment of wages and penalty rates
3. Workplace health and safety – inductions and injuries
4. Rostering arrangements
5. Non-payment of superannuation

Quotes attributable to Dave Oliver, ACTU secretary:

“Thousands of young workers will be starting their first jobs this summer and it's important they know about their rights and entitlements in their new workplaces.

“We did a study in September and found more than 50 percent of young workers said they knew they weren't getting paid the right amount, and 56 per cent said they weren't getting the right on-the-job training.

“For a start, unpaid trials are against the law. Young people must be paid for every hour worked, including for staff meetings and training. Even in a probationary or qualifying period young employees are still entitled to be paid their full hourly rate of pay.

“Young workers are often paid below the minimum rate in the relevant award or agreement. Depending on age, it might be appropriate for employers to pay a junior rate, but employers must explain the pay structure clearly to new starters.

“Young workers are more vulnerable to workplace injuries, particularly in construction, retail, manufacturing and hospitality. Young workers need to be taught how to do manual handling safely and how to properly operate machinery.

“It's also important for young people to be informed about the hours of work they are expected to work, breaks they're entitled to and any shift or penalty rates they should be getting. The award of agreement will stipulate the ordinary hours of work for the industry and minimum or maximum hours per shift.

“Young workers over the age of 18 are entitled to be paid 9.5 per cent of their wages in compulsory super if they earn more than \$450, before tax, in a calendar month – regardless of whether they are permanent or casual employees.”

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