

# Child labour



## Principle:

**Child labour is not used or promoted, and appropriate measures are taken to prevent the use of such labour.**



## Key message:

**The interests of the child should be put first.**

## Definition

*“...work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development” – International Labour Organisation (ILO) <sup>1</sup>*

## What is a child worker?

- This is the employment of someone under the age of 15, or under the national minimum age, whichever is higher.<sup>1</sup>
- In certain cases, children above the age of 13 (if in accordance with the local minimum age) can be employed in some forms of light work.<sup>1</sup>

## What is a young worker?

- Where permitted under ILO C138<sup>1</sup>, children aged between 15 and 18 may be employed - these are called ‘young workers’.
- Young workers cannot be employed in hazardous activity, and safeguards must be in place to protect their health and development.

## What is expected at sites?

- Sites should have processes in place to ensure that everyone employed is over the required minimum age. These should include:
  - Child labour and young worker policies
  - Procedures for proving worker ages before employment
  - Employment records, including evidence of worker ages
  - A child labour remediation action plan
- Where *young workers* are employed, sites should:
  - Keep a register of young workers

## Facts

- The ILO estimates that around 168 million children and young workers were illegally employed in 2012.<sup>2</sup>
- Of this, nearly 60% of illegal child labourers were employed in the agricultural sector.
- Around 7.2% were employed in industry.

## Hazardous activity

Hazardous activity is work that “jeopardises the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, either because of its nature or because of the conditions in which it is carried out”.<sup>1</sup>

## Child workers – rights

Although in some cases children over the age of 13 can be employed in some light work, if the local minimum age is higher this should always be followed. Additional to the safeguards for all young workers, child workers cannot work over six hours a day, must have 30 minutes rest every three hours, and cannot work between 8pm and 7am.



Stone excavation - an example of hazardous activity

# Child labour



- Keep a record of young workers' roles and working hours
- Identify non-hazardous roles and activities
- Make sure young workers are only employed in non-hazardous activities
- Ensure that young workers' education is not disrupted
- Ensure that young workers have at least 30 minutes rest after four hours of work
- Make sure that young workers don't work over seven hours a day
- Ensure that young workers don't work during the hours of 8pm to 6am

• All children should be prevented from entering hazardous working environments and family accommodation should be separated from these areas.

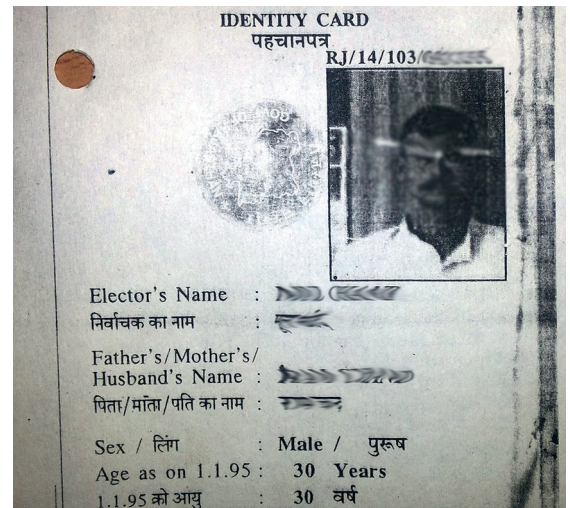
## How to identify child labour?

Child labour and exploitation of young workers can be challenging to identify. Methods to do this include:

- visual observation
- requesting proof of age and keeping records
- reviewing attendance registers
- staff and worker interviews

## What if child labour is found?

- Provide alternative non-hazardous work for young workers over the age of 15, ensuring it is not harming the health and development of the child.
- Provide appropriate light work for young workers over the age of 13, which does not harm their health, education or development.
- Provide alternative opportunities such as easier access to education.
- Change the location of work to prevent 'hidden' child labour.
- Completely remove children from employment, especially if under the minimum age or in hazardous work. Ensure the child does not end up in worse forms of employment.
- Any other creative response that is relevant to the context and solves the issue.



Appropriate records are key for ensuring that children are not accidentally employed at sites



Light family work is considered a normal and positive part of life in many parts of the world

## Additional information and resources

- [ILO Minimum Age Convention](#)
- [ILO Handbook on Hazardous Child Labour](#)
- [Sample - 'no child labour' policy](#)
- [Sample - employment policy](#)
- [Sample - workers' records](#)
- [Sample - non-hazardous roles checklist](#)
- [Sample - attendance register](#)

1. International Labour Organization, 2015. What is child labour. [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

2. International Labour Organization, 2015. Marking progress against child labour. [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)