

Work-related Injuries among Massachusetts Teens, 2017 - 2021

Occupational Health Surveillance Program, Fall 2024



Background

Each year from 2017 to 2021, an estimated 44,000 teens aged 16-17 years old had a job in Massachusetts. All workers can be exposed to hazards on the job that can cause injury, illness, or even death, and teens are at an increased risk. Nationally, teens have an on-the-job injury rate nearly twice that of adults. As new workers, they are often unfamiliar with workplace hazards, ways to avoid injuries, and their rights as workers. This data brief provides an overview of teen workers in Massachusetts and highlights the industry in which the highest proportion of severe injuries occur – food services.

Injury prevention activities are needed

Our goal is to inform prevention activities, including enforcement, education and training, and other outreach. A focus on teen worker injuries in the food services industry is critical to keeping this young workforce healthy and safe.

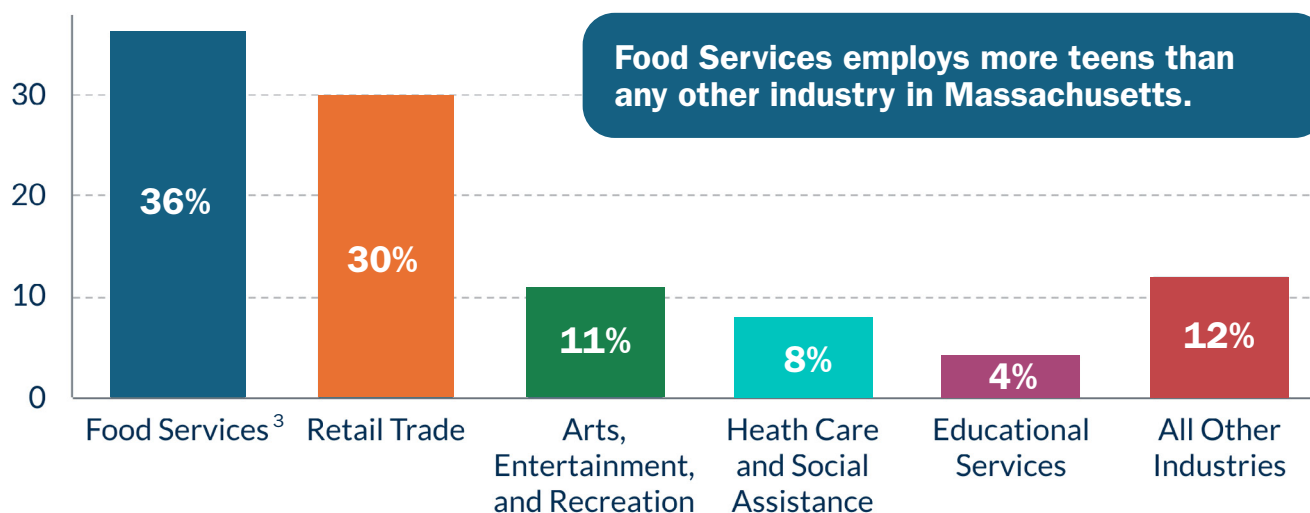
Share Resources with Employers:

Help spread the word to employers that they play an important role in preventing injuries among their teen workers.

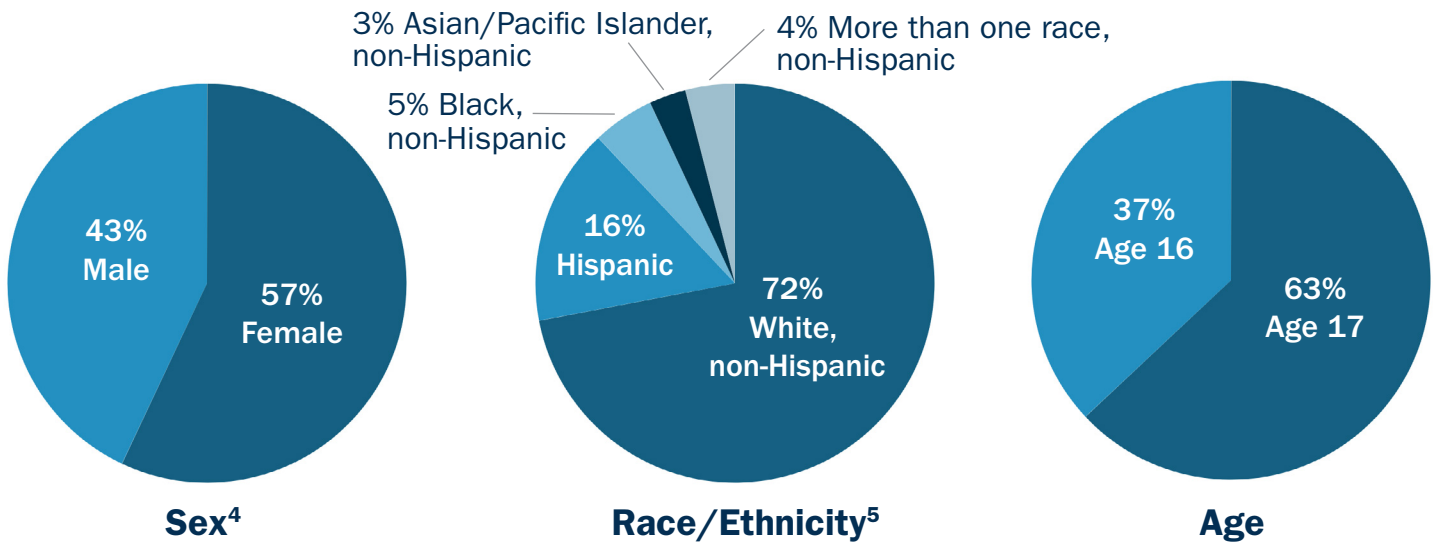
[Share "Teen Work Injuries: What Employers Need to Know."](#) Employers may use this resource to help teens stay safe at work.

Overview of Teen Workers in Massachusetts¹

Top industry sectors where teens work²



Demographics of teen workers in Food Services



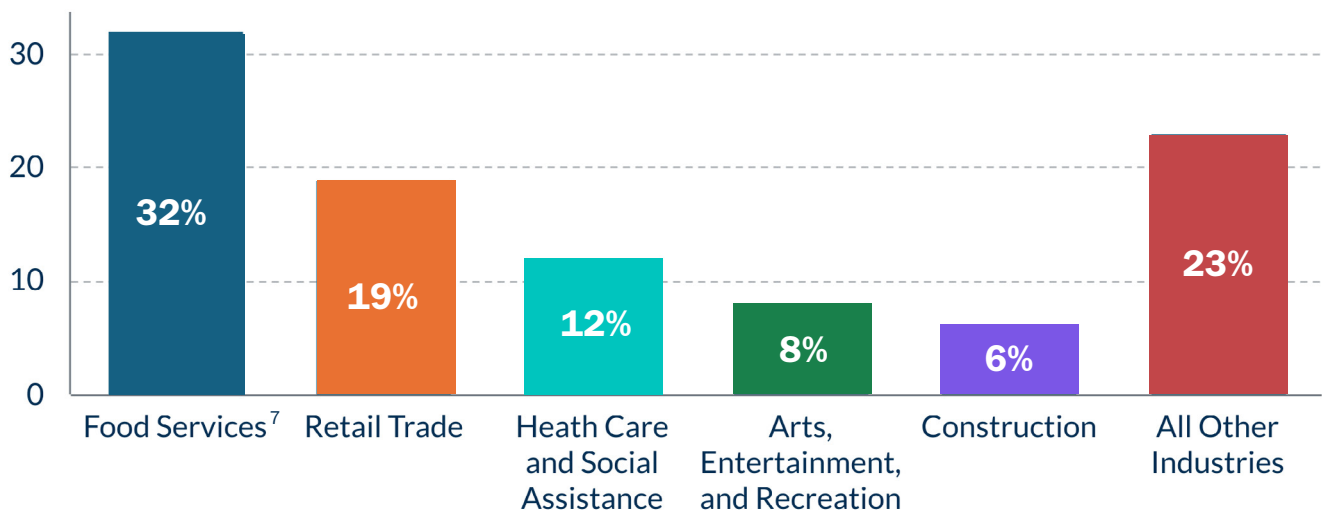
Injuries among Teen Workers in Massachusetts⁶

How did we get data on teen worker injuries?

The data below came from workers' compensation data. Between 2017 and 2021, 442 claims were filed on behalf of teen workers. Each claim represents a work-related injury and/or illness that resulted in five or more lost workdays. This means the data in this report account for the most severe injuries, not all injuries.

Note: A majority (over 91%) of claims filed were injuries. Therefore, we refer to these claims as injuries, but that does also include illnesses (1.5%) and claims that could not be classified (6.6%).

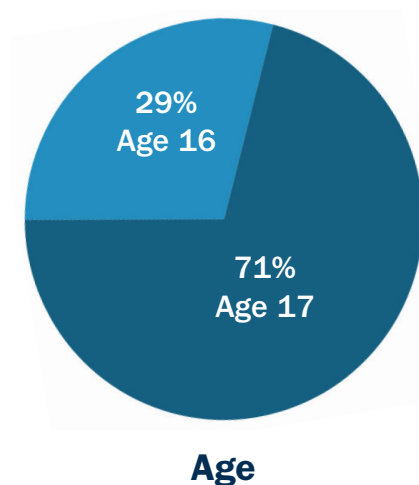
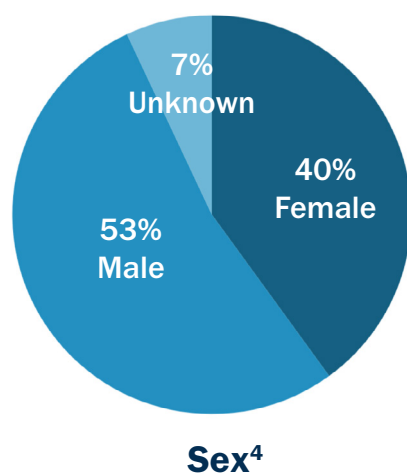
Top industry sectors among teens with work-related injuries



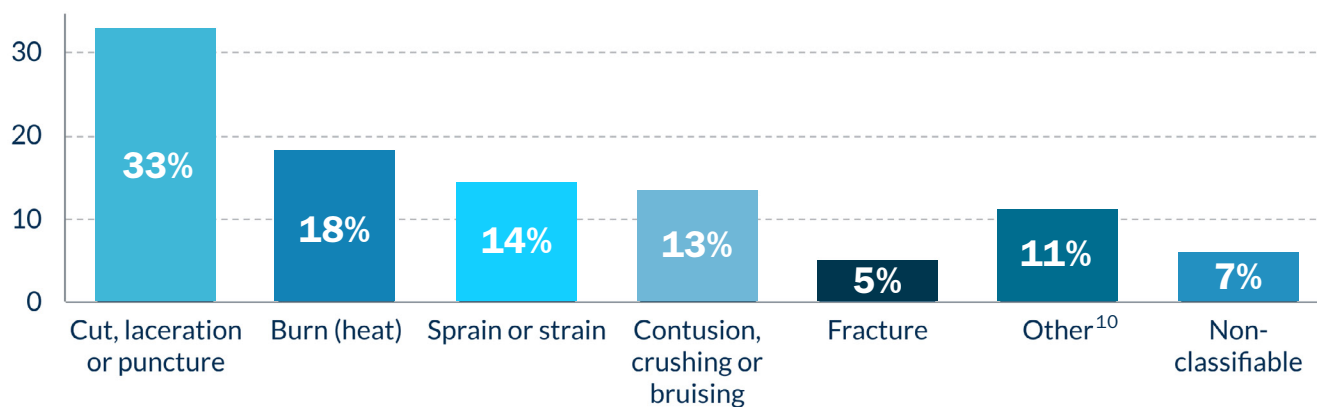
Top occupations among teens in Food Services with work-related injuries⁸



Demographics of teens in Food Services with work-related injuries⁹



Types of work-related injuries among teens in Food Services



Endnotes

1. Source for industry and demographic data: American Community Survey (ACS), 2017-2021.
2. Percentages in the figure and those that follow may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
3. The Food Services industry includes family or fine dine restaurants, pizzerias, fast food, and catering, among other sub-groups. It also includes Accommodations (e.g., hotels), which accounts for less than 2% of the overall workforce in this industry.
4. Sex is captured as a binary variable.
5. Due to unstable estimates, “Other, non-Hispanic” is not reported. Hispanic includes people who identify as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
6. Source for claims data: Workers’ Compensation data, 2017-2021, Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents.
7. The Food Services industry includes family or fine dine restaurants, pizzerias, fast food, and catering, among other sub-groups. It also includes Accommodations (e.g., hotels), which accounts for only 9% of the claims filed in this industry.
8. Occupations were coded using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System:
 - Fast Food and Counter Workers: SOC 35-3023
 - Dishwashers: SOC 35-9021
 - Food Preparation Workers: SOC 35-2021
 - Cooks, Fast Food: SOC 35-2011
 - Cooks, Restaurant: SOC 35-2014
9. While Workers’ Compensation data has information on age and sex of claimants, it lacks information on race/ethnicity, limiting our ability to examine racial disparities in injuries.
10. Other injury types include concussions, dislocations, multiple injuries, non-classifiable injuries, and illnesses.