

THE  
NATIONAL LAW REVIEW

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## DOL Proposes Rule to Allow Younger Workers to Operate Patient Lifts in Healthcare Settings

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Wednesday, October 10, 2018

On September 27, 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) expanding the employment, training, and apprenticeship opportunities for 16- and 17-year-olds in healthcare occupations by removing the prohibition on teen employees operating patient lifts. Currently, the DOL's Child Labor Hazardous Occupations Order No. 7 bars teen employees from working in occupations that require the operation of power-driven patient lifts, treating these types of lifts essentially as equivalent to construction equipment. In the proposed rule, however, the DOL acknowledges that patient lifts differ substantially from construction equipment such as forklifts, backhoes, and cranes.

The DOL notes that a bipartisan group of lawmakers has criticized the current regulation for unnecessarily depriving youth of opportunities in the healthcare field. Moreover, the DOL recognizes that the use of patient lifts is actually safer for workers in comparison to the alternative method of manually lifting patients.

If this proposal is finalized, it would broaden the participation of younger employees in healthcare occupations. Written comments for this proposed rule are due on or before November 26, 2018.

*Ajente Kamalanathan contributed to this post.*

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**Source URL:** <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/dol-proposes-rule-to-allow-younger-workers-to-operate-patient-lifts-healthcare>



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