

News Release

FAYETTE JANITORIAL SERVICE AGREES TO PAY \$649K IN PENALTIES, HIRE OUTSIDE CONSULTANT TO PREVENT CHILD LABOR EMPLOYMENT IN SANITATION CONTRACTS

Investigations found 24 children, some just 13 years old, doing dangerous work in Iowa, Virginia

SIoux CITY, IA – The Department of Labor has [entered into a consent order and judgment, approved by a federal court in Iowa on May 6, 2024](#), with a Tennessee cleaning contractor that requires the employer to pay \$649,304 in civil money penalties, hire a third-party to review and implement company policies to prevent the employment of children in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act and establish a program for reporting concerns about the illegal employment of children.

The agreement follows an investigation by the department’s Wage and Hour Division that found Fayette Janitorial Service LLC headquartered in Somerville — operating as Fayette Industrial — employed at least 24 children, some as young as 13 years old, on overnight sanitation shifts at two separate slaughtering and meat packing facilities, Seaboard Triumph Foods LLC in Sioux City and Perdue Farms in Accomac, Virginia.

On Feb. 27, 2024, the department obtained [a preliminary injunction against Fayette Janitorial Service](#) LLC in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa to stop the company’s illegal employment of children at its workplaces in more than 30 states. Fayette agreed to nationwide compliance six days after the department filed its motion for a temporary restraining order. Provisions in the FLSA [ban children under age 18 from being employed in hazardous occupations](#) common in meat and poultry slaughtering, processing, rendering and packing operations.

At the Seaboard Triumph facility, federal investigators witnessed children concealing their faces and carrying glittered school backpacks before starting their overnight shift and learned children were assigned on overnight shifts to use corrosive cleaners to

clean dangerous kill floor equipment, including head splitters, jaw pullers, bandsaws and neck clippers. They also learned at least one child had suffered severe injuries at the Perdue Farms plant as the child tried to remove debris from dangerous machinery.

“The Department of Labor is determined to stop our nation’s children from being exploited and endangered in jobs they should never have been near,” said Regional Solicitor Christine Heri. “Children in hazardous occupations drove the Fair Labor Standards Act’s passage in 1938. Yet in 2024, we still find U.S. companies employing children in risky jobs, jeopardizing their safety for profit. We are committed to using all strategies to stop and prevent unlawful child labor and holding all employers legally responsible for their actions.”

In addition to the payment of penalties for the child labor violations, the consent order and judgement requires Fayette Industrial to do the following:

- Hire a third-party consultant or compliance specialist with knowledge and experience in complying with the FLSA’s child labor provisions within 90 days.
- Direct the compliance monitor to review company policies immediately, provide training at all facilities the company operates and monitor and audit Fayette’s compliance for at least 3 years.
- Maintain accurate records of all employees, including date of birth and work tasks assigned.
- Impose disciplinary sanctions, including termination and/or suspension, on any management personnel responsible for child labor violations after the date of the consent judgement.
- Establish a toll-free hotline number for people to seek guidance and/or to report child labor compliance concerns anonymously.

“Every employer has a legal and moral obligation to make certain they are not employing children in dangerous jobs,” explained Wage and Hour Midwest Regional Administrator Michael Lazzeri. “With this agreement, we are ensuring Fayette Janitorial Service takes immediate and significant steps to ensure they never put children in harm’s way again.”

During the last fiscal year, department investigators found more than 5,800 children had been employed in violation of federal child labor laws.

Workers and employers can call the division confidentially with questions and the division can speak with callers in more than 200 languages. [Learn more about the Wage and Hour Division](#), including child labor regulations on [dangerous jobs that are prohibited](#) for workers under age 18.

[For more information about the FLSA](#) and other laws enforced by the agency, contact the division's toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243).

[*U.S Department of Labor v. Fayette Janitorial Service LLC d/b/a Fayette Industrial*](#)

[*Civil Action: 5:24-cv-4012*](#)

Agency

Office of the Solicitor

Date

May 6, 2024

Release Number

24-777-CHI

Media Contact: Scott Allen

Phone Number

[312-353-4727](tel:312-353-4727)

Email

allen.scott@dol.gov

Media Contact: Rhonda Burke

Phone Number

[312-353-4807](tel:312-353-4807)

Email

burke.rhonda@dol.gov