

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

Results of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, 1915

This report, published by the New York State Factory Investigating Commission in 1915, lists the laws enacted by the New York State Legislature from 1912-1914 (in response to the Triangle Shirtwaist fire) to make factory work safer and healthier.

Results of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, 1915

Laws Enacted as a Result of the Commission's First Year's Work

The following bills recommended by the Commission in its preliminary report were passed by the Legislature during the session of 1912, and became laws:

1. Registration of factories.
2. Physical examination of children before employment certificate is issued.
3. Fire drills.
4. Automatic sprinklers.
5. Fire prevention; removal of rubbish; fire-proof receptacles for waste material; protection of gas jets; prohibition of smoking in factories.
6. Prohibition of the eating of lunch in rooms where poisonous substances are prepared or generated in the process of manufacture; adequate hot and cold washing facilities for such establishments.
7. Employment prohibited of women within four weeks after child-birth.
8. Summary power of Commissioner of Labor over unclean and unsanitary factories.

Laws Passed as a Result of the Commission's Second Year's Work

The following bills recommended by the Commission in its second report were enacted into law by the Legislature during the session of 1913:

1. Reorganization of Labor Department; Industrial Board.
2. Penalties for violation of Labor Law and Industrial Code.
3. Fire-proof receptacles; gas jets; smoking.
4. Fire alarm signal system and fire drills.
5. Fire escapes and exits; limitation of number of occupants; construction of future factory buildings.
6. Amendment to Greater New York charter with reference to the Fire Prevention Law.

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7. Prohibition of employment of children under fourteen, in cannery sheds (factory for the canning of foods) or tenement houses; definition of factory building; definition of tenement house.
8. Manufacturing in tenements.
9. Hours of labor of women in canneries.
10. Housing conditions in labor camps maintained in connection with a factory.
11. Physical examination of children employed in factories.
12. Amendment to Child Labor Law; physical examination before issuance of employment certificate; school record; supervision over issuance of employment certificate.
13. Amendment to Compulsory Education Law; school record.
14. Night work of women in factories.
15. Seats for women in factories.
16. Cleanliness of workrooms.
17. Cleanliness of factory buildings.
18. Ventilation; general; special.
19. Washing facilities; dressing rooms; water closets.
20. Accident prevention; lighting of factories and workrooms.

Laws Passed as a Result of the Commission's Third Year's Work

The following laws, recommended by the Commission in its third report, were passed by the Legislature in 1914 and have become laws:

1. Sanitation in mercantile establishments. This covered provisions for seats for female employees; cleanliness of rooms; cleanliness of buildings; size of rooms; ventilation; drinking water; wash rooms and dressing rooms; and water closets.
2. Hours of labor of women in mercantile establishments limited to fifty-four hours a week in the entire State.
3. Hours of labor of children between fourteen and sixteen in mercantile establishments reduced from fifty-four to forty-eight hours a week and their employment prohibited for more than eight hours a day or after 6 o'clock in the evening of any day.

Source: New York (State) Factory Investigating Commission, Fourth Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, 1915. 5 vols. Albany, J.B. Lyon company, printers, 1915, vol. 1, pp. 2-11; <https://archive.org/details/fourthreportoffa01newyiala>
