

## LOOK INTO SUMMER JOBS CAREFULLY

Some newspaper ads promise great summer jobs for college students, offering travel and good earnings. Many of these summer jobs will require long hours selling books, magazines, or cleaning products door-to-door. Travel involves car-pooling in a van and sharing cheap motel rooms with others on the selling crew.

You should be very careful about agreeing to work for a company as a traveling salesperson, also known as a transient merchant.

To entice you to sign up, some of these companies give examples of students who made big money selling for them. But such promises of huge earnings often are misleading because the companies use examples of students who also were paid commissions to recruit others to join the company. People who just sell the company's products earn a great deal less and often do it under less than ideal working conditions.

Moreover, because students often are hired as independent contractors, the company assumes no responsibility for their actions. It likewise may provide no unemployment insurance or Workers Compensation benefits.

It is your responsibility to know the laws about selling door-to-door in the state in which you are working. For example, if you get arrested for not having a state transient merchant's license, it would probably be your responsibility to get yourself out of jail, not the company's.

Your ability to sell and your personal motivation will determine how much money you make. Some students have complained that they could have earned more money working at a minimum wage restaurant job based on the number of hours they spent selling door-to-door.

Check out any company before you allow yourself or your children in college to sign up. Some unscrupulous companies make students work long hours for little pay in dangerous communities. Some of these same companies put their recruits through emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Some of the less legitimate companies also tend to target military bases and low income housing developments - not just college campuses - for their recruits.

Before you sign up, ask the company detailed questions about the working conditions and income potential. Ask what will happen if you get injured on the job or need to quit in the middle of the summer. How will you get home in case of an emergency? Ask how and when you will be paid and what room and board the company will provide. You might find the answers to these questions make staying nearer to home much more profitable and preferable.

*The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division investigates allegations of misleading or deceptive practices in the marketplace. Investigators also mediate individual complaints against businesses. If you have a consumer problem or question, call the Consumer Protection Division at 328-3404, 328-3409 (TDD), or toll free at 1-800-472-2600.*