

## Temporary employees and safety

Staffing agencies and host employers both have the responsibility of ensuring a safe workplace for temporary employees. Whether these temporary employees work seasonally or are permanent, they have the right to a safe workplace and proper safety training. To keep these employees safe, both the staffing agency and host employer must communicate with each other on appropriate training. Why is this important.... because both parties can be held liable if OSHA believes safety was neglected. The following list identifies some of the shared responsibilities between the two party's when using temporary employees.

- 1) Be sure to communicate, identify and outline the safety goals each party is responsible for, such as training, education and awareness.
- 2) Although the staffing agency may not be an expert at a specific workplace, they should communicate with the host employer about the hazards that exist in the work environment so they can be communicated to their temporary employees.
- 3) Host employers should treat temporary employees as their own and train them just like any other employee.
- 4) Staffing agency should inquire about host companies training programs and ensure they are fulfilling their responsibilities.
- 5) Both parties should encourage temporary employees to speak up if they witness an unsafe work practice and/or condition.

Here is a list of some worker initiatives the temporary agency and host employer should consider before work begins.

- 1) The nature of the work. Consider low hazard positions since the temporary employees may be inexperienced.
- 2) Hazard Communication. Temporary employees have the right to know about the chemical hazards they may be exposed to.
- 3) Lockout Tagout. Temporary employees need to have a basic understanding of what lockout/tagout is and how to identify when a lockout/tagout is occurring.
- 4) Powered Industrial Trucks (PITs). Temporary employees must go through the same training and certification of a full-time employee if they are going to operate PITs.
- 5) Recordkeeping and Reporting. Serious injuries to temporary employees, whether under the supervision of the agency or host employer, must still be recorded on the OSHA log. The recording responsibility falls on the party who supervises the injured employee on a day-to-day basis.
- 6) Personal protective equipment. Ensure temporary employees are trained on the appropriate PPE for the work they perform.
- 7) Exposure to indoor and outdoor heat-related hazards. If temporary employees are exposed to heat-related hazards, they need to understand how to protect themselves in these situations.
- 8) Be sure you evaluate your facility for other hazards and communicate them appropriately.

As you can see, the responsibility for the safety of temporary employees falls on both the staffing agency and the host employer. Each party is responsible to offer training and to assure training responsibilities are fulfilled and documented. If these are not completed, unsafe work environments may exist resulting in a dangerous workplace and injuries. If you are a staffing agency or host employer, communicate with each other to make certain temporary employees are kept safe.

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