

49% of Workplaces Use Temporary Workers at Least on Occasion



Many companies supplement their regular workforce by using workers from temp agencies. For example, when we recently asked readers if they use temp workers in their workplace, 49% said yes'22% on a regular basis and 27% only on occasion.

If you use temp workers, are you doing enough'or anything at all'to ensure their safety while they're working on your behalf'

Like new and young workers, temp workers are a vulnerable segment of the workforce. For example, an Institute for Work & Health (IWH) study found that although temporary workers face relatively high OHS risks, they have less OHS protection than regular workers.

Here are just a sample of safety incidents involving temp workers:

- A temporary worker was killed due to a guarding violation. The manufacturer was fined \$100,000.
- A worker from an employment agency was picking up recycling when he lost control of the truck and was ejected from it. He later died from his injuries. The recycling company pleaded guilty and was fined \$225,000.
- A worker from a temp agency suffered a crushing injury in machinery that resulted in the surgical amputation of his foot. The company was fined \$70,000 for a safety violation.
- At an importer's warehouse, a temporary worker was hit by a pallet that fell from a racking system. The court fined the importer \$70,000.

So if your company uses temporary workers, do the following to ensure their safety while in your workplace:

- Review with the employment agency all worksites to which the workers might possibly be sent, the job assignments and job hazard analyses to identify

and eliminate potential OHS hazards, and identify necessary training and protections for each worker.

- Request and review the safety training and any certification records of the temporary workers who'll be assigned to your company.
- Ensure that your contract with the employment agency clearly states who's responsible for specific OHS duties, such as which employer will provide necessary PPE for the assigned workers.
- Provide specific training to temporary workers tailored to the particular hazards at your workplace and of the jobs they'll be assigned to do as well as a general safety orientation. In other words, give temporary workers safety training that's identical or equivalent to that provided to your own employees performing the same jobs.
- Promptly notify the employment agency if a temporary worker is injured or becomes ill. And make sure that temporary workers know and understand your injury reporting process and how to get first aid if needed.