

# Case Study Provides Advice on Protecting Temporary Workers



Many companies supplement their regular workforce with workers from temp agencies. For example, an employer may use temps seasonally or to cover extended employee absences.

But although temps may not technically be your 'employees,' you must still take certain steps to ensure their safety while they're working on your behalf. And temporary workers *do* get hurt.

Here are just a few examples of safety incidents involving temporary workers:

- A temporary construction worker was buried when a sewer trench collapsed. He died from his injuries.
- A full-time farm worker found the body of a temporary worker at the base of a six-metre high pile of stacked fruit crates. It appeared that he was climbing the stack when the top crate came loose, causing him to fall.
- A company had a temp helping unload a truck at its loading dock. The truck driver didn't have a clear and unobstructed view behind the truck and there was no signaller present. He reversed the truck and struck the temp, pinning him between the truck and the loading dock edge. The temp died from his injuries.

The American Staffing Association and National Safety Council recently published a case study addressing the safety obligations of staffing companies and host employers for temporary workers. The fictional case study is based on past citations issued by OSHA in connection with temps' on-the-job injuries and provides practical information so staffing companies and host employers can better protect temporary workers from such injuries.

The situation posed in the case study is that a staffing agency assigned a temporary worker to a host employer's worksite to perform welding work indoors using a portable generator and portable welding equipment. While performing this work, the worker seriously burned his hand.

The case study advises host employers to do the following to protect the safety and health of temporary workers:

- Train supervisors on requirements in the OHS laws for the safety of temporary workers and the allocation of safety responsibilities in any contracts with staffing agencies
- Ensure that supervisors know how to manage *all* workers when unsafe behaviours happen
- Maintain regular communication with a temporary worker's staffing agency
- Ensure that temporary workers are accounted for and specifically referred to in your OHS policies
- Revise, review and update (when necessary) the procedure and risk assessments/job safety analysis for the activities taking place on your premises, which should be documented and shared with the staffing agency.