

TOOLBOX TALK #4

PROTECTING TEMPORARY WORKERS

In an effort to better protect temporary workers – who are at an increased risk of work-related injuries and illnesses – OSHA and NIOSH partnered to release a report containing recommended practices for staffing agencies and host employers.



OSHA notes that both staffing agencies and host employers must collaborate so that Occupational Safety and Health Act requirements for temporary workers are completely met. The report recommends the following for staffing agencies and host employers regarding temp workers:

- **Evaluate the jobsite.** Before taking on a host employer as a client, staffing agencies should inspect all worksites in which temp workers may be sent, and perform a job hazard analysis to remove hazards and identify specific training workers may need. Staffing agencies should relay information to host employers specifying the training and skill levels of individual employees.
- **Know how to recognize hazards.** Staffing agencies need to understand basic safety principles and be able to identify the hazards that temp workers face. By doing so, agencies will be better equipped to work with host employers to remove hazards.
- **Create clear contracts.** Contracts between staffing agencies and host employers should clearly state who is responsible for the safety and health of temp workers. These responsibilities should be reviewed regularly.
- **Conduct training.** When training temp workers, both the agency and the host employer share responsibilities. Agencies should provide a general level of safety training, while host employers need to offer more in-depth training customized to their workplace's specific hazards. Additionally, host employers must provide temp workers with training "identical or equivalent to that provided to the host employers' own employees performing the same or similar work."
- **Stay in touch with workers.** For staffing agencies, establish ways to stay in contact with temp workers, such as when workers pick up paychecks or by email. Agencies should have procedures in place for workers to report safety hazards. If a worker reports a safety concern, the staffing agency "has the duty to inquire and, to the extent feasible, verify that the host has fulfilled its responsibilities for a safe workplace," the report states. In turn, host employers should train workers on how to report hazards. If any safety complaints are voiced by a temp worker, staffing agencies should follow up with the host employer in an effort to remedy any issues.