



SAFE WORK



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Temporary Workers - Employer Responsibilities

Several temporary workers (employed by temporary placement agencies) have recently been injured while performing tasks without sufficient training or instruction on safe work procedures.

In many cases, temporary placement agencies rely on the employer at the job site to provide the workers with workplace orientation; verify they have the appropriate skills to perform the job(s); and provide them with job-specific, including safety and health training.

Unfortunately, this does not always happen. Additional mis-communication may exist where there is more than one employer at the work site (for example, a prime contractor and sub-contractor), with each assuming the other will provide worker orientation, training, and job instruction.

As a result, temporary workers may be unaware of the hazards present at the job site as well as those hazards particular to their assigned task, placing them at increased risk of suffering a work-related injury or illness.

Under workplace safety and health law in Manitoba, a temporary worker has two employers – the temporary placement agency, and the employer at the job site. Both employers have legal responsibilities regarding the occupational safety and health of the temporary worker, as follows.

Employers that hire temporary workers bear the greatest responsibility for ensuring the safety and health of the workers at their workplace. They are required to ensure that temporary workers:

- Receive a workplace orientation, including: location of emergency exits, first aid kits, eye wash equipment, a review of emergency fire and evacuation plans, and a review of workplace rules.
- Receive task specific training, including safe work procedures, and job hazard information.
- Are provided with appropriate tools and personal protective equipment to perform their job in a safe manner.
- Receive competent supervision.
- Understand the work they are assigned to perform as well as the work they are not to perform. As an example, temporary labourers at ABC Company are not to operate equipment or machinery.
- Do not operate powered lift equipment (forklifts and powerjacks) unless certified by the workplace. Certificates are not transferable. Each company must train the worker on their equipment, hazards and safe operating procedures before the worker is allowed to operate that equipment.

Temporary Placement Agencies are responsible for ensuring that temporary workers receive sufficient initial occupational safety and health information and training in preparation for the job site and task. They are required to ensure that temporary workers:

- Receive an initial safety and health orientation so that they can identify common hazards at the workplace they will be sent to. As an example, workers being sent to perform demolition work should be able to identify mould and asbestos prior to attending the job site.
- Receive a workplace orientation and job specific training (including safe work procedures) from the company they are being placed with.
- Are aware of their responsibility to follow the workplace safety and health rules and safe work procedures at each job site and for each job task.
- Understand that they must receive appropriate training for all tasks.
- Understand the work they are sent to perform; their right to ask questions about the work they are assigned to do; and their right to refuse work they believe is unsafe.
- Are capable of the job. For instance, a worker with lifting restrictions due to a medical condition should not be tasked to move or lift heavy items.

"Cette information existe également en français au www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/index.fr.html"