

# Using temporary workers

Temporary workers are employed for a variety of reasons, for example to provide cover for permanent employees who are off sick, or on holiday, or to cope with seasonal increases in workload. Whether temporary workers are employed by you, a recruitment agency or are self-employed, they raise important safety issues because they are not familiar with the workplace and company rules, and are on site for a limited period of time.

Following the advice below will help you manage the health and safety of temporary workers'.

## As an employer, what do I have to do?

- **Risk assessment** – you must carry out a separate risk assessment for those activities you expect to be carried out by temporary workers.
  - **Health and safety arrangements** – as an employer you should set up effective arrangements for managing health and safety in the workplace. These arrangements should include procedures to give temporary workers appropriate information about their job and protect their safety.
    - **Information** – you should give temporary workers the following information:
      - important details about the risks to their health and safety that you have identified in your risk assessments.
      - measures that you have taken to prevent or control these risks.
      - action they should take in emergencies.
- Make sure that you have procedures for communicating with people whose first language is not English.
- **Experience and skills** – you should clearly identify particular qualifications or skills needed by the temporary worker. You should make sure the recruitment or employment agency has this information before they find people to work for you.
  - **Training** – as with your permanent staff, you should keep records of the training you have given temporary staff.

## If a temporary worker has an accident on my premises, whose responsibility is it to report it?

You are responsible for reporting accidents involving temporary workers. If the temporary worker is your own employee, you should report the accident to your local council. If a worker employed by an agency has an accident while working for you, you should tell the recruitment agency as soon as possible. They should tell the local council.

## Do I need to supply temporary workers with personal protective equipment?

The duty you have to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) only applies to your own employees. The employment agency is responsible for making sure temporary workers have the appropriate PPE.

Self-employed workers should provide their own PPE.

You are responsible for making self-employed contractors and the employment or recruitment agency aware of the risks involved with the work, and should tell them if they need PPE.

Whoever provides the PPE will be responsible for making sure it is suitable and maintained.

## Am I responsible for carrying out display screen equipment (DSE) assessments for temporary workers?

Yes, you are responsible for carrying out DSE assessments for all workstations. You should tell all temporary workers about the procedures for using the DSE safely.

## Should I include temporary workers in my company's health and safety policy?

Yes. A **safety policy** should include details about arrangements and procedures set up for specific health and safety issues, including temporary workers.

This section of your policy should include the following:

- A list of matters that you should address before you employ a temporary worker, including identifying special qualifications or skills they need (for example, forklift truck training certificate, or any health monitoring or personal protective equipment that is needed). You should give the worker these details before they start work.
- A list of matters that you should address when the worker starts working for you (for example, induction training, passing on risk-assessment information, making them aware of safety rules and so on).
- Details of procedures that you should follow to make sure the temporary worker has the skills needed to work on your premises (for example, checking their training certificates).
- Arrangements for making sure temporary workers are supervised, where appropriate.
- Details of procedures that have been set out to allow you to communicate with the temporary worker's employment or recruitment agency.



## Case Study

A forklift truck was reversed over a young temporary worker's foot while he was on placement in a builder's merchants. The local council's Environmental Health Department successfully prosecuted the recruitment agency for failing to protect the health, safety and welfare of the worker. The council proved the agency placed him with a company without making the relevant checks or making sure the worker had the appropriate information and training. The builder's merchant was also prosecuted for not meeting its health and safety responsibilities.

More information

Recruitment and Employment Confederation - [www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com)

Health and Safety Executive - [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Trade Union Congress - [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

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