



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: Prevention of work-related injuries & illnesses through research & investigation

TEMPORARY WORKER SAFETY: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY-UPDATE

Hazard Alert: Temporary Worker Safety 8/29/26

Workers employed through staffing agencies (primary employers) are generally called *temporary* or *supplied* workers. A staffing agency supplies a temporary worker to a host employer. *Staffing agencies and host employers are jointly responsible for temporary workers' safety and health.*

From 2001 to 2023, 85 Michigan temporary workers died on the job. Seventy-three (73, 86%) of the individuals who died were male, and 67% (49 of 73 individuals) were White. *Figure 1* shows the means of death by number of deaths and *Figure 2* shows the industries by number of deaths in which the temporary worker was placed.

Ten workers were 21 years of age or younger; the youngest was only 15 years old. The oldest was 76 years. **A common theme that has emerged from the investigations of these deaths over the years was a lack of health and safety training for temporary workers across all industries.**

EXAMPLES OF WORK-RELATED TEMPORARY WORKER FATALITIES IN MICHIGAN

- A 41-year-old male died after falling 15 feet through a section of roof that collapsed. He had been on the job for one hour.
- An 18-year-old male died from head injuries when he was pulled into the hoist support bar of a rotating barrel. He had done this job for 3 months.
- A 20-year-old died from a 27-foot fall through a roof skylight to a cement floor. There was no fall protection system. He had been on the job for 4 hours.
- A 39-year-old male was returning to his office with a coworker when he was struck by a vehicle as he was transferring from one bus to another bus.
- A 62-year-old male tractor-trailer driver was killed while unloading 14 straw bales weighing 650 pounds from his trailer which fell off the trailer and struck him. The bales were thought to have become unstable while he transported them.

Figure 1. 85 Temporary Worker Deaths by Means of Death, Michigan, 2001-2023

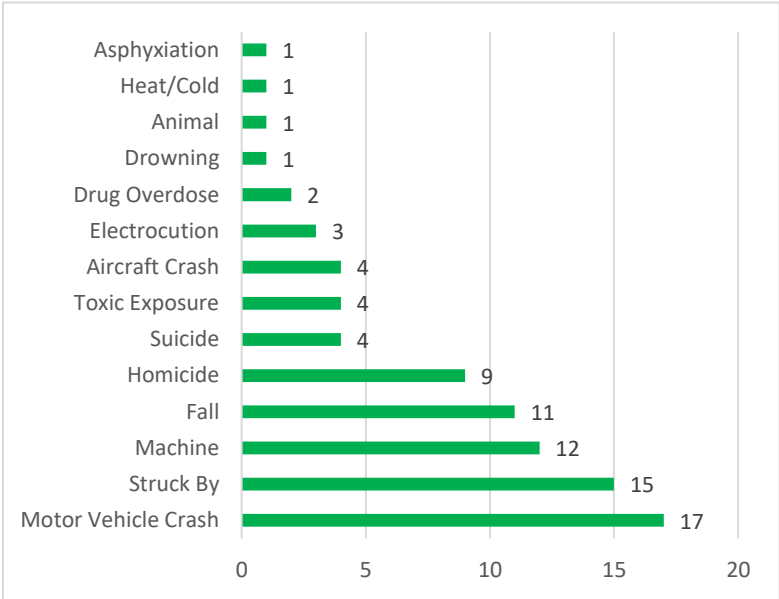
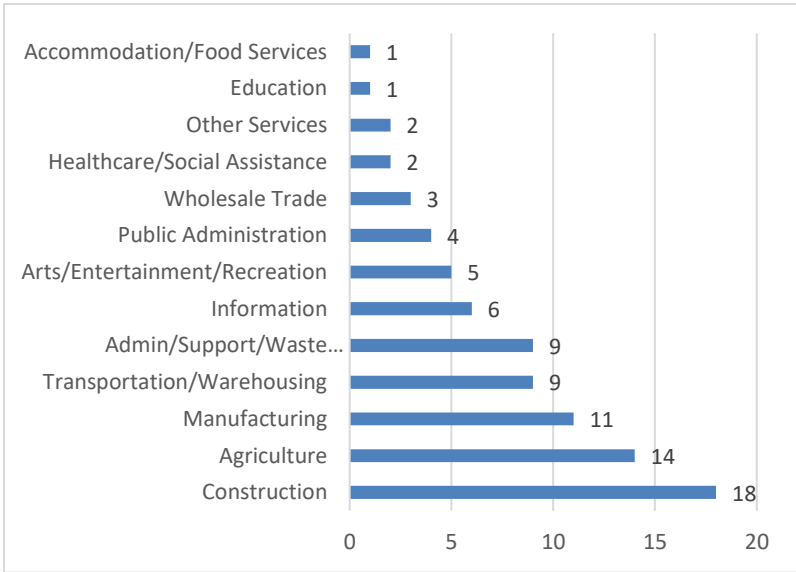


Figure 2. 85 Temporary Worker Deaths by Industry, Michigan, 2001-2023



PREVENTING WORK-RELATED TEMPORARY WORKER DEATHS

STAFFING AGENCY AND HOST EMPLOYER

Before temporary workers are hired

- Consider the hazards of the jobs to which temporary workers will be assigned.
- Determine which party is better equipped to prevent and correct the hazards temporary workers will face through training, work practice controls and other methods.
- Resolve any substantial differences in safety policies or programs between the two parties.

Develop a Written Contract

A written work contract should be created between the staffing agency and the host employer. Host employers must treat temporary workers like any other workers in terms of training and safety and health protections. To ensure that there is a clear understanding of each employer's role in protecting employees, MIOSHA recommends that the staffing agency and the host employer set out their respective responsibilities for compliance with applicable MIOSHA standards in their contract. Including such terms in a contract will ensure that each employer complies with all relevant regulatory requirements, thereby avoiding confusion as to the employer's obligations. The contract should address, including, but not limited to the following:

- Determine which entity provides supervision of the temporary worker on a day-to-day basis (which party will control workplace activities, conditions and related hazards).
- Tasks the temporary worker is expected to perform.
- Worker qualifications/experience required.
- The safety and health responsibilities of the staffing agency and host employer including:
 - The nature and extent of safety and health training.
 - Party responsible for each aspect of required safety and health training (as applicable to job).
 - In most cases, the host employer is responsible for site-specific training and the staffing agency is responsible for generic safety and health training.
 - Party responsible for providing required personal protective equipment (PPE) and training.
 - Method to inform the other employer when training is completed.
- Hazard controls minimizing exposure.
- Medical testing (as applicable).
- **Injury and Illness Recordkeeping Requirements.** In Michigan, the employer that is required to manage the injury and illness recordkeeping and reporting requirements is the *employer who manages the day-to-day supervision of the temporary worker in performing their tasks.*
 - *Host employers* that provide day-to-day supervision of the temporary employee are required to record the temporary employee's injuries and illnesses on their log and report to MIOSHA if the injury or illness triggers the reporting requirements in the standard.
 - *Temporary staffing agencies* that provide day-to-day supervision of the activities of the temporary employee while on the host employer's worksite, the temporary staffing agency shall record the temporary employee's injuries and illnesses on the temporary staffing agency's log. The temporary staffing agency shall report the injury or illness to MIOSHA if required by the standard.

RECOMMENDED STAFFING AGENCY PROCEDURES

Before sending workers to a client site

- **Research the host employer's safety records.** Staffing agencies have a duty to inquire into the conditions of their workers' assigned workplaces and should ensure the workers are sent to a safe workplace. One way to check the safety record of a company is to search for the company name on [OSHA's establishment lookup](#) webpage. If a company has had a federal OSHA or state-based OSHA inspection, if any safety or health standard violations were found, a citation will be issued.
- **Review the host employer's written safety programs, plans and policies.**
- Ask the client about the jobs to be performed, hazards temporary workers will be exposed to, protective measures to be taken, skills required, and employee training required.

- **Visit client site and perform a basic safety assessment.** Develop or utilize an on-line safety inspection checklist (example: [Wichita State University Environmental Health and Safety \(EHS\) Audit Checklist](#)) to provide guidance in assessing hazards, safety programs, plans and policies.
- **Match employee experience and qualifications to the job demand(s).** Staffing agency should provide a document to the host employer that specifies each temporary worker's specific training and competencies related to the tasks to be performed.
- **Provide generic safety and health training** in a language and vocabulary understood by the worker.
 - The worker must have a basic ability to identify hazardous situations, procedures to report hazards, injuries and illnesses, understand key components of the hazard communication standard requirements and other safety and health standard requirements as applicable to the assignment (e.g. bloodborne pathogen, confined space, working around forklifts, etc.) and understand their rights if confronted with a hazardous situation at a worksite.
- MIOSHA recommends that the staffing agency, when placing temporary employees, ensures the host employer has readily accessible reporting/emergency contact information for the staffing agency on file.

During the work assignment:

- **Verify** host employer has fulfilled its responsibilities for a safe workplace by conducting a follow-up visit. Ensure that their employees received proper site-specific training, (i.e., PPE, hazard communication training, machine, emergency evacuation, etc. as applicable).
- **Maintain communication with their employees** so safety concerns can be raised.
- **Maintain communication with the host employer**
 - Ensure staffing agency is alerted to additional or newly-created site-specific workplace hazards that may need to be addressed.
 - Encourage host employer to inform staffing agency regarding temporary worker job performance, adherence to safety policies and other relevant issues.
 - Inform employer promptly if a temporary worker has reported a workplace injury to the staffing agency.
- **Coordinate work-related injury/illness incident investigation** with the host employer to ensure preventive measures are taken.
- **Maintain records of any medical surveillance** the host employer conducts for hazards (e.g. lead, noise, etc.) and make these records available to affected employees.
- **Record temporary workers work-related injuries or illnesses** on staffing agency OSHA 300 log if providing an onsite supervisor who oversees the workers' day-to-day supervision.

RECOMMENDED HOST EMPLOYER PROCEDURES

OSHA's [Protecting Temporary Workers](#) webpage and Temporary Worker Initiative Bulletins (as applicable) as well as the NIOSH [Protecting temporary workers: Best practices for host employers](#) offer health and safety work practice guidance for host employers to ensure the safety of the temporary worker.

Before Hiring temporary workers

- **Research the staffing agency's safety record** and background.
- **Review the staffing agency's safety programs, policies and plans.**
- **Ask the staffing agency what training they provide to workers** and the language(s) in which training is provided. **Verify the quality of the training** by reviewing materials or attending training sessions.
- **Specify temporary worker job duties and tasks, the skills required, and the training expected** before the worker arrives on-site.
- **Perform and document a job hazard analysis and a PPE assessment** for the temporary worker job.

Recommended Host Employer Procedures, cont.

After hiring temporary workers

- **Provide temporary workers with safety training that is identical or equivalent to that provided to the host employers' own employees performing the same or similar work.**
 - Ensure the company's safety and health policies specifically include temporary workers.
 - Include temporary workers in any safety programs you offer at your facility including safety meetings, toolbox talks and scheduled training.
 - Train supervisors on MIOSHA requirements for safety of temporary workers and the allocation of safety responsibilities in any executed staffing agreements.
 - Encourage temporary workers to report any hazards they encounter and to communicate any concerns to a supervisor or other individual.
- **Provide site-specific and job-specific training** in a language and vocabulary workers can understand. Also include:
 - Inform temporary workers of site-wide safety policies,
 - Their rights in the workplace,
 - Procedures for reporting hazards they encounter,
 - What to do in case of injury or illness.
- **Conduct initial (baseline) monitoring** (if applicable). Share results with staffing agency.

During the work assignment

- **Personal protective equipment use:**
 - Provide workers with any PPE necessary to work safely (dependent upon written contract).
 - Assess the quality of any PPE provided by the staffing agency or the worker to ensure it provides adequate protection.
- **Consult with the staffing firm prior to any change** in temporary worker's job assignment.
- **Communicate with temporary workers** periodically about their job performance and safety-related behavior.
- **Record temporary workers' work-related injuries or illnesses** on company OSHA 300 log unless the staffing agency provides an onsite supervisor who oversees the workers' day-to-day supervision.
 - Promptly inform the staffing agency on any temporary worker injury or illness.
 - Coordinate medical treatment if necessary.
- **Conduct medical surveillance and monitoring** (if applicable). Share results with worker and staffing agency.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The 2022 NAICS 561320 describes the “temporary help services” as establishments primarily engaged in supplying workers to clients' businesses for limited periods of time to supplement the working force of the client. The individuals provided are employees of the temporary help services establishment. However, these establishments do not provide direct supervision of their employees at the clients' work sites.)
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in the May 2023 National Industry-Specific Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates estimated a total of 2,964,020 temporary workers employed across all US industry sectors.
- In Michigan per the American Staffing Association (ASA):
 - Staffing firms employed 512,400 workers
 - Top 5 temporary help occupation groups:
 - Production - 41%
 - Transportation & Material Moving -15%
 - Office & Administrative Support - 9%
 - Architecture & Engineering - 6%
 - Business & Financial Operations - 6%
- Nationally, per the ASA:
 - Most staffing employees (73%) work full-time, comparable to the overall workforce (75%).
 - Six in 10 staffing employees (64%) work in the industry to fill in the gap between jobs or to help them land a job.
 - The average length of employment is 10 weeks.

RESOURCES

- **MSU Occupational and Environmental Medicine:** www.oem.msu.edu/
- **MIOSHA Fact Sheets**
 - [Employer Responsibilities to Protect Temporary Workers](#)
 - Injury and Illness [Recordkeeping Requirements for Temporary Workers](#)
- **Federal OSHA**
 - [Protecting Temporary Workers](#) webpage
 - OSHA/American Staffing Association (ASA) Alliance [Products & Resources](#) webpage
- **NIOSH Publication Number 2022-126, July 2022.** [Protecting temporary workers: Best practices for host employers](#). Includes Appendices for Best Practices Checklists: Evaluation and Contracting, Training for Temporary Workers and Their Worksite Supervisors and Injury and Illness Reporting, Response, and Recordkeeping
- **OSHA/NIOSH:** [Protecting Temporary Workers: Best Practices](#)
- **NIOSH Total Worker Health Webinar:** [How to Keep Temporary Workers Safe at Work](#)
- **American Staffing Association**
 - [Safety Matters](#) webpage
 - [Safety Standard of Excellence](#) webpage
- Cal OSHA Safety and Health Fact Sheet: [Protecting Temporary Agency Employees: Information for Employers](#)