Improving Temp Worker Safety
Defining “Shared Responsibility”
Since 2010, the temporary worker industry has added more jobs in the U.S. than any other industry.
Temp Employment Growth By Region

**West**
- 1990: 261,569
- 2008: 492,390
- Percent change: 88.2

**Midwest**
- 1990: 261,799
- 2008: 568,267
- Percent change: 117.1

**Northeast**
- 1990: 205,187
- 2008: 344,965
- Percent change: 68.1

**South**
- 1990: 396,904
- 2008: 897,786
- Percent change: 126.2

Source: OCEW data.
In 2013, temp workers in the U.S. reached a record 2.7 million.
The surge in temporary employment

SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
And **20,000** temporary jobs are added to the economy each month.
But as temp work increases, so does concern about the hazards and risks facing the transient workforce.
A 2010 study of temporary workers in Washington State reported that...
... temp workers had higher rates of injury for all injury types than permanent employees.
Sometimes even on their first day on the job...
... temp workers have been **pulled** into machinery,
stricken by **heat exhaustion**, 
and asphyxiated by chemicals.
Why the increase in injury among temp workers?
One possibility...
They lack the knowledge and safety training
that traditional workers gain over years of experience on the job.
Another possibility...
It may be difficult for the temp worker population to speak out.
According to the Chicago Workers Collaborative,
some temp workers are afraid to speak out about safety violations...
... because of factors like:
language barriers...
and immigration status.
However, more and more temp workers are willing to voice concerns in anonymous surveys.
In a 2005 survey by the Day Laborer Collaboration,
68% of respondents had concerns about their **physical safety** on the job.
Some survey respondents stated that they were not provided with the needed protective gear.
OSHA Chief, Dr. David Michaels, addressed this growing issue on Workers Memorial Day in 2013.
Dr. Michaels stated that over the past year OSHA received far too many reports of workers **killed in their first few days** at work.
In Dr. Michael’s own words:
“Many of those killed and injured are temporary workers...
... who often perform the most dangerous jobs,
have limited English proficiency,
and are not receiving the **training** and **protective measures** required.”
In October 2013, Dr. Michaels wrote:
“Safety training is a cost of doing business,
so some employers just skip it
or **assume** that the staffing agency has conducted the training.”
So who is responsible for temp workers’ safety?
Is it the host employer, or the staffing agency that places many temp workers in jobs?
OSHA explains that host employers and staffing agencies are jointly responsible.
OSHA gives this example of host and agency collaboration:
Staffing agencies might provide general safety and health training,
and host employers might provide **specific training** tailored to the particular workplace equipment and hazards.
The bottom line is...
There needs to be communication between the staffing agency and the host employer to ensure necessary protections are provided for temp workers.
Staffing Agencies Duties:
• Inquire into the **conditions** of their workers’ assigned workplaces
• Determine what hazards may be encountered, and how to best ensure the safety of temp workers.
Host Employers Duties:
• Provide **safety training** to temporary workers.
• Keep *injury records* for temp workers just as you would for permanent workers.
When staffing agencies and host employers work together...
... temp workers stay safer.
Access the full white paper:

Improving Temp Worker Safety