

HR Tips from Express



Safety

Safety challenges affect every company, regardless of industry. With so many safety challenges, starting a safety program can seem overwhelming. The tips below, which focus on the five most frequently cited OSHA violations, should help you get started. As your total HR provider, Express Personnel Services can help you handle safety challenges and other HR issues. Contact us today for more information.

Scaffolding

There were 9,012 scaffolding-related violations in 2006, and there is an average of 4,500 accidents and 50 deaths involving scaffolding each year. OSHA reports that 77 percent of scaffolds are not equipped with guardrails, so the first thing you can do to protect employees is ensure all scaffolds have guardrails to help prevent falls. Another common reason for these injuries is a lack of training. Train workers so that they know how to prevent accidents, and make sure that only employees who are trained to use scaffolding use the equipment. They should never overload the scaffold or set it up in an unstable position. All tools, materials and debris need to be properly handled so that they do not fall and hit other workers. Employees who work near scaffolding also need to be aware of what is going on and should wear protective equipment in case any materials do fall in the area.

Hazard Communication

With over 6,700 violations, hazard communication is an area where you can make some immediate adjustments. The main component of hazard communication is the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), which includes all the information your employees need to know regarding chemicals in their work area. Make sure that each employee has an MSDS for each chemical they encounter. Also, ensure that all chemicals are labeled appropriately and that workers are trained on the proper way to handle them. Learn more about the MSDS and hazard communication by listening to the Chemicals in the Workplace podcast employers.express-test.com/us/Solutions/HR-Tip.aspx.

Fall Protection

Falls are one of the deadliest safety areas. In 2005, 767 workers died due to falls. In 2006, there were 6,378 fall-related violations. Falls result in a high amount of workers' compensation injuries, not to mention possible fatalities. You can protect your employees by analyzing all possibilities for falls in your workplace and creating a plan for preventing falls. Using the scaffolding advice above, train your employees and ensure employees wear personal protective equipment when appropriate.



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Respiratory Protection

Over 5 million workers in 1.3 million workplaces are required to wear respiratory protection equipment. In 2006, there were 4,332 respiratory-protection related violations cited by OSHA. If your workers are exposed to any harmful dusts, fogs, fumes, mists, gases, smokes, sprays or vapors, they need respiratory protection. Respirators must be provided by the employer if employees' health is in danger. OSHA regulation 1910.134 offers detailed information on how to determine if your workers need respiratory protection and how to implement safety programs in this area.

Lockout/Tagout

Lockout/tagout (LOTO) regulations concern protecting employees from the unexpected start-up of machinery or equipment. There were 3,659 LOTO violations in 2006. About 3 million workers are at risk for LOTO-related injuries, and approximately 50,000 injuries and 120 fatalities occur each year. After use, all equipment should be completely turned off by disengaging the power supply so that the equipment cannot come on unexpectedly. Train employees on how to do this for all equipment, and make sure that they do so every time the equipment is not in use or needs to be serviced.