

Agency workers checklist for Unite Safety Representatives:

Ensuring that all workers have the same level of health and safety protection including agency workers

Note: The checklist has been drafted so that it can be used by safety representatives as a tool to check compliance by both the agency and the hirer and the term "employer" is therefore inter-changeable to mean either the agency or hirer.

GENERAL

Does your health and safety policy include agency workers and state who will take responsibility for their health and safety?

Is it clear whose responsibility it is to ensure that agency workers have the appropriate skills and training for the job?

Is there a clear written agreement between the user business and the agencies they use as to which of them is responsible for health and safety management, including delivering health and safety training, providing health and safety information to agency workers and providing personal protective equipment (free of charge)?

Does the agreement between the agency and the employer follow good practice and cover the following areas:

1. Are all workers, including agency workers, made aware of their own responsibilities in relation to health and safety?
2. Do agency workers know who actually employs them?
3. Is Employers' Liability Insurance in place to cover all employees, including agency workers?

UNION ORGANISATION

Does your branch encourage the election of safety representatives from amongst agency worker members at your workplace?

Are safety representatives and shop stewards given access to agency staff when they first start work?

Does the branch ensure that agency worker members are fully included in union activities and have access to union education?

CONSULTATION

Does your employer consult safety representatives about health and safety arrangements for agency workers?

Does your employer consult agency workers on health and safety matters?

Does your agreement ensure that the rights of agency workers are fully respected?

RISK ASSESSMENT

Have suitable and sufficient assessments of the risks to which workers, including agency workers, been carried out?

Does your employer involve you in risk assessments particularly in respect of work to be carried out by agency workers?

Does your employer involve agency workers in risk assessments?

Are special risk assessments carried out (before they start work) for agency workers who are of child-bearing age, are pregnant, who are young workers or have a disability?

INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Does your employer provide health and safety training and information for agency workers?

Does your employer provide induction training for agency workers before they start work?

Does your employer provide job-specific training for agency workers

for example in manual handling, operation of machinery etc?

Is this training and information delivered for all in a comprehensible form taking account of literacy and/or language issues?

What steps are taken to ensure that the training is understood and acted upon?

Is an interpreter provided if necessary?

Does induction training for agency workers include information about fire safety, first aid, emergency procedures, reporting accidents and near misses?

Do agency workers know whom to contact to raise concerns about health and safety?

WELFARE

Are suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences available for all?

Are suitable and sufficient washing facilities available for all?

Is wholesome drinking water supplied for all?

Are there adequate facilities for accommodation of clothing and changing clothing?

Are there adequate rest facilities for rest and to eat meals?

Are there adequate rest facilities for pregnant workers and new mothers?

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

Is there an agreement in place between your employer and the agency to ensure that health surveillance is provided (if necessary) for all workers including agency workers?

SICKNESS ABSENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Does your sickness absence policy provide for equal treatment for agency workers and permanent staff?

Do all staff, including agency workers, have access to occupational health provision?

WORKING HOURS

How are the working hours for agency workers monitored to ensure that they are able to work safely?

Are accurate records kept of hours being worked?

Do terms and conditions comply with the Working Time Regulations, eg do all workers, including agency workers, have suitable rest breaks?

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Is there a clear agreement between your employer and the agency as to which will supply PPE to agency workers?

Are agency workers consulted about PPE?

Is suitable PPE provided free of charge to agency workers and are they trained how to use it?

OTHER ISSUES

Are there any health and safety issues or hazards specific to your workplace not covered above?