
Contractor safety

Contractors provide a number of services for companies including building renovations, electrical work, machine maintenance, new building additions and machine installation. With these services, it is paramount that both the contractor and host employer take the necessary precautions to keep all employees safe during these activities. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) suggests that safety is a two-way street when working with contractors. This means the responsibility falls on both parties. Safety is elevated when employers and contractors establish systems to coordinate their efforts and communicate to provide all workers equal protection against hazards. Whether contractors are new to your organization, or you've been working with them for years, consider the following practices:

Pre-Qualification and Selection

One way to determine a contractor's safety level is to evaluate their safety records. Safety records will help identify a company's commitment to safety and may uncover some dangerous practices. Request injury and illness records, injury rates, safety certifications and safety training programs.

Safety Orientation and Training / Worksite Hazard Identification / Emergency Procedures

Collaborate with contractors to identify and assess workplace hazards. Conduct site inspections and risk assessments to mitigate potential risks and ensure a safe work environment. Provide thorough safety orientation and training to contractors before they begin work. It is essential they understand workplace hazards, emergency procedures and proper safety protocols within your facility.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Once a worksite hazard evaluation is complete, ensure contractors use appropriate PPE for their tasks. Perform periodic inspections to validate the proper usage of PPE. Promptly address any concerns to your contact if there are issues.

Safety Meetings and Communication:

Depending on the length of the contractor's project, conduct regular safety meetings. Safety meetings are a great way to discuss safety concerns, updates, changes and best practices. Always encourage open communication channels to address safety issues promptly.

Incident Reporting and Investigation:

Establish clear procedures for reporting and investigating safety incidents involving contractors. Encourage prompt reporting of near misses, injuries or hazardous conditions to prevent future incidents.

Documentation and Record-Keeping:

Maintain accurate records of safety training, orientation, inspections, incidents and contractor compliance documentation. This information is valuable for audits, regulatory compliance and future references. Review the information with your leadership team to discuss potential changes on upcoming projects.

Some other considerations when working with contractors include security / access control, restricted areas, understanding written obligations within the contract / agreement and performance evaluation.

Ensuring contractor safety in the workplace is essential for maintaining a secure and healthy environment for everyone involved. By implementing these measures and fostering a culture of safety, organizations can effectively manage contractor safety in the workplace, protect the well-being of all individuals and mitigate risks associated with contractor activities.

If you need help identifying potential hazards in your workplace, please contact Andy Sawan, risk services specialist at Sedgwick at andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com or 330.819.4728.