

# SUPERVISOR SAFETY: REDUCING RISKS FOR NEW WORKERS

Providing a safe working environment and ensuring a safe start when new people begin working for you is not only the right thing to do, it's the law. OSHA has a general provision requiring employers to ensure workers have been provided with the proper information, instruction and supervision to protect their health and safety while they perform their jobs. While this provision applies to all workers, whether they are new to their jobs or not, offering the best possible supervision and introduction to safety in the workplace is critical for anyone new on the job. The following tips can help employers ensure new employees are ready for work.

## *Employer Considerations*

- ✓ Always conduct new hire orientation and safety training.
- ✓ Ask new workers about their previous safety education and work experience. Don't assume a new employee knows the basics of workplace safety.
- ✓ Verify every new worker knows his or her rights and responsibilities, including:
  - The right to participate in health and safety training, and safety programs in the workplace
  - The right to know about hazards they may be exposed to on the job
  - The right to refuse unsafe work
  - The responsibility to follow safety procedures and wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be required
- ✓ If English is a worker's second language, it can contribute to on-the-job accidents and injuries. To promote worker safety, you should post signage and safety communication materials in the language in which your employees are fluent.
- ✓ New employees are at a greater risk for a workplace injury than their more experienced co-workers. As with all employees, workers new to the job must take an active role in protecting themselves. This includes:
  - Understanding all necessary safety measures before starting work. If they are unclear, instruct them to ask for clarification
  - Following all safety measures at all times
  - Wearing and maintaining required PPE
  - If machine guards are required on equipment, ensuring they are in place
  - Avoiding shortcuts
  - Following hazard warnings when using chemicals; obtaining further information from the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) on hazardous chemicals if necessary
  - Asking about emergency procedures and being prepared to follow them in the event of a chemical spill or fire

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