



# Implications Of Nonstandard Work For Worker Safety And Health

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# Non-standard Work: Injury And WC Coverage Risks

- Many forms of non-standard work have higher risk of workplace injury and illness
  - Even those covered by workers' compensation
- Exacerbating this, some forms of non-standard work are at risk of not being covered by workers' compensation

# Evidence

- Higher workplace injury and illness rates for temporary workers than for permanent employees
- Washington State study: Temp agency workers had twice the WC claiming rate of permanent workers (Smith et. al. 2010)
- California and Florida: WC data show temps had about 50 percent greater risk of being injured on the job than non-temps. (Grabel et. al., ProPublica, 2013)

# Traditional Versus Non-standard Work

- Traditional work
  - Full-time
  - Permanent
  - Fixed work schedule
  - Fixed location(s) of work
  - Fixed job tasks
- Non-standard work
  - Part-time/self-employed
  - Temporary staffing
  - Contracted out
  - Flexible work schedules
  - Work at home or on the go
  - Variable job tasks

# Contracting Out Is Growing

- Businesses increasingly contracting out for services formerly performed by employees
- Through temporary staffing agencies and also independent contractors
- Examples:
  - security guards
  - janitorial services and grounds maintenance
  - computer and LAN maintenance

# Why Are Temporary And Contract Work Often Less Safe?

- Less experience and familiarity with operations due to short tenure at a worksite
- More distant relationships with longer-term workers who could help navigate worksite hazards
- Fewer hours of safety training relevant for the specific job assignment
- More hazardous work assigned to temporary workers and outsourced to independent contractors

# Why Are Temporary And Contract Work Often Less Safe?

- Less likely to report unsafe conditions because of risks associated with precarious employment
- Supervisory lines and responsibility for OSH are blurred
- Exposed to hazards at multiple worksites
  - Can risks be managed across multiple worksites?
  - How can a case be attributed to one worksite when it may be due to exposure in many?

# Impact Of Flexible Work Schedules And Location On OSH

- Non-traditional work sites may be less safe
  - Lack traditional safety controls
  - Outside OSHA scope
- Non-traditional work hours may be less safe
  - Worker fatigue
  - Poorer working conditions
    - e.g. poor lighting