

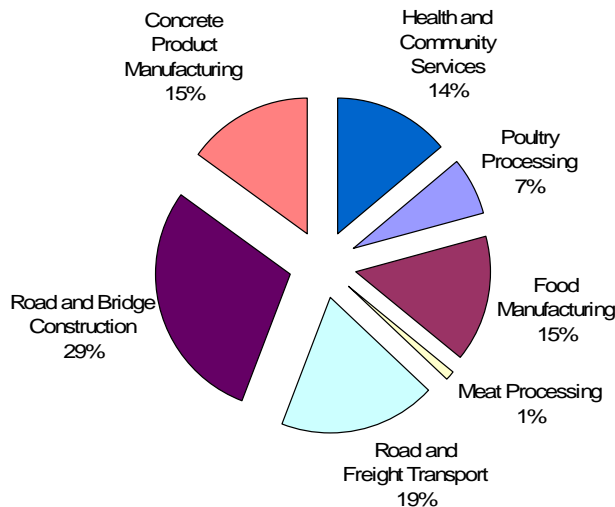


Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Statewide Campaign – Labour Hire Arrangements

In 2005-2006 Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) conducted an assessment of labour hire arrangements in respect to workplace health and safety obligations. Both labour hire agencies¹ and host employers² across a range of industries were visited as part of this campaign. The findings from these visits were very encouraging and demonstrated satisfactory management on the whole with workplace health and safety issues related to labour hire arrangements³.

291 inspectorial visits were conducted as part of this campaign (115 visits to labour hire agencies and 176 visits to host employers). Not surprisingly many labour hire agencies supplied labour across many different industry sectors. Therefore the distribution of the visits by industry is presented below based upon the distribution of the host employers by industry sub-sector.



For each labour hire agency visited, one or more of the agency's host employers were also visited. The host employer visits were conducted to verify the findings from the agency visit. Data was collected in three areas – training and supervision, pre-placement workplace health and safety (WHS) assessment, and on-going monitoring and consultation.

¹ In this campaign the term labour hire agency included group training organisations

² In this campaign the term host employer referred to the employer where the labour hire worker was placed by the labour hire agency

³ The data collected and analysed as part of this campaign only relates to workplace health and safety and labour hire arrangements. Other issues may have been identified during the workplace visits and are not reported here.

The campaign did not specifically target Group Training Organisations (GTO), however neither were they excluded. Where a GTO was visited by an inspector, the inspector assessed the organisation taking into consideration the effect of section 10 (the definition of an employer) of the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*.

What were the results of the campaign

Area one – training and supervision

All labour hire agencies were found to have a better than satisfactory performance in this area. Inspectors found the labour hire agencies were providing workers with generic WHS training and ensuring these same workers received specific WHS training with the host employer. The agencies were also found to be very good at ensuring their labour hire workers were adequately⁴ supervised on site. Visits to host employers confirmed these findings.

Area two – pre-placement WHS assessment

Once again labour hire agencies were found to be undertaking pre-placement assessments appropriately prior to the worker being placed with the host. Agencies were considering the match of the worker to the job and were using competent people to conduct the assessments.

Host employers were also found to be considering the competency of the worker prior to the worker starting and were conducting pre-placement assessments. What is not known is if these pre-placement assessments were conducted because of the influence of the labour hire agencies or not.

Area three – on-going monitoring and consultation with labour hire workers at the host employer

This area was also found to be operating effectively.

Agencies were found to be complying by:

- conducting on-going general monitoring
- monitoring the tasks labour hire workers completed
- engaging in consultation with the labour hire workers and the host employers
- having systems in place to ensure they are notified of any incidents to labour hire workers
- conducting investigations into workplace incidents involving their workers
- having systems in place to ensure any required and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) was provided to their workers.

Host employers were found to be complying by:

- reviewing the labour hire workers training and instruction if the worker's tasks changed
- notifying the agency of any changes to tasks
- consulting with labour hire agencies and workers on health and safety issues
- notifying the agency of any incidents affecting the agency's workers
- investigating incidents involving labour hire workers
- ensuring any required and appropriate PPE was provided to labour hire workers.

⁴ In the opinion of the inspector

Where to from here?

The findings of the campaign show labour hire arrangements with respect to workplace health and safety in the targeted industries was being well managed. The low number of notices issued reflects these findings. What is not known is if the cooperative working relationship between the two organisations improved the overall safety on site greater than would have been the case without the external input of the labour hire agency. This may be an area for further research.

One aspect that was found to have acceptable outcomes but could be improved was the use of a systematic approach to ensure labour hire workers were not exposed to risks. Overall risk was well managed, however some hosts could have improved their risk management processes.

As with any research, these findings represent only what was found at the time the workplace visits took place and are only relevant to the industries visited.

For further information visit www.deir.qld.gov.au or call 1300 369 915.

© The State of Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations 2007.

Copyright protects this document. The State of Queensland has no objection to this material being reproduced but asserts its right to be recognised as author of its original material and the right to have its material unaltered.

The material presented in this publication is distributed by the Queensland Government as an information source only. The State of Queensland makes no statements, representations, or warranties about the accuracy or completeness of, and you should not rely on, any information contained in this publication. Despite our best efforts, the State of Queensland makes no warranties that the information in this publication is free of infection by computer viruses or other contamination. The Queensland Government disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including, without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason.