Safety With Seasonal Employees

Along with the long-awaited warm days, farmers markets, and family vacations, summer brings the addition of seasonal employees who fill a wide range of roles in municipal recreation and highway departments. When you hire employees on a seasonal basis, it is important to take appropriate steps to ensure their safety as well as that of the people they work with. Here are a few best practices recommended by PACIF Loss Control staff.

**Make sure employees have received the appropriate training** to perform their designated tasks safely. This might include the proper use of personal protective equipment, how to avoid noxious plants, safety around bloodborne pathogens and chemicals, evacuation procedures, and other safety elements. Each specific training is determined by the exposures the employee may encounter.

**If you use seasonal highway workers to operate commercial motor vehicles**, make sure to follow all Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration requirements with regard to hiring, pre-employment drug testing, participation in the random testing pool, and related requirements.

**Recreation staff may need specific training** on how to handle program participants who exhibit behavioral problems. (See related article *Inclusion and Accommodation in Rec Programs*.)

**Encourage all employees to drink plenty of water** to avoid heat-related health issues.

**Get background checks on employees who may work with at-risk populations**, such as children or the elderly, to verify their suitability for employment. Nobody is too young or too old to be vetted this way. The Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC) will perform a background check for a fee, though municipalities working with “sensitive populations” may be exempt from these charges. Visit [vcic.vermont.gov/ch-information/record-checks](http://vcic.vermont.gov/ch-information/record-checks) for more information on how to use this resource.

Hiring seasonal employees is a cost-effective way to meet the expanded demands for services that many Vermont municipalities face in the summer, and remembering these tips can help you keep everyone safe while enjoying the warm weather. If you have any questions regarding safety, liability, or human resource risk management that relate to seasonal employees, contact PACIF Loss Control at [losscontrol@vlct.org](mailto:losscontrol@vlct.org). We are here to help!