

## SAFETY GROUP PROGRAM MONTHLY ARTICLE

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ASSURANCE

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### **Seasonal Workers**

An important part of the U.S. workforce, seasonal workers are employed in numerous industries throughout Colorado every year. Seasonal workers regularly step in to fill employers' needs for additional manpower when those needs cannot be handled by full and part-time staff. Although seasonal workers have the same rights as other workers, it is important that employers who hire seasonal workers understand some specific issues.

Seasonal jobs are frequently filled by "word of mouth" so the screening process for these employees may be different. Once they start working, seasonal workers are typically very loyal and it isn't unusual for them to return to work for the same employer year after year. In some industries – for example, agriculture – because some seasonal workers return annually, the workforce includes a greater percentage of older workers. In industries like agriculture where seasonal workers perform heavy labor tasks, the cost of claims by older workers may be higher. On the flip side, many seasonal employees work in industries in which they have little or no experience; a factor which can lead to an increased risk of injury. (According to Pinnacol's data, since 2011, nearly 40 percent of claims filed by policyholders were for workers with less than one year of experience on the job.)

The combination of older workers and employees with little experience has the potential to create real safety concerns for employers. Good communication between the employer and the seasonal worker is an effective way to help safeguard against injuries. It is critical that seasonal workers understand the organization's safety rules, how to use protective equipment, etc. When an injury occurs, the seasonal worker needs to know who their medical provider is and how to report an injury.

Employers should hold on-going meetings to go over important procedures, identify safety hazards, review equipment safety, etc. Employers can also use posters and employee paycheck stuffers to reinforce good safety practices. Pinnacol provides these materials to our policyholders free of charge. To order, visit our website at [Pinnacol.com/resources/order-materials](http://Pinnacol.com/resources/order-materials).

Employers should ask all of their employees – seasonal or permanent – these important questions and make sure that their employees know the answers.

1. Who is your medical provider?
2. Who is your safety coordinator?
3. Do you know and understand the organization's safety rules?
4. What protective equipment is required for your job?
5. Do you know how to use this protective equipment?
6. Do you know how to report an injury?

While seasonal workers are temporary, short-term employees, their injuries can have long-term impacts for employers. By reporting claims early with complete and accurate information, costs can be reduced and injured workers can get the prompt medical attention they need. And, because a strong safety program is a key to building safeguards against potential injury, employers should regularly review the organization's safety policies and procedures with seasonal staff and have good safety and return-to-work programs in place. By following these recommendations, employers can help to ensure their temporary workers have a "safe" season.