

Focus on...

Temporary Workers Gain More Protection

Two California laborers, 16- and 22-year-old brothers from Mexico, died while cleaning the confined-space drainage system of an organic waste recycling facility. Both were exposed to excessive levels of hydrogen sulfide inside a 10-foot shaft. ([Read full investigation report.](#))

The older brother, who died trying to rescue his younger brother from the bottom of the shaft, worked for a temporary employment agency that provided workers for the employer.



Photo: Opening of shaft in which two brothers died

Subcontractors and temporary workers like this victim, who are often new to their workplace, gained more legal protection this month when California Governor Jerry Brown signed a groundbreaking worker protection bill, AB 1897, into [law](#). The law holds the state's employers legally responsible for wage and safety violations committed by their subcontractors and temporary agencies.

The new law follows on the heels of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Temporary Worker Initiative](#), launched last year.

It includes outreach, training, and enforcement to ensure that temporary workers are protected in their workplaces.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and OSHA also jointly released a [publication on recommended practices](#) to protect temporary workers.

Resources

[Recommended Practices, Protecting Temporary Workers](#) – NIOSH/OSHA
[Protecting Temporary Workers](#) – OSHA website

[OHB](#) improves California worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, test new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and help make changes at the workplace.

Email OHW@cdph.ca.gov with feedback about this update or change of address.

