

# Looking for a temporary help agency?

## Here are 8 tips to help you find a reputable one

**With the changing economy, more and more Ontarians are turning to temporary help agencies (THAs) to assist them in finding a job. If you're an employer that hires workers through a THA, here are 8 tips to help you find an ethical agency to work with.**

### **Do Your Research**

Just like any business you hire, research the THA to make sure they're reputable. Start by looking at their website, read reviews and find out if they are mentioned on other sites or message boards. If they have a history of doing bad business, there is likely a trail online. Likewise, for reputable agencies, look for recommendations and good reviews. If you've had a great experience with a THA, consider writing a positive review.

### **Look for an Association Membership**

Membership to a professional association, such as the Association of Canadian Search, Employment & Staffing Services (ACSESS), can be a good indicator that the THA is reputable and safe to do business with. Associations generally have a code of ethics that their members need to follow and other good business requirements that must be met.

### **Check Their References**

To know if an agency is the right fit for you and your employment needs, find out who hired them previously. Many legitimate agencies post client lists on their websites. If you can't find a client list, simply ask. Agencies may be willing to send you recommendations.

### **Find Out If They Have a Brick-and-Mortar Office**

A THA without an office building or with no fixed address can be a sign that they are illegitimate. Many fly-by-night agencies operate from a cell phone, making it difficult to track them down if they aren't complying with labour laws. Search the address online to see if it's a real building.

### **Know the Agency's Responsibilities**

When hiring a THA, educate yourself on what they are responsible for. For example, the agency is considered the "Employer of Record" and is responsible for making source deductions for things such as CPP and EI. If the wage rate seems too low, your temporary worker may not be getting paid minimum wage. If the rate is too good to be true, it probably is.

## Read the Fine Print

When hiring an agency, you'll likely have an agreement with them (written or verbal) that outlines agreed upon details, including the time frame and any stipulations. Most reputable THAs will offer a trial period in their agreements. If the candidate doesn't work out, a reputable agency will usually work to find a more suitable candidate for their client.

## Beware of Hidden Fees

When a temporary help agency charges you their fees, take a close look. Recruiting services operate based on charging the employer a fee – it's expected. What's not expected or okay are fees that aren't explained or discussed up-front. Make sure you understand what you're being charged for – and get it in writing – before hiring them.

## Cash Payments Are a Red Flag

In this day of online transfers and direct bank deposits, cash payments are uncommon – particularly from a business. If an agency is trying to pay your employees in cash with no official receipt or paper trail, it could be a warning sign of an irreputable THA.

# Employment Standards Resources

The *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (ESA) is a law that sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in Ontario. Here are some useful resources that provide general information about employment standards. For further information, visit [Ontario.ca/employmentstandards](https://www.ontario.ca/employmentstandards) or call our information centre toll-free at 1-800-531-5551 (multiple languages are available).

## Your Guide to the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*

[Ontario.ca/ESAGuide](https://www.ontario.ca/ESAGuide) walks you through detailed information about employment standards, including specific rules around pay periods, wage statements and record keeping requirements. It also features a chapter dedicated to temporary help agencies.

## Employers and Recruiters of Foreign Nationals

The *Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, 2009* (EPFNA) covers:

- foreign nationals who work or are seeking work in Ontario pursuant to an immigration or foreign temporary employee program (foreign nationals),
- those who work to find or attempt to find employment for foreign nationals (recruiters), and
- those who employ foreign nationals (employers).

Find out more at [Ontario.ca/EPFNA](https://www.ontario.ca/EPFNA)

## Employment Standards Poster

The Employment Standards Poster describes important rights and requirements under the ESA. Employers are required to give every employee a copy of the poster. It is available in multiple languages and can be downloaded for free at [Ontario.ca/ESAposter](https://www.ontario.ca/ESAposter).

### **Employment Standards Tools**

We have a suite of interactive tools and calculators to help employers understand employment standards such as termination of employment, hours of work and overtime, and public holidays. Learn more at [Ontario.ca/ESAtools](https://www.ontario.ca/ESAtools)

**Disclaimer:** This resource has been prepared to help employees and employers understand some of the minimum rights and obligations established under the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA) and regulations. It is not legal advice. It is not intended to replace the ESA or regulations and reference should always be made to the official version of the legislation. Although we endeavor to ensure that the information in this resource is as current and accurate as possible, errors do occasionally occur. The ESA provides minimum standards only. Some employees may have greater rights under an employment contract, collective agreement, the common law or other legislation. Employers and employees may wish to obtain legal advice.