

Master Brewers Safety Toolbox Talk



Hiring Steps to A Safe Contractor Relationship

Overview

Choosing the contractor is your most important step. Hire the wrong one and you could face unexpected costs, unfinished work, and injured workers. When hiring contractor, it is your responsibility to be through. As the host employer, you can be cited by OSHA under the multi-employer work site rules.

A contractor is anyone hired to provide materials or labor. For certain projects, a general contractor may oversee many subcontractors to complete the work.

Task Experience

Plumbing is not process piping, and a residential electrician isn't an instrumentation and process control technician. Does the contractor do work similar to what you need done? Get references to confirm the contractor has the knowledge and skills to complete the project. A specialist contractor is best, as they'll be experts in every aspect of the task. But when the task is outside their trade, you may need an additional contractor. The process control tech may need a pipe fitter to finish your piping and control work. The experts can provide you with a perfect system that may cost more, and a generalist may do a lower quality job at a lower cost.

Licensed

Qualifications indicate contractor competence. Certain trades require certifications and are highly advised for others. Ask for certificates of competence and memberships in professional organizations. Quality and safety always go hand in hand. They will have the right tools and use them to do a task. This limits chance of injury or damage. A pump bearing is replaced better and safer with a bearing press, not a sledgehammer.

Request Safety Documentation

Confirm the contractor's health and safety program. Beer line cleaning and electrical work are dangerous to workers and even customers. Improper beer line cleaning has

injured customers, so following a written procedure is crucial. For electrical work, the NFPA 70e requires that hosts and contractors know each other's electrical systems and safe work policies, especially for lock out tag out. Ask for policies, procedures, training records and examples of risk assessments to measure their commitment to safe work practices. And you as a host need to share information about the dangers in your brewery. It's appropriate to research for OSHA inspections and violations.

Insured

The insurance coverage depends on the work. The agent or broker will write a Certificate of Insurance to the brewery. Get proof of Workman's Compensation coverage provided on the insurance carrier's letterhead. Uninsured contractor injuries are covered by your insurance, which affects your insurance premiums. Confirm the required insurances, including public liability, employer's liability and professional indemnity. One million dollars of general liability coverage is typical, and you should be listed as an additional insured called a "Certificate Holder". Keep large bills from ending up on your desk!

Bonded

"Licensed, Bonded, and Insured" is truly misunderstood. In this context, it usually refers to a very limited Crime Coverage. Often at limits as low as \$10,000, this coverage is triggered by a Theft for which there is a Conviction. Obviously, this provides us minimal protection.

The bond we are interested in covers our work Performance and Payment, usually projects. Can your contractor secure a bond? Those who can have a pre-qualification more thorough than your check into their background. Ask them to include a Letter of Bond-ability from their Surety/Agent with your bid quote.

If Subcontractors Are Used

If they will, how do they confirm the subcontractors' competence and safety? Your contractor may pass your pre-assessment, but an unsafe subcontractor still affects you. Your contractors should pre-

assess their subcontractors. Otherwise, refuse access for the subcontractor.

Schedule Pre-work Briefings

Your brewery is different from every other brewery. Before work starts in your building, hold a documented meeting with the workers. Explain your safety rules and hazards the workers are exposed to in different parts of the brewery. Until you tell them, your contractors don't know where hot things can burn them, or CO2 can asphyxiate them. Explain how brewers get hurt, not how to brew. Use your new hire safety orientation as your guide. This can be used in a legal situation to show you explained the danger. Answer all safety questions as if they are the most important question in the world. Talk about your electrical system, including electrical drawings. If previous electrical work found system questions, share that information now. Explain forklift traffic. Walk the brewery and explain exits, eye wash, areas they can be trapped in like coolers, etc. Remember that if you are exposed to it, they are too. Make sure they understand evacuation alarms, and that your staff knows to include announcements of emergencies to them.

By following these steps, you can be assured that you are hiring a capable contractor and complying with your legal responsibilities. Remember though, your responsibility doesn't end once a contractor has been appointed – you must also monitor them throughout the project to ensure they are complying with their legal duties.

Pre-assessing contractors takes time. But it protects you and the profits of your brewery, from loss by damage, injury, theft or lawsuit. It's your brewery, protect it.

If you have any questions regarding this, please see your supervisor/manager or a member of the Safety Committee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BREWERY SAFETY, PLEASE VISIT THE MBAA BREWERY SAFETY WEBSITE AT:
<http://www.mbaa.com/brewresources/brewsafety>