



# Hiring Temporary Foreign Workers— Find Out What You Need to Know First

by the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada

**CANADA'S OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY** is experiencing unprecedented demands for labour at a time when many regions of the country are facing labour shortages. To fulfill their labour challenges, petroleum industry companies have been looking into various options, including sourcing workers from outside Canada when the domestic supply of skilled workers is insufficient. One way companies are considering meeting their short-term worker supply needs is by hiring temporary foreign workers.

On the surface, it would seem that this type of recruiting offers employers a valuable opportunity to get the job done; however, if not done properly, hiring temporary foreign workers can create its own set of problems and challenges. For that reason, it is important for

employers to fully understand the process involved and plan carefully for every phase of bringing temporary foreign workers to Canada.

Most companies understand there are a number of steps and potential pitfalls in this process, but they don't know where to start. Several companies have approached the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada to source information they require to complete applications in support of their overseas labour recruitment activities. From these requests, the Council determined that companies needed much more information about the whole process of hiring temporary foreign workers, as well as the risks and rewards of this action.



To meet this information need in a proactive way, the Council created an information piece that outlines the pertinent regulations, definitions, costs, and steps involved in hiring temporary foreign workers. The information, compiled by Calgary-based immigration expert Herman Van Reekum, applies directly to the petroleum industry.

This document clarifies the important concepts involved in hiring this type of worker and highlights some of the key decisions employers need to make once they have decided to embark on this path. The article also contains links to informative websites that readers can refer to if they need more detail about any of the topics.

The information included in the article helps company HR representatives understand the:

- Cost considerations of hiring temporary foreign workers, such as recruiting costs, government fees, and relocation expenses;
- Differences between immigrants, who are moving to Canada permanently, and temporary foreign workers, who have restrictions placed on who they work for and how long they may stay in Canada;
- Need for a Labour Market Opinion (LMO), issued from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC);
- Process of applying for an LMO, including setting clear job descriptions, proving the company has tried to find Canadian workers for the position(s) and proving that the wages and working conditions being offered to the foreign worker are up to Canadian standards;
- Required paperwork, such as work permits, visas, and professional or trade credentials;
- Recruitment process, including issues to consider, where to source temporary foreign workers, and what external recruitment resources may be required;
- Programs that smooth the relocation process, such as orientations, language training, and cultural sensitivity training for front-line supervisors and coworkers;
- Adjustments workers new to Canada must make as they become accustomed to different languages, cultures, working environments, living standards, and even weather; and

- Options following the end of the temporary worker's term, including rotation, repatriation, or immigration.

By providing this comprehensive information, the Council is providing petroleum industry companies with a reputable resource to make informed workforce decisions that make good business sense for their operations.

The information on hiring temporary foreign workers is posted on the Petroleum HR Council's website at: [www.petrohrsc.ca](http://www.petrohrsc.ca).

*This monthly column covers current topics, strategies, solutions, and insights into human resources issues in the upstream petroleum sector.*

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