

The Interview With The Hotel Manager Birchwood Lodge

Posted on September 20, 2019

For the purpose of this assignment, the manager of the hotel, Birchwood Lodge, was interviewed. The interviewee's name is Roman Collak, and he is originally from Slovakia, Europe. Roman runs the Birchwood Lodge hotel and is basically in charge of everything that is going on in the company, such as managing his crew, including the accountant, supervisor, front desk, maintenance workers, and housekeepers.

Roman is responsible for hiring or firing employees. Additionally, Roman is in charge of how much the company is going to spend on renovations or raising the wages of the workers in a year. On top of that, Roman makes schedules for his front desk. While fulfilling all of these responsibilities, Roman asked the following legal question: What work health and safety regulations apply to his obligation "to provide their needs during their recuperating time such as surgeries, clinic consultations and other medical needs to be paid for"?

Roman hires students from different countries in Europe every summer. Therefore, his scenario includes temporary foreign workers. For American employers, occupational safety and health remain key responsibilities. In 2024, the accommodation and food-services industry reported hundreds of thousands of nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses, while the broader leisure-and-hospitality sector also recorded fatal occupational injuries (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2025). The employer's emphasis and focus on the duty of care has increased because injuries can create legal liability, workers' compensation costs, lost productivity, staff turnover, and ethical concerns. Foreign nationality does not reduce a worker's entitlement to a safe U.S. workplace.

Regulatory Background

The U.S. Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970 and created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The agency sets and enforces workplace safety and health standards, conducts inspections, and provides compliance assistance. The same law created the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which conducts research and makes recommendations regarding occupational hazards. The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission provides independent review of contested OSHA citations and penalties.

Duties Of Employers Under Occupational Safety And Health Administration

OSHA or an OSHA-approved state plan covers most private-sector employers and employees in the United States. The employer's nationality is not the deciding factor. If Roman operates a hotel within the United States and employs workers there, the applicable federal or state-plan safety rules generally apply to that workplace. OSHA requires employers to provide a workplace free from recognized serious hazards, comply with applicable standards, examine workplace conditions, maintain safe tools and equipment, communicate hazards, provide required personal protective equipment, and train workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand (Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], 2026).

Roman should not assume that hiring European students changes these obligations. A student participating in the Department of State's Summer Work Travel program may work temporarily in the United States through an authorized sponsor, and sponsors and employers have responsibilities connected with the participant's health, safety, welfare, placement, and working conditions (U.S. Department of State, 2026). The employer must also verify work authorization as required by immigration law and comply with wage, hour, antidiscrimination, and other employment laws.

The General Duty Clause Of Occupational Safety And Health Administration

Employers must comply with specific OSHA standards that apply to their operations. They also have a general duty to protect workers from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm. In a hotel, potential hazards may include slips and falls, lifting and repetitive-motion injuries, exposure to cleaning chemicals, blood or bodily fluids, workplace violence, heat, electrical hazards, machinery, ladders, and fire or emergency risks.

The general duty does not mean that employers must pay every medical expense regardless of cause. Whether treatment, wage replacement, or disability benefits are payable depends on whether the injury or illness is work-related and on the workers' compensation law of the state. The hotel should report injuries promptly, provide emergency assistance, cooperate with medical restrictions, and follow applicable leave and accommodation laws.

Occupational Safety And Health Administration-

Mandated Written Plans

In an attempt to keep employees safe, employers may need to prepare and implement written plans depending on the hazards present. Examples include hazard communication, exposure-control plans for bloodborne pathogens when occupational exposure is reasonably anticipated, respiratory-protection programs when respirators are required, emergency-action plans, fire-prevention plans, and procedures for personal protective equipment.

Hotel management should maintain written procedures for safe housekeeping, chemical handling, lifting and moving furniture, needle or sharp-object encounters, maintenance work, pool chemicals, laundry operations, emergency evacuation, and workplace violence. NIOSH guidance for hotel workers highlights common risks affecting housekeepers, front-desk staff, maintenance staff, laundry workers, and other hotel employees, including ergonomic strain, slips, chemical exposure, and work organization (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH], 2023).

Record Keeping

Many employers with more than ten employees must maintain OSHA injury and illness records unless they qualify for an industry exemption. The forms commonly include the OSHA 300 Log, OSHA 301 Incident Report, and OSHA 300A annual summary. Covered employers must also report a work-related fatality to OSHA within eight hours and report an in-patient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye within twenty-four hours. The records generally must be retained for five years. OSHA's employer guidance explains that recordkeeping duties depend on establishment size, industry, and whether an incident meets the regulatory definition of a recordable case (OSHA, 2026).

Workers Training

OSHA standards require employers to train workers regarding the hazards and controls relevant to their jobs. Such training must be effective and, where a standard requires it, documented. Roman should provide orientation before employees begin hazardous tasks and repeat training when duties, equipment, chemicals, or procedures change.

Training should be understandable to international students whose first language may not be English. It should cover hazard reporting, emergency procedures, chemical labels and safety data sheets, lifting techniques, slips and falls, personal protective equipment, harassment or violence reporting, and how to obtain medical help. Under the Summer Work Travel program, sponsors must monitor participants and respond to issues affecting their health, safety, and welfare; therefore, the employer should communicate promptly with the program sponsor when a serious incident or unsafe condition arises (U.S. Department of State, 2026).

Occupational Risks And The Families Of Workers

If workers are exposed to hazardous substances, there may be a risk that contamination is carried home on clothing, footwear, tools, or personal items. Examples can include lead, asbestos, pesticides, infectious materials, or hazardous dusts. Hotels are less likely than heavy industrial workplaces to involve some of these substances, but maintenance or renovation work may create specialized risks. Employers should identify hazards, use the hierarchy of controls, provide changing or decontamination facilities when required, and prevent contaminated equipment or clothing from leaving the workplace.

Hotel housekeeping also presents significant ergonomic risks. Repeated bed making, pushing carts, lifting mattresses, cleaning bathrooms, and working in awkward postures can contribute to musculoskeletal injuries. NIOSH recommends involving workers in identifying hazards, improving tools and work organization, training employees, and evaluating whether controls reduce injuries (NIOSH, 2023).

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation generally provides medical treatment and wage-replacement or disability benefits for qualifying work-related injuries and occupational illnesses. For most private-sector hotel employees, workers' compensation is administered at the state level, and requirements vary by state. The U.S. Department of Labor administers separate federal programmes for federal employees and certain specialized groups, but it directs private-sector employees to the relevant state workers' compensation board (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], 2026).

Roman therefore needs to identify the state in which Birchwood Lodge operates, maintain the required insurance or approved self-insurance, post required notices, report claims promptly, and avoid retaliation against employees who report injuries. Temporary or foreign-worker status does not automatically exclude an employee from coverage. Independent-contractor status also cannot be assigned merely by using a label; the actual working relationship and the applicable state test determine coverage.

The interview statement about paying for surgeries, clinic consultations, and other medical needs should be clarified. The employer is not ordinarily responsible for every employee medical expense. Work-related treatment may be covered through workers' compensation, while non-work-related treatment may be handled through health insurance, paid leave, sick leave, disability benefits, or the employee's own arrangements. Federal laws such as the Family and Medical Leave Act and Americans with Disabilities Act may also apply depending on employer size, employee eligibility, and the circumstances.

International And Temporary-Worker Considerations

Roman's practice of hiring European students requires attention to the specific visa and exchange programme. The BridgeUSA Summer Work Travel programme permits eligible post-secondary students to participate in temporary work and cultural exchange for a limited period. Sponsors must vet placements, maintain contact with participants, and address welfare concerns. Employers should provide accurate job descriptions, lawful wages, reasonable hours, safe housing or transportation arrangements when those are offered, and immediate communication about serious incidents (U.S. Department of State, 2026).

OSHA protections generally apply without regard to immigration status, but immigration authorization determines whether the person may lawfully accept the job. Roman should complete Form I-9 properly, coordinate with the authorized sponsor, and avoid keeping passports or coercing employees. Workers should receive information about their rights and know how to contact the sponsor, emergency services, OSHA, or other agencies.

Operational Challenges

Even the general duty of care can be challenging in busy hotels because of high turnover, language differences, temporary staff, irregular shifts, chemical use, physically demanding housekeeping, lone work, guest interactions, and maintenance emergencies. Quality management tools are indispensable to address these challenges and keep employees safe.

Roman should establish a practical safety programme that includes management commitment, worker participation, hazard identification, preventive controls, education, incident investigation, and continuous improvement. Injury data should be reviewed for patterns rather than used only for compliance. In 2024, accommodation and food services recorded a total recordable injury-and-illness rate of 2.6 cases per 100 full-time workers, demonstrating that the sector's risks are material and measurable (BLS, 2025).

Conclusion

Roman's scenario includes temporary foreign workers because he hires students from different countries in Europe every summer. If the hotel operates in the United States, Roman is generally bound by OSHA or an OSHA-approved state plan, applicable wage and immigration rules, state workers' compensation law, and the requirements of any exchange programme involved. His duties include providing a safe workplace, controlling recognized hazards, maintaining required written programmes and records, training employees in understandable language, reporting serious

incidents, coordinating with sponsors, and carrying the required workers' compensation coverage.

The statement that the employer must pay for surgeries, consultations, and every medical need is too broad. The correct legal route depends on whether the condition is work-related, the state workers' compensation system, available insurance, leave laws, and the employee's status. Roman should obtain state-specific legal and insurance advice, but the immediate operational priority is a documented hotel safety programme designed around the actual hazards faced by front-desk, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance, and seasonal workers (OSHA, 2026; NIOSH, 2023).

References

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