



Safe Environments

Healthy Workers

## 5 TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING AN UNSAFE WORK SITUATION

To make a living, to get a foot in the door to that dream job, you may have to take on part-time jobs or temporary work. You may also have to perform work for which you have little or no experience. The jobs are low in pay, and you have little control over the work you do. Precarious work also tends to come with a level of risk, which can jeopardize your health and safety. Regardless of the type of job you have, your employer must take every precaution reasonable to protect you from getting injured at work. The challenge is, if your employer fails to meet this expectation and you find yourself in an unsafe, unhealthy situation or worse, you got injured on the job, should you speak up



### **ABSOLUTELY! HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION:**

#### **1. WRITE IT DOWN.**

- What is the specific concern, or dangerous situation?
- How might you or someone else get hurt?
- What do you think can be done to address the hazard?

## 2. PRACTICE

- Practice what you will say so that you can share your concerns confidently

## 3. REACH OUT

- Consult your co-workers who are doing the same job to find out if they feel the same way that you do.
- Also, reach out to your company's health and safety representative. The individual's name should be on your company health and safety bulletin board. They can help you with company processes on how to report a hazard.
- If you work in a unionized workplace, you can also reach out to your union representative if your safety concerns are not addressed.

## 4. TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR

- Tell your supervisor that you think that the work is unsafe.
- Explain the specific concern and how someone might get hurt.
- Share ideas that you have to make the work safer.

## 5. IF YOU STILL FEEL THE WORK IS UNSAFE. STOP.

- In Ontario, you have the right to refuse work that you believe is dangerous to either your co-workers or yourself
- Tell your supervisor that you think that the work is unsafe and you are refusing to work. You need to stay at the job site when you do this. Your complaint will be investigated, and your health and safety representative can be there to support you. Ask for them if you need.

## WHAT IF YOUR EMPLOYER OR SUPERVISOR IGNORES YOUR COMPLAINT?

You have options. Bring it up again. Don't be afraid of speaking up! The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act is the law that serves to protect workers in the workplace, and all employers must follow it. Under the Act, Part 6 specifies that employers are prohibited from worker reprisals. In other words, employers cannot punish you for speaking up about health and safety concerns in the workplace; it is illegal.

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*You can get assistance from the Ontario Ministry of Labour. Reach out to them by telephone at 1-877-202-0008 and inform them of your situation. This number operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

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