

# Refusing Unsafe Work

[Refusing unsafe work - WorkSafeBC](#) website

As a worker, you have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a work process or using a tool or machine puts you or someone else at risk, you must not perform the job or task. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe and to remedy the situation.

As a worker, you may not be disciplined or penalized for following these steps. Your employer or supervisor may temporarily assign a new task to you, at no loss in pay. As an employer, workers are your eyes and ears on the front line of workplace health and safety. When workers refuse work because they believe it's unsafe, consider it an opportunity to investigate and correct a situation that could have caused harm. Steps to follow when work might be unsafe

## **1. Report the unsafe condition or procedure**

- As a worker, you must immediately stop the work and report the unsafe condition to your employer or supervisor.
- As an employer or supervisor, you must investigate the matter and fix it if possible. If you do not agree with the worker that the condition is unsafe, report back to the worker.
- If the worker and the employer or supervisor can't agree on how to resolve the matter, move to step 2. As employer or supervisor, if you believe the work can safely be done by another worker while the matter is under investigation, you must:
  - Give notice in writing to the workers assigned or permitted to do the work
  - Give notice in writing to a worker representative of the joint health and safety committee, a union representative, or other worker, as applicable
  - Ensure the written notice includes:
    - The refusal and the reported unsafe condition
    - Reasons why the task would not create an undue hazard
    - The workers' right to refuse the work

**2. If the matter is not resolved in step 1**

- Both the worker and the employer or supervisor must investigate the matter in the presence of one of the following:
  - A worker representative of the joint health and safety committee (or worker health and safety representative)
  - A worker chosen by the worker's trade union
  - Any other worker chosen by the worker who first reported the unsafe condition

**3. If the matter is still not resolved, notify WorkSafeBC**

- If the matter is not resolved after following steps 1 and 2, both the worker and the supervisor or employer must contact WorkSafeBC. Call 604.276.3100, or toll-free 1.888.621.7233. A prevention officer will then investigate and take steps to find a workable solution.

For more information about the refusal process, please see [OHS Guideline G3.12](#).