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Work Safe for Life

REPORTING HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS AT THE WORKPLACE

A guide for employers and supervisors on empowering workers to speak up about unsafe conditions

Safety is everyone's responsibility in the workplace. When a worker reports a hazard to the jobsite supervisor, all workplace parties can work together to prevent an incident, injury, illness, or fatality before it happens.

Empowering workers to report unsafe conditions

You can create a workplace where workers feel empowered to speak up about unsafe conditions without fear of retaliation. You can achieve this outcome by fostering a culture of safety, providing clear reporting systems, and ensuring swift action to resolve concerns.

Use the following strategies to encourage reporting in your workplace.

- **Promote a safety-first culture:**
  - Encourage open communication and prioritize safety in all aspects of the workplace.
  - Make it clear that health and safety concerns will be taken seriously.
- **Create clear reporting channels:**
  - Establish simple, accessible, and anonymous reporting systems for workers to report unsafe conditions.
  - Ensure workers are aware of these channels and knowledgeable of how to use them.
- **Train workers and supervisors:**
  - Train workers and supervisors regularly on recognizing hazards, reporting unsafe conditions, and understanding their rights and responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- **Respond promptly to reports:**
  - Act quickly to investigate and resolve reported hazards.
  - Keep workers informed of the steps that you take to mitigate the risk and show that their concerns are valued.
- **Document and track incidents:**
  - Keep detailed records of all reported hazards and the actions you take to resolve them. This process will help you to identify recurring issues and demonstrate your commitment to workplace health and safety.
- **Protect against retaliation:**
  - Implement and enforce anti-retaliation policies to ensure workers feel safe about reporting hazards.
  - Respond to any retaliatory actions against workers who report a hazard with disciplinary measures.
- **Involve workers in safety decisions:**
  - Engage workers in regular safety meetings and encourage their input on potential safety improvements. Workers on the front line often have valuable insights into the risks associated with their work and the best practices for safely completing the work.
- **Review and improve safety protocols:**
  - Assess and update safety procedures continuously to reflect changes in the workplace or industry. Regular safety audits help to identify potential areas for improvement.
- **Encourage reporting with positive reinforcement:**
  - Recognize and reward workers who actively report hazards or contribute to a safer working environment in other ways. This approach reinforces the importance of reporting and shows that worker health and safety is your top priority.