

A culture of care: Why speaking up matters

Explain dangers

Working safely is a daily promise that you make to yourself and to those who care about you. Safety is also your legal responsibility in the workplace. When you see a health and safety hazard and report it to your supervisor, you can prevent someone from being injured or killed at the workplace.

Identify controls

Understand workers' duties

Sections 28(1)(c) and 28(1)(d) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) say that workers must do the following to ensure the safety of themselves and others at the workplace:

- Report to their employer or supervisor the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger themselves or another worker
- Report to their employer or supervisor any contravention of the OHSA or the regulations or the existence of any hazard of which they know

Avoid complacency

As a worker, you must always be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards. You should take precautions to avoid becoming complacent about health and safety.

Complacency is a mindset that develops when you underestimate the hazards at the workplace and the risk of an incident. It leads you to be less aware of your surroundings and less vigilant about following health and safety policies and procedures.

Use these strategies to avoid complacency:

- Make sure you have received the appropriate training and education to perform tasks safely, address hazards at the workplace, and understand the risks of the work.

- Prioritize health and safety and encourage others to do the same. Wearing personal protective equipment, following procedures, and reporting concerns can set the tone for how the entire workplace treats health and safety.
- Check in with yourself and your co-workers about your mental health. The risk of complacency is higher when a worker is not in the right frame of mind to focus on the task. To check in with yourself, ask these key questions: Am I in a good place? Is there something that I need to do to be more focused on the job and aware of the hazards? Checking in with a co-worker can be as simple as asking them about how they are doing.

Take action to control hazards

Share health and safety concerns with your supervisor as soon as possible:

1. When you notice a hazard, verbally report it to the site supervisor or use your company's system to report it anonymously.
2. Provide recommendations to your supervisor on how to eliminate or control the hazard, if you are knowledgeable of controls.
3. Follow up on the report. If your supervisor did not respond to your concern, inform the next level of management within the company.

You have the right to refuse work that you believe endangers your health and safety or the health and safety of others (per Section 43(3) of the OHSA).

Follow your workplace procedure for work refusal. Your employer cannot fire or discipline you for refusing unsafe work or for asking them to address a hazard in the workplace.

Demonstrate

Review the worker responsibilities outlined in Section 28 of the OHSA. Go over the protocol for reporting hazards, as well as the workplace procedure for work refusal.

Ask each member of your crew to pledge that they will report workplace hazards.