

Getting a job?

A new job can make you nervous, especially if it's your first one. It can be scary to speak up when you feel unsafe, but being aware of safety issues at work is an important part of your job.

Young and new workers — especially male workers — are more at risk of being injured on the job. Injuries can happen in what may look like safe workplaces — for example, restaurants or stores. But even these workplaces can have significant hazards. Your safety is important and definitely worth asking about. Do you know what questions to ask? Have you been given training on how to do your job safely? Do you know your safety rights in the workplace?

We're here to help.

Ask questions about safety

WORK SAFE BC

Your health and safety rights

Workers in B.C. have three basic health and safety rights:

- 1 The right to know about hazards in the workplace
- 2 The right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace
- 3 The right to refuse unsafe work without being punished or fired

Safety starts on Day 1

When starting a new job, or interviewing for one, everyone wants to make a good first impression. Asking questions about health and safety may not be top of mind, but learning more about safety procedures is always a positive thing. It shows your employer that you're proactive about safety and likely to be engaged in all aspects of your job. Asking these questions is also a way for you to learn how much value your employer puts on workplace health and safety. The most important part of any job is that you get home safe every day, and that starts with being aware and knowing what to look for.

Here are some questions to ask during an interview:

- What safety training and orientation will I get before I start work?
- What safety hazards does the job involve (for example, hot oil, high noise levels, moving equipment)?
- Will I be trained in how to prevent injuries?
- What are my health and safety responsibilities?
- Is there a safety committee? How can I learn more or be a part of it?
- If I'm injured at work, what's the procedure?

After you're hired

Even experienced workers can have trouble talking to their boss about safety, but your manager or supervisor wants you to be safe and injury-free. Speaking up shows that you respect your work, so always ask if you're not sure how to do something safely.

Your manager will respect you for asking. Approach them respectfully, speak confidently, and listen carefully to the answer. Say something like:

- I really like (for example, "doing this job" or "working with this equipment") but there's a lot to learn. Can you please go over it with me again?
- I think I've got the hang of this but can you watch me to make sure I'm not missing anything?
- I'm still not comfortable with this. Can you please explain it again?

Reporting concerns

Workplace health and safety is a shared responsibility. Your employer is responsible for training, orientation, providing personal protective equipment, and putting safe work practices in place. You are responsible for following safe work procedures, wearing safety gear, and reporting any safety concerns you have. Even though it can be hard to bring up these issues, most managers know that safety pays off and will appreciate it if you talk to them about any safety hazards you see.



If you have a concern:

- 1 Talk to your supervisor or manager and explain why you're uncomfortable. In most cases this will resolve the problem. If you are not sure if you should be concerned ask your co-workers. There is strength in numbers, so consider going as a group to your supervisor if you have concerns.
- 2 If you don't get a satisfactory response from your supervisor or they are not available, go to that person's supervisor.
- 3 If you're still not satisfied, talk to your safety representative, a safety committee member, or a union steward.
- 4 Most problems are solved at this stage. If they are not, you can contact WorkSafeBC anonymously and explain your safety concerns. A prevention officer will investigate and take steps to find a solution. Call 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland or toll-free 1.888.621.7233.

Refusing unsafe work

You have the right to refuse unsafe work. This can be a tough thing to do, but sometimes it's necessary. Not only is refusing unsafe work your right, it's your responsibility. The good news is that most employers are more than willing to listen when you talk about safety problems. Keep your cool, be polite, and respectfully explain to your supervisor why you can't complete the job.

It is against the law for employers to fire or punish you for refusing or reporting unsafe work. And if they did, would you really want to work there?

So listen to your gut. If something doesn't feel safe at work, talk to your boss.

We're here to help

You can make a difference — and we're here to help. If you need more information, or you're unsure about your workplace rights and responsibilities, visit worksafebc.com/ListenToYourGut. You can also call us at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free 1.888.621.7233) or email yworker@worksafebc.com.

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