

Refusing unsafe work

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a job or task 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 remedy the situation.

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.

If a worker refuses work because it's unsafe, workplace procedures will allow the issue to be properly understood and corrected. As a worker, you have the right to refuse to perform a specific job or task you believe is unsafe without being disciplined by your employer. Your employer or supervisor may temporarily assign a new task to you, at no loss in pay.

Steps to follow when work might be unsafe

1. Report the unsafe condition or procedure:

- As a worker, you must immediately report the unsafe condition to your supervisor.
- As a supervisor, you must investigate the matter and fix it if possible. If you decide the worker's concern is not valid, report back to the worker.

2. If a worker still views work as unsafe after a supervisor has said it is safe to perform a job or task:

- As a supervisor, you must investigate the problem and ensure any unsafe condition is fixed.
- This investigation must take place in the presence of the worker and a worker representative of the joint health and safety committee.

3. If a worker still views work as unsafe, notify WorkSafeBC:

- If the matter is not resolved, the worker and the supervisor must contact WorkSafeBC. A prevention officer will then investigate and take steps to find a workable solution.