

## Discussion Questions

This resource is designed to facilitate meaningful conversations about workplace safety. Every year, thousands of young workers are injured on the job, often due to a lack of awareness about their rights and the importance of working for an employer who respects them. Below, you'll find discussion questions that will support a deep and impactful dialogue about this issue.

### **1. Workplace safety may seem like a boring topic, but why is it one of the most important issues to learn about?**

- Workplace safety is ubiquitous. Whether you work on a construction site or in an office, workplace safety affects everyone.
- When it comes to workplace safety, the stakes are high. Physical injuries and emotional injuries sustained at work can have consequences that last a lifetime.
- By understanding these issues now, you'll be better equipped to handle them effectively when they inevitably arise.

### **2. Have you, or has someone you know, been injured at work? How did it affect that person?**

- According to statistics, every year around 1,000 Canadians are killed in a workplace accident.
- Every year, tens of thousands of Canadians are injured at work.
- The true scope of the problem is unknown, as many workplace injuries, if not most, go unreported.

### **3. What are some bad employer red flags mentioned in the video?**

- Safety isn't even mentioned at work.
- Doesn't care if you're sick or injured.
- Uses job security as intimidation.
- Encourages you to cut corners.
- Responds to issues with criticism instead of support.
- Pressures you to prioritize production over safety.
- Threatens job loss for refusing unsafe work.

### **4. What should you do if you notice any of these red flags at your workplace?**

- Speak out: Talk to a friend, co-worker, or supervisor.
- It's hard to make changes alone, but it's easier when we work together.
- If nothing changes, consider looking for a new job. There are many good employers that understand the importance of workplace safety. You deserve to work for an employer that respects you.

### **5. What is the right to refuse unsafe work? How do you exercise this right?**

- The right to refuse unsafe work is a legal protection that allows workers to decline to perform a job or task that they believe poses a danger to themselves or others.
- It is illegal for your employer to punish you for refusing unsafe work.
- The worker should first report the unsafe condition to their supervisor or employer as soon as possible.

- Upon being notified, the employer must investigate the concern immediately.
- If the worker still believes the work is unsafe after the employer's investigation, they can continue to refuse to perform the task and call the Ministry of Labour to perform an inspection.

## 6. What is a workplace reprisal and why is it illegal?

- A workplace reprisal refers to any negative action taken by an employer against an employee who has raised concerns about workplace safety, asserted their rights under health and safety laws, or refused to perform unsafe work.
- Reprisals can include termination, demotion, disciplinary action, or any other form of penalty or intimidation.
- Laws against reprisals help maintain open communication about potential hazards, encouraging workers to participate actively in their own protection and the safety of their colleagues.

## 7. What are the different forms of workplace harassment and bullying?

- Verbal Harassment: Insults, offensive jokes, and mocking based on someone's race, gender, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics.
- Physical Harassment: Unwanted physical contact ranging from touching to physical assault and threats.
- Psychological Harassment: Actions designed to intimidate, isolate, or demean an individual, including constant criticism, spreading rumours, or sabotaging someone's work.
- Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and sharing pornography at work.
- Discrimination: Comments, jokes, actions, or threats directed at someone based on their protected characteristics, like race, ethnic background, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

## 8. If you or a co-worker are being harassed or bullied at work, what should you do?

- Document the Incidents: Keep a detailed record of what happened, including dates, times, what was said or done, and any witnesses.
- Report the Behaviour: Inform your supervisor, HR department, or another appropriate authority within your organization. Follow any specific procedures your company has for reporting.
- Seek Support: Talk to someone you trust for support, such as a colleague, a union representative, or a mental health professional.
- Know Your Rights: Familiarize yourself with your workplace's policies on harassment and bullying, as well as your legal rights in the jurisdiction you are in.
- Escalate the Issue: If the situation is not addressed satisfactorily at a lower level, consider escalating the matter to higher management or external authorities such as a labor board or human rights commission.
- Consider Legal Advice: If the harassment or bullying continues or your workplace does not take your complaints seriously, consult with a legal professional who specializes in employment law.

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Make a  
commitment to  
oppose unsafe work.