

## Refusal of unsafe work

### After this huddle, staff should be able to:

- **Recognize** when a worker has the right to refuse unsafe work.
- **List** the first steps to take when they believe work is unsafe.
- **Locate** the formal process for refusing unsafe work.

### How to run the safety huddle

As the huddle leader, do the following:

#### Before the Huddle

- Review the huddle content and huddle leader notes.
- Prepare copies of the SafeCare BC Refusal of Unsafe Work Toolkit.

- Prepare copies of your organization's written work refusal procedure.

#### During the huddle

- Review your organization's process for reporting unsafe or harmful acts or conditions.
- Review the three-step process for investigating a refusal of unsafe work from the toolkit.

#### Leading the discussion

- Select a scenario relevant to your workplace and read it aloud to participants.
- Allow time for participants to work through the scenario using the toolkit.
- Use guiding questions and huddle leader notes to facilitate the discussion.
- Keep the discussion focused and within 5–10 minutes.



### Scenario for long-term care

1. Jenna is assigned to transfer a resident using a ceiling lift. As she prepares for the task, she notices the ceiling lift is not functioning properly. The ceiling lift jerks while moving and makes unusual noises. Concerned for both her safety and the resident's, Jenna stops the task and reports the issue to her supervisor, stating that she does not feel safe using the equipment.
2. Aaron is tasked to transfer a resident using a sit-to-stand lift. He has not received any training on how to use the lift and feels unsafe completing the transfer. He reports his concern to his supervisor saying that he feels unsafe using equipment he hasn't been trained to use.

### Scenario for home care

1. Maria, a health care assistant, arrives at a client's home and finds the client's adult son visibly intoxicated and yelling angrily about the home care agency. He blocks the hallway and moves towards her, and Maria feels at risk of violence. She tells the client she cannot stay because she feels unsafe, leaves the home, and immediately calls her supervisor to report the situation.



### Guiding questions

- What steps should the supervisor take after the worker reports the issue?
  - What other steps should be taken if the issue is not resolved?
  - If you were unsure about the refusal of unsafe work process, where would you go or who would you ask for help?
- ### Huddle leader notes
1. Create a safe space:
    - Listen, respect all views, and be mindful of others' challenges.
    - Guide the discussion to focus on what participants can control.
    - Move the conversation from complaints to solutions, strengths, and helpful actions.
    - Invite anyone with specific concerns to talk with you after the huddle.
  2. Key discussion points: Use the objectives and key discussion points below to guide the huddle if needed.
    - **What does the right to refuse unsafe work mean?** Workers in British Columbia have the right to refuse work they believe is unsafe. If a worker observes a task or condition that appears unsafe or harmful, they must stop the task and report the concern to their supervisor as soon as possible.
    - **Reinforce with staff** that the first step in refusing unsafe work is to not do the task and report it as soon as possible to their supervisor.
    - **Show staff** where they can find your organization's written work refusal procedure and the SafeCare BC Refusal of Unsafe Work Toolkit for future reference

