

# HOW TO REFUSE DANGEROUS / UNSAFE WORK



*Have you been asked to do something at work that could hurt you or a co-worker?*

This includes danger from:



Equipment / Tools



Procedures / Processes



Workplace Conditions



Violence / Harassment / Bullying



Most workers have the right to say NO to unsafe work\*...

\* that is not part of your normal job



...without getting into trouble or being punished.

The people involved in the process are:



Your Employer



Fellow Workers



YOU



Your Worker Representative\*



MLSTD Inspector†

## Follow these steps:

1

**Talk to other workers.** Tell them why you are worried and want to use your *right to refuse*.



**Remember...** your co-workers can support you and help draw attention to the issue.



**Tell your employer / supervisor.** Explain why you feel the work is unsafe.

2

*"I want to exercise my right to refuse to do a task because I believe it is dangerous to me and/or other workers".*



**The employer must investigate**

3

They must do it with both **you** and your **worker representative\*** present.



The employer can choose to fix the hazard...

4

...or they may disagree with you, and say there is no danger.

If you are confident – have reason to believe – it is still dangerous, you can once again exercise your **right to refuse** dangerous work.

5

If you do so, **you** or your **employer** must call the government inspector at the **Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD)** – See *contact information below*



MLSTD Inspector

The MLTSD will send an inspector out to investigate your concern(s).

6

After investigating, the inspector must provide their decision in writing without delay to:



Your Employer



You



Your Worker Representative†

**Be sure to hang on to your copy**

**While waiting for the inspector's decision:**



Stay in a **safe place** away from the hazard.

7

Offer to do **another job** (for which you are trained and have the right gear) – to show your willingness to work,



Note: Someone else can be asked to do the job if you are there, and they are told that you refused and why.



If the inspector **AGREES** with your concern, the employer must fix the hazard, usually by a specified deadline.

8

If the inspector **DISAGREES** with your concern, you must return to work...



...or you can **appeal\*** the inspector's decision, but you must return to work until that happens.

9

If you are going to appeal, we highly recommend you contact a Legal Aid Clinic – See *contact information below*

\* the appeal must go to the Ontario Labour Relations Board within 30 days

**Remember...**

Employers **must NOT punish you** in any way for refusing dangerous work.



Employers **must pay you** for your time, at your usual rate.

\* Worker Representative: A worker health and safety representative, joint health and safety committee member or someone that workers choose.

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc.  
**OHCO**  
 .on.ca  
 1-877-817-0336  
[ask@ohcow.on.ca](mailto:ask@ohcow.on.ca)

Local Legal Aid Clinic  
 Find the nearest one:  
 1-800-668-8258\*  
[www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics/](http://www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics/)

Ministry of Labour, Training, Skills and Development (MLTSD)  
 Health and Safety Contact Centre  
 1-877-202-0008\*  
 Press 1 for Work Refusals.  
[webohs@ontario.ca](mailto:webohs@ontario.ca)

\*Ask to speak to someone in your language