

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Catastrophic workplace events in recent years have highlighted the importance that we communicate to every worker that they have three basic rights in the workplace:

The right to know the hazards

Employers have the responsibility to inform workers of known or foreseeable hazards in the workplace.

Workers have the right to know the hazards and the controls that are in place to prevent injuries.

The right to participate in safety activities

Workers participate in safety in many ways: by following established procedures, wearing appropriate safety equipment, participating in crew talks or on safety committees, to name a few.



The right to refuse unsafe work

Everyone has the right, the responsibility and the obligation, to refuse to do work if they feel that performing the work would cause undue risk of injury to themselves or to anyone else.



There are three steps in the refusal of unsafe work:

*Worker notifies supervisor,
who investigates.*

Under the *Workers Compensation Act*, Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of their workers. Therefore, the Supervisor needs to be given the opportunity to resolve the issue at the first step.

Often this involves training or communication of safety controls. If the worker is satisfied, the work gets done.

If the worker still believes that to perform the work would create an undue risk of injury:

*The supervisor, worker,
and member of the joint
occupational health and safety
committee investigate. A
representative from the union
may also be present.*

If the worker still believes that to perform the work would create an undue risk of injury:

*WorkSafeBC
is called in
to assist.*

At no time can a worker be disciplined for refusing to perform work, if the worker truly felt it would cause undue harm to themselves or others.