

Finding Your Voice, Knowing Your Rights

Safety Tips for Alberta Workplaces

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Safety Tips In Action – Bullying at Work

Tip 1: Ensure safety training includes a discussion of psycho-social safety and a comprehensive account of safety

- We all benefit from open dialogue about psychosocial safety because employers and employees are often not clear about this workplace hazard.
- This involves both workers and employers:
 - Many techniques used to create safe physical workspaces work for safe psychosocial workspaces.
 - Talk about psychosocial hazards during meetings.
 - Poll staff anonymously to assess their understanding.
 - Weave psychosocial safety into health and safety committees and into the roles of health and safety representatives.
 - Weave psychosocial training into formal parts of the job.
 - Samples of psychosocial policy statements and resources can be found through the Government of Alberta.

Tip 2: Have mechanisms in place for workers to report bullying and harassment in the workplace.

- Psychosocial hazards will remain in workplaces if employees can't comfortably report them. Employees must trust that their claims are taken seriously and effectively dealt with.
- Offer multiple options for reporting.
- Ensure confidentiality and lack of reprisal when a complaint is made.
- Ensure that actions that police psychosocial hazards have their intended consequence and stop the hazard from harming staff.
- Reward employees for flagging hazards.
- Ensure that information is clear and consistent, and communicated through multiple avenues.
- Take reports seriously and follow up on them, no matter how difficult it is.

Finding Your Voice, Knowing Your Rights Safety Tips In Action – Learning a new task

Tip 1 and 2: Confirm employees are trained before assigning a new task, ask them to explain how to use tools, and supervise their operation.

- Communication is collaborative, yet fear, stress, and reluctance to speak out effect workplace communication.
 - Check comprehension beyond rote memorization or language.
 - If there is a language barrier, have a colleague translate or act as a mentor during and after training.
 - Encourage a workplace where staff are comfortable saying they have not been trained or don't understand something.
 - Ensure there is no reprisal when promoting safety knowledge.
 - Schedule comprehension checks in non-stressful times.
 - Don't test staff on their language ability.

Tip 3: Remember there are power differences between employers and employees, and it may be difficult for the employee to refuse work even if they don't feel safe.

- Power in the workplace is related to personality types, positions in the workplace, and other factors like background, age, gender, and experience.
 - Factor in power dynamics when checking comprehension. Ask questions that demonstrate ability and information, not yes/no answers.
 - Tell staff it's okay to say they do not know how to do something. This can be done throughout training via formal documents, mentor-mentee support, staff resources, PD opportunities.
 - Respond positively when employees are honest about their abilities.
 - Have contingency plans when employees can't complete a task safely.
 - Issues of power can also come from customers. Let customers know that safety is a priority.

Finding Your Voice, Knowing Your Rights Safety Tips In Action – Asking for help

Tip 1: Reach workers with different language or literacy levels through a variety of training methods.

- Keep training flexible and responsive to address language and learning barriers.
- Provide materials or policies in several languages. Use translators to assist in training if available.
- Seek out translated material, such as WCB forms and tutorials.
- Use mentorship as one-on-one training helps to support comprehension. Mentors can also be translators.
- Ensure assessment is skills based and not language fluency. Rely on simple language.

Tip 2: Use visuals, hands-on training, and avoid text-heavy manuals.

- Approach training from different perspectives and with different techniques. Training approaches should be flexible.
- Include clear visuals and instructions in simple language in training material.
- Provide hands on supervision before asking employees to perform new tasks independently.
- Align tests with the training. Provide assessment that is not solely text-based.
- Use mentorship and hands-on training wherever possible.