



# Worker Safety

## OHS Act

The Prince Edward Island Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations exist to establish a minimum standard of health and safety in Island workplaces. The act is built on the Internal Responsibility System (IRS), where everyone works together to keep the workplace safe. The Act gives all workers three rights:

### 1. The Right to Know

The Right to Know means that as a worker you have the right to know how to do your job safely. It also means that you have the right to know about hazards that may exist in your workplace and receive training that will give you the knowledge you need to identify and avoid them.

As a worker, you have the right to receive training that will give you this knowledge. This training should include identification of hazards (e.g., WHMIS regulation is one part of your Right to Know), what to do if there is an injury, location of first aid supplies, work areas that are off limits, how to properly use personal protective equipment and where to report accidents.

### 2. The Right to Participate

The Right to Know means that regardless of the size of your workplace or the position you hold, the OHS Act gives you the right, as a worker, to participate in health and safety issues and decision making in your workplace.

### 3. Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

At any time in your working life, you may encounter an unsafe situation on the job or be assigned a task that you believe may endanger your health or safety. These conditions or concerns should be immediately reported to your supervisor. In most cases the situation is resolved by eliminating the hazard. If the situation is not rectified, you can exercise your right to refuse unsafe work.

The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work means that you have the legal right to refuse work that you believe is dangerous to your health and safety or the health and safety of another worker.

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## “Do I feel I am at risk of getting injured?”

If you are asked to do something at work and are concerned about your health and safety on the job ask yourself, “Do I feel I am at risk of getting injured?” If you answer yes, follow the steps below:

### Step 1

Report your safety concern to your supervisor. If the problem is resolved and you feel that the situation is no longer dangerous, return to work. If not then...

### Step 2

Report the matter to your Health and Safety Representative or Joint Health and Safety Committee, if one exists, as soon as possible giving your reasons for refusing to work. If it is still not resolved, then...

### Step 3

Contact the OHS division at WCB (368-5680) and explain your situation. Return to work only when you feel that the situation is no longer dangerous.

- **In all cases, stay at your workplace for your normal working hours, unless you are in a working alone situation.**
- **Under the law, a worker can not be punished for exercising his or her Right to Refuse Unsafe Work.**

This bulletin is an internal publication of the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees. Comments, questions, concerns and suggestions should be sent to: Mark Barrett, UPSE Communications and Campaigns Officer at mbarrett@peiupse.ca.

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