



4 steps TO RESOLVING A HEALTH AND SAFETY PROBLEM

In future issues of *The Canary*, this page will be dedicated to highlighting specific health and safety hazards that CUPE members may face in the course of their work. With the launch of this new newsletter however, we thought we should dedicate this issue to reviewing the steps to take if you have a health and safety problem in your workplace.

1 Tell your supervisor.

In all Canadian jurisdictions, the respective occupational health and safety acts state that it is the primary duty of the employer to provide workers with a safe workplace. Your supervisor is the first link in a chain that goes to the top, so they need to be told about the hazards and dangers you discover in the workplace.

An important note: no job is worth dying over. In all jurisdictions, workers have the legal right to refuse to perform a task that they feel will cause harm to themselves or others. If you feel the task is unsafe or dangerous, tell your supervisor that you are refusing to do the task because you feel it is dangerous. This should set into motion a series of steps that will lead to the hazard being removed, or an investigation with your local health and safety representative or a committee member. For more information on the right to refuse unsafe work, check out cupe.ca/health-and-safety/refuse.

2 Make sure your co-workers, your union health and safety committee, and your local executive know about the hazard.

It is the law that your employer must tell all employees about the hazards of the workplace, however not all do. To help protect each other, tell co-workers, especially those who will be potentially exposed to the hazard.

3 Make sure your joint health and safety committee (JHSC) knows about the problem.

All hazards should be reported to members of your JHSC or your health and safety representative, but this is a particularly important step if your supervisor does not take action to fix the hazard. A well-functioning committee will address problems brought to its attention, and will conduct regular health and safety inspections to make sure that working conditions are safe. For more information on health and safety committees check out cupe.ca/health-and-safety.

4 Contact your CUPE staff representative.

All CUPE locals have access to a national staff representative. If you have a health and safety issue that you cannot get rectified, your local staff rep can help or refer you to the proper person for assistance.

OUR WEBSITE HAS IMPROVED! cupe.ca/health-and-safety

• more information on workplace health and safety issues • fact sheets and guidelines on a wide range of topics • the latest health and safety news AND MORE