




# survival tips for rookies in the workplace



the people  
& workplace  
department





This information was accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of printing. Labour market information and educational programs are subject to change, and readers are encouraged to confirm with additional sources of information when making career, education and employment decisions.

**This publication is available on-line** through the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website – Alberta's leading on-line source for career, learning and employment information. To access this and additional publications, visit [www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop](http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop)

**For copyright information contact**

Alberta Human Resources and Employment  
People, Skills and Workplace Resources  
Telephone (780) 422-1794 Fax (780) 422-5319  
E-mail [info@alis.gov.ab.ca](mailto:info@alis.gov.ab.ca)

**For additional copies please contact**

Learning Resources Centre  
12360 - 142 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5L 4X9  
Internet [www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop](http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop)  
Fax (780) 422-9750  
Telephone (780) 427-5775  
Catalogue Item # 454992

ISBN 0-7785-0497-2

© 2001, Government of Alberta, Human Resources and Employment

This material may be used, reproduced, stored or transmitted for non-commercial purposes. However, Crown copyright is to be acknowledged. It is not to be used, reproduced, stored or transmitted for commercial purposes without written permission from the Government of Alberta, Human Resources and Employment. This book is not for resale unless licensed with Government of Alberta, Human Resources and Employment.

09/2001 – 40M

03/2002 – 40M

02/2003 – 40M

04/2004 – 20M

10/2004 – 50M

# Table of Contents

X-treme risk	3
X-treme safety	4
It'll never happen to me	5
<b>Real life, real people</b>	5
<b>Risky business</b>	7
<b>Beat the odds</b>	8
What's safe? What isn't?	9
<b>How do you find a hazard?</b>	9
<b>What's your hazard IQ?</b>	11
<b>If you are hurt at work</b>	13
Hey! You've got rights	14
<b>You gotta do it</b>	15
<b>Employer's responsibilities</b>	16
<b>Rules of the game</b>	16
<b>Real life, real people</b>	18
Talking to the boss	21
<b>10 Questions to ask your employer</b>	21
<b>The safety partnership</b>	24
How to say "No" at work	25
<b>Survival tips</b>	26
<b>The boss insists</b>	27
<b>What would you do?</b>	29
You're not bulletproof	31
<b>Get the gear, get the know-how     and get real</b>	31
<b>I Chose to Look the Other Way</b>	32
Getting help	33
Worker Orientation Safety Checklist	37

# Acknowledgements

This publication would not have been possible without the generous assistance of organizations and individuals who contributed valuable information and shared their real-life stories. Alberta Human Resources and Employment, People, Skills and Workplace Resources gratefully acknowledges all those who participated in this project.

**Adecco Employment Services Limited**

**Alberta Human Resources and Employment**

Employment Standards

Workplace Health and Safety

**Alberta Job Safety Skills Society**

**Alberta Learning**

**Elk Island Public Schools**

**Federation of Labour – British Columbia**

**Workers' Compensation Board – Alberta**

**Workers' Compensation Board – British Columbia**

**Workplace Safety and Insurance Board – Ontario**

**Workplace Health and Safety Centre – Ontario**

**Youth Connections – Edmonton**

**Mel Camilli**

**Julia Hamilton**

**John Higgins**

# X-treme Risk

---



Snowboarders hurtle over mountain slopes. BASE jumpers soar like eagles from cliffs, waiting until the last heart-stopping second to pull their rip cords. And every day, thousands of young people go to work assuming they are safe, assuming they are bulletproof – now *that's* risky.

Just like the mountain and the cliff, your worksite can be dangerous if you're not prepared. No matter what you do, or what job you have, hazards exist. Whether you're a store clerk, landscape gardener, truck driver, painter, waitress or cook, there is always an element of risk.

And, if you're 15-24 years of age, you are 1/3 more likely to be injured on the job than those over 25.

Find out the hazards at your workplace and learn how to stay safe.

In this booklet, you'll learn about the rules of the game and the equipment you need to stay safe. You'll get tips on talking to your co-workers and your boss about creating a safe, healthy and fair workplace. We'll help you develop strategies so you can win – so you can stay safe at work!

# X-treme Safety

---

Earning your own paycheque is an exciting step towards independence. Work is an adventure of doing new things, making your own decisions and taking responsibility.

You're like a rock climber surveying the rock face before the climb. You'll get the rush of succeeding at the challenges that lie ahead. But, before you take that first handhold, whether you are scaling a mountain or entering a new job, you'll need to:

- know the rules
- have proper training
- assess the risks and have a plan to deal with them
- use safety equipment and protective clothing
- communicate with your team, co-workers, and leaders.



# It'll never happen to me

---

Here's reality. Lots of people your age have been hurt while at work. They didn't plan it. They didn't expect it. You, too, could lose a finger, a leg or spend months or years in the hospital. You may never be able to play your favourite sport again. Or go dancing. Or drive a car...

Still don't think it could happen to you? It can.

In Alberta in the year 2002, 9 young people were killed on the job. That's 9 funerals, 9 families. We're not talking about gang violence or drunk driving. These were kids who had jobs...kids who were killed – at work.

## Reality check

Who's important in your life? Who do you care about?  
How would you feel if they didn't come home from work one day? Or if they could no longer walk?

## Real life, real people



**Timothy Hamilton\***, a 19-year-old high school graduate, working to make money for college, was killed at work less than two months after he was hired. Tim was asked to raise a 28-foot (8.53 m) aluminium centre pole from inside a large canvas tent.

\* used with the permission of Tim's family

Above the tent, where Tim couldn't see, was a 14,400-volt power line only 27 feet (8.23m) off the ground. Tim was electrocuted and died instantly. Even though the law requires employers to keep workers 10 feet (3.05m) away from such live power lines, Tim was asked to do something dangerous. The company was fined \$100,000 for failing to protect its workers. But that didn't give Tim his life back.



**Mel Camilli\***, at 21 years of age, had every reason to enjoy life – a well-paying job, a girlfriend, and a promising career in forestry. But, in a split second, his world changed. While doing a routine task, he was trapped by a 100-ton piece of machinery. His right leg was severed immediately and his left leg was amputated a few months later. “I knew there were things I would never do and things I would have to learn to do all over again. I resigned myself to never having a girlfriend or a wife,” recalls Mel. Instead of dating, playing sports, travelling, or any of the usual things his friends were doing, Mel was learning to live each day. Today, Mel is married with a family. He enjoys wheelchair basketball and hockey and works with computers by day. But, his life hasn't been easy. **So, “if you've got questions,” Mel says, “if you've got concerns for your safety – or for the safety of your co-workers – speak up.”**

\* used with the permission of Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia

**A hazard is any situation that could result in injury, disease, or death**



# Risky business

Find out if you are at risk at your job. These are only some of the more common risk factors.

**Check all that apply to you:**

- I've had my job for less than six months
- I'm a guy (don't be offended, you're seriously more at risk!)
- I'm between 15-24 years of age
  
- I sometimes go partying the night before an early shift
- I sometimes get very few hours of sleep before starting work
- I'm always under pressure to work quickly
  
- I tend to think an accident won't ever happen to me
- I've never had safety training for my specific job
- I try to impress my boss or co-workers and don't like asking questions
  
- I use the same tool all day long
- I have to lift, push, or pull heavy things
- I use chemicals or work around toxic substances or gases
- I sometimes use a ladder or climb onto something else to reach things

- I work alone
  - I work in a crowded area
  - It's very noisy where I work
  - I work in extremely hot or cold conditions
- 
- I drive or operate moving equipment or machinery
  - I work around electrical equipment or power lines
  - I work around an oven, deep fryer, or other hot objects or substances

If you checked even one, a workplace injury could do more than ruin your weekend. The great thing is that you can change it – you can learn x-treme safety at work.

### Got a new job?

Over **50 per cent** of all accidents involving young workers occur during their first six months on the job. Make sure you get safety training – it's your right!

## Beat the odds

So you know you're at risk – the numbers prove it. What can you do about it? Lots. Learn how to spot a hazard, learn how to deal with each hazard, learn your rights, and learn how to speak up for yourself.



# What's safe? What isn't?

---

A perfectly safe workplace would have no hazards. There would be no machines, equipment or materials that could harm you – nothing would malfunction, not even humans! Unfortunately, many workplace hazards are so familiar that we ignore them and put ourselves, and sometimes others, at risk.

## Reality check

A 17-year-old groundskeeper didn't know that the gloves he was wearing had been in contact with gasoline. When he struck a lighter, the gloves caught fire and he received third degree burns to his arm and back.

## How do you find a hazard?

Ask yourself **What if?** questions. **What if** I bump into the open containers of hot oil? **What if** the forklift tips over on my co-worker in a fast turn? **What if** I inhale the toxic fumes from the toilet cleaning chemicals?

Learning to spot a hazard – before an accident happens – is the first step to staying safe. Every job will have slightly different hazards. The medical field, for example, will have different hazards than the logging industry.

Wherever you work, there are 3 main types of hazards:

## Physical hazards

Equipment, machinery or tools  
Very hot or cold temperatures

### Examples:

- Using the same tool all day long
- Being crushed by equipment
- Using electric equipment with frayed cords
- Tripping on items lying on the floor
- Falling from heights
- Working in a noisy place

## Biological hazards

Bacteria, viruses, insects, fungi, mold or plant materials

### Examples:

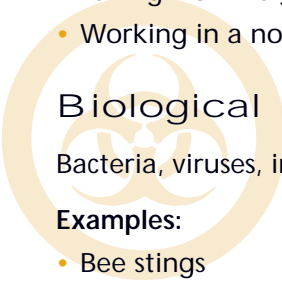
- Bee stings
- Allergic reaction to plants, insects or mold
- Being in contact with materials where viruses or bacteria are present

## Chemical hazards

Vapours, gases, dusts, fumes, or chemical mists

### Examples:

- Using cleaning products regularly
- Using paint materials regularly
- Working around lots of dust
- Exposure to asbestos
- Using toxic chemicals



# What's your hazard I.Q.?

Identify the types of hazards below. The ability to recognize a hazard will help you stay safe – at work or anywhere.

1. A greenhouse worker has to clean up a pile of burlap bags. They have been piled up for a long time and are damp and moldy. What type of hazard is this?

- physical    biological    chemical

2. A summer student is hired to do grounds work for the city parks and uses a weed eater and lawn tractor almost every day. The equipment is very loud but she thinks it's no big deal.

- physical    biological    chemical

3. A skateboarder plans to jump and slide down a rail. The front wheels of the board are loose and missing a screw but it's a great trick.

- physical    biological    chemical

4. A college student has a part-time job cleaning a building. He is always using industrial strength cleaners and once a month has to use a special cleaner that is quite toxic.

- physical    biological    chemical

5. A worker is hired to clean the stadium and empty the garbage bins after sports events and concerts. She doesn't wear gloves as she finds them uncomfortable. What type of hazard is this?

- physical    biological    chemical

6. A junior high school student gets a job at the local pizza joint. His job involves cutting pizzas as they come out of the oven. In one day, he cuts more than 50 pizzas.

physical    biological    chemical

7. A high school student and his buddy go mountain biking in Banff. Even though he's unfamiliar with the steep terrain and sharp corners, he speeds down the path.

physical    biological    chemical

8. A hospital worker often forgets to wash her hands and sometimes doesn't bother wearing gloves.

physical    biological    chemical

9. Workers in an office complained of headaches, eye irritation and fatigue. It was discovered that delivery vehicles were parked and left idling below the air intake system, which provided fresh air to the building.

physical    biological    chemical

**Answers:** 1. Biological 2. Physical 3. Physical 4. Chemical  
5. Biological or Chemical 6. Physical 7. Physical  
8. Biological or Chemical 9. Chemical

How did you do?

8-9 Awesome

6-7 Gearing up

4-5 Cliff hanger

0-3 Crash and burn. Try again.



## Work alone?

Will someone hear you if you're in trouble? Working alone means working where help is not readily available in the event of an injury, illness or emergency. It's another kind of hazard. To find out more and to obtain a free copy of the handbook Working Alone Safely, call the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 or visit [www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

## If you are hurt at work

Even if your employer has a good injury prevention program, you or one of your co-workers could be hurt on the job. Here's what to do.

1. Tell your employer
2. Get medical treatment, if required
3. Fill out a WCB Report of Injury form

Think your injury is no big deal? Follow these steps anyway. The information will help your doctor to best treat your injury. It will also help your employer find ways to improve workplace health and safety practices – to prevent a similar or worse injury from happening again.

**“Don't let a work ethic kill you.” Julia Hamilton  
(19-year-old son was killed at work)**

# Hey! You've got rights

---

Did you know that it's against the law for anyone to force you to do work that you think is unsafe? Did you also know that it's against the law for an employer to operate an unsafe business? You have a right to work in a safe environment. Know your rights.

- Right to Know ...about workplace hazards BEFORE you start work
- Right to Refuse ...unsafe work



## Unsafe work – What is it?

Any task where you believe there is danger to your health or safety or that of another worker. The regulations define imminent danger as danger that is not – or shouldn't be – a normal part of the job. (For example: entering an unprotected trench).

It's a situation where the risks to your safety outweigh your ability to protect yourself. If you feel you are in imminent danger, remove yourself from the situation and talk your supervisor.

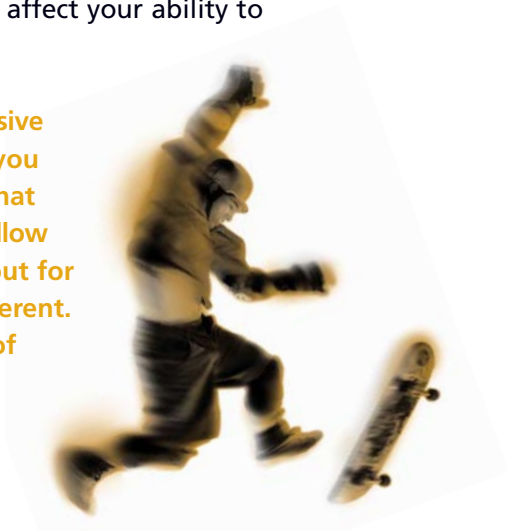


# You gotta do it

You have a part to play too – just like it's up to a cyclist to wear a helmet or a skydiver to pull their own ripcord. By law, workers must take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety – and that of other workers on the job site. As a worker, you've got to:

- follow the health and safety procedures for your job
- ask for training if you don't know how to do something safely
- work safely and encourage your co-workers to do the same
- use all provided personal protective equipment and clothing
- immediately report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor
- inform your supervisor if you have a physical, mental or emotional issue that could affect your ability to work safely.

**Drive a car? Ever take a defensive driving course? Even though you may have the right-of-way, that doesn't mean other drivers follow the rules. You have to watch out for yourself. Job safety is no different. Learn to spot danger ahead of time – avoid the crash.**



## Employer's responsibilities

Your boss has a duty to watch out for your health and safety – as far as is reasonable to do so. Bottom line, the law says your boss must:

- make sure you have the necessary training, qualifications and experience for the job
- let you know about all safety hazards at your job
- provide certain types of safety equipment
- make sure you know how to use your safety equipment
- train you to handle dangerous products
- investigate any accidents that caused injuries
- investigate any “near misses”
- follow the Employment Standards Code.

## Rules of the game

Ever wonder how many hours you have to work before you get a break? What about getting paid for overtime? What's the minimum wage? Are you old enough to work the graveyard shift? How much notice should you give? Are you entitled to maternity leave? In Alberta, the Employment Standards Code provides the answers to these questions and more. To find out more about the rules of the game, call 310-0000 toll-free anywhere in Alberta and dial (780) 427-3731 or surf over to [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards/](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards/)



## Are you under 18?

There are specific rules that apply to you. If you are between the ages of 12 and 14 years you are considered an “adolescent” and need a permit to work at any job other than clerking in an office or retail store or delivering flyers. A permit will only be granted if the employer has the written consent of your parent or guardian and can satisfy Employment Standards that the employment is not likely to be harmful to your life, health, education or welfare. Adolescents can’t be employed for more than two hours on a school day, eight hours on a non-school day and at all between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

If you are a “young person” between the ages of 15 and 17 years you don’t need a permit to work. However, restaurants, bars, all retail stores, gas stations, hotels and motels have special restrictions when employing young persons. In these businesses, young persons may not be employed without the continuous presence of someone 18 or older after 9 p.m. and cannot be employed at all between midnight and 6 a.m. For a young person to work after midnight in other occupations requires the consent of their parent or guardian and the continuous presence of someone 18 years of age or older.

**If you’re in a high school Work Experience Program, your hours of work may be different. Check with your Work Experience Co-ordinator.**

### Reality check

Your employer asks you to remain working after midnight and you're 15 years old. What would you do?

## Real life, real people

I never dreamed that anything like this would ever happen to me

### Nicole's story\*

I work part time at a small fast-food restaurant in my town. Our specialities are burgers and fries but we have a lot of other stuff too. It's a really busy place and we are always running to keep up with the customers. We all share in the work when it comes to getting the fries cooking. Two years ago, when I was dumping some fries in the hot oil to cook, there was a big splash. The hot oil covered my left arm and splashed my body in a few other places. The pain was unbelievable. I received third-degree burns to my arm. It took 14 months of skin grafts to get my arm to heal and there's a major scar that will never go away. I never dreamed that anything like this would ever happen to me.

\* used with the permission of Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Ontario

### Reality check

A department store hired a 16-year-old to work alone after school as a cleaner. One of his tasks was to cram discarded cardboard into a compactor-baler. His body was found trapped in the baler.

## Reality check

You work in a restaurant and your boss isn't around much. The head cook is in charge and thinks it's fun to throw knives to other workers in the kitchen. You know this is dangerous and puts everyone at risk. You know you have a right to a safe workplace. What should you do?

I still  
can't  
believe  
he's  
gone

### Cindy's story\*

My older brother Scott was working for an electrical contractor. They were rewiring some machine on an assembly line in a factory. It was supposedly a small job. They were only supposed to be there for the morning. Scott started undoing the screws where the wires attach and he got electrocuted. He died almost immediately they said. We found out later that the electrical connections hadn't been "locked out" but Scott didn't know it. If the machine had been locked out, there wouldn't have been any power in the wires. Scott used to talk about his job all the time. But he never, ever said anything about health or safety training. The investigation showed that Scott never had any kind of health or safety training for his job – even though it was his right. I wish Scott had known about his rights. He would probably still be alive. I miss Scott so much. It's so different without him around. I still can't believe he's gone.

\* used with the permission of Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Ontario

If only  
they  
had  
told  
me

### **Rob's story\***

I know all about getting injured at work. It happened to me. I got a job last summer working with a homebuilder. We were putting the floor on a new house. I backed up a couple of steps and BOOM! The next thing I know I'm laying in the basement of this place and my leg is broken. The pain was so intense. I was screaming. They took me to the hospital and put a plate and pins in my leg, just below my knee. The doctor says if I'm lucky, I'll get the full movement back. But it's already been a year. It is getting better but it's really slow. Nobody ever told me that openings in the floor should be barricaded to keep us from slipping through them. If only they had told me.

\* used with the permission of Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Ontario

### **Job shadowing/work experience**

No big deal right? Wrong! Even if it's only for a few hours or a few days doing work experience or job shadowing, ask your supervisor to explain the risks of the job site and how to protect yourself. Accidents have happened to students too.

# Talking to the boss

---

One of the most important parts of your job is your ability to communicate with your employer – effectively. Learn how to do it right so your boss understands how important safety is to you. Learn how to speak up for yourself and for your rights.

## 10 Questions to ask your employer

Getting ready for a job interview or starting a new job? Ask these questions. Find out how serious your boss will be about your safety.

1. What are the dangers of my job?
2. Are there any other hazards that I should know about?
3. Will I receive job training?
4. Do you have safety meetings?
5. Is there safety equipment I'll be expected to wear? Will I receive training in how to use it? When?
6. Will I be trained in emergency procedures (fire, chemical spill...) When?
7. Where are fire extinguishers, first aid kits and other emergency equipment located?
8. What do I do if I get hurt? Who is the first aid person?
9. What are my health and safety responsibilities?
10. Who do I ask if I have a health or safety question?



## How did your employer do?

You can check your employer's answers with the facts below.

1. By law, your employer must tell you about any hazards at the workplace.
2. Not all hazards affect you right away. High noise levels, over time, lead to hearing loss. Working with radiation, dusts and chemicals can increase your risk of diseases like cancer. Your employer must tell you about these "hidden" hazards.
3. Your employer must make sure you have the skills to safely do your work. If you're still learning, you must be under the direct supervision of someone who has these skills. Learn all the skills you need before you do a new job on your own or alone.
4. Safety meetings are not mandatory in Alberta but if your employer holds them, it's a sign of their commitment to your safety.
5. Lungs and ears...The law requires employers to provide protective equipment where there is a breathing hazard or where legal noise limits are exceeded. However, your employer isn't required to provide hard hats, safety boots, flame resistant clothing or eye protection. If safety equipment is necessary, your employer must make sure you use it.



**6.** You must be trained in emergency procedures – in case of fire, chemical spills, etc. If you're working with chemicals, special training is required before you start work.

**7.** Your employer must control the hazards at your workplace by providing fire extinguishers and other special equipment. You must be told where this stuff is and how to use it.

**8.** If you're injured, get first aid and report your injury to your employer as quickly as possible. The law says your employer must provide on-site first aid equipment. Most employers are required to have people present with first aid training.

**9.** You are expected to do your best to protect your own and your co-workers' health and safety. This means if you're asked to do something that may put you or your co-workers in danger, the law says you must refuse to do that task.

**10.** If you have a health or safety question, the first person you should ask is your employer, usually your supervisor, as they know your workplace the best. You can also phone the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre. It's a free, confidential call, 1-866-415-8690. Or you can go to the website at [www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

### **Tough guy?**

If you're a guy age 15-24, you are more likely to be injured on the job than any other worker.



## The safety partnership

Your safety is a partnership between you and the employer. When the partnership is working well, it might look like this.

Employer	You
Tells you there is a hazard	Listen up! Pay attention.
Provides training	Take the training
Holds safety meetings	Attend the meetings
Provides protective equipment	Wear it properly (according to the instructions)
Provides fire extinguishers	Know where they are and how to use them
Provides trained first aid staff and kits	Know who and where they are

Sometimes you may have to take the lead for the partnership to work effectively. Then it may look like this.

Employer	You
Ignores safety	Talk to the employer about the benefits of workplace safety. Be involved in making changes
Asks you to do something dangerous	Don't do it. Talk it out. Take a stand. Share this booklet with them

To start things off on the right foot, ask your employer to give you a safety orientation to your worksite. You might even want to suggest using the "Worker Orientation Safety Checklist" provided at the end of this book.

# How to say "NO" at work

---

Say "No"? Yeah right. I finally landed this job and I want it to work out. How can I tell my supervisor I won't do something if it's dangerous?

Although it may be awkward to talk about, most employers want to keep their workers safe and appreciate hearing suggestions – it makes their job easier. A safe workplace also means lower insurance premiums for your employer. Pointing out safety concerns and the benefits of a safe workplace can be a great way to gain the respect of your boss. It's also your responsibility as a worker.

## The law protects you

Each Canadian province has a law to help keep work sites safe and healthy. It's called the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* in Alberta. These laws are a little different in each province. In Alberta, call the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 or visit the website at [www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

You don't have to tell them your name.



## Survival tips

You may want to first ask the advice of a trusted co-worker. Then, try to work things out with your direct supervisor. Only speak with their boss if your supervisor doesn't deal with your concerns. Don't go over any heads first.

When you approach your supervisor, make sure your attitude is respectful and positive – it'll show when you're talking. Express your desire for doing the job right, doing it safely. Here are some examples:

Politely ask your supervisor for a minute of their time. Then say...

"I really want to make sure I do this job right. What should I know about doing it safely?"

OR

"I'd like to do this job but I think it could be dangerous. [say why] What do you think?"

OR

"I need some training before I do this job. Any suggestions?"

Depending on the situation, a good supervisor may choose to:

- remove any hazards so the task is safe (if that's possible)
- train you on-the-spot
- get another worker to do the task until you've received training
- arrange for you to learn by working with another worker who has experience.

# The boss insists

If you've tried to talk to your employer and he/she still insists that you do unsafe work, here are some examples of what you can say:

"I've been taught that it's against the law for me to do a task that I believe could be dangerous. I really like my job but I can't do this task...

...until I've got training to do it safely

OR

...until the equipment is working properly

OR

...until someone holds the base of the ladder

OR

...until I've got a respirator so I don't get sick from the fumes

OR

...until we're both certain that I can do this job without getting injured."

What if my boss wants me to do something **right away** and I've got a gut feeling that it's not safe?

Trust your gut. If in doubt, don't do it. Then use any of the survival tips above to deal with your boss. Or you may think of a better way. Remember, do it with respect, stay calm and you'll be okay.

## Keep your cool

Every boss will react a little differently. Most employers will be grateful for your input, but others may not be. You may express your concern once and everything may turn out great. Or, you may have to talk with your boss several times before things change. Your boss might get impatient or even angry, but things may still turn out okay – or not. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee for the perfect ending.

## You can't be fired!

Wait a minute. If I tell my boss I think a job is unsafe, I'll get fired. Right?

Wrong! That would be illegal. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* states: No person shall dismiss or take any other disciplinary action against a worker because that person did what this Act told them to do.

## Tough choices

If you've tried to work things out with your boss and it's not going great, you may decide to quit your job if your health or safety is at risk. Your life is more important than any job. It's more important than your work ethic or your résumé. And, even though the law says you can't be fired for refusing unsafe work, you could come across an employer who doesn't handle things properly and lets you go. Of course, you'd have every right to take legal action and you may wish to report the employer. To get help, call the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 or visit the website at [www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)



## What would you do?

Circle the best answer:

You're a waitress at a local restaurant. The cook became ill and had to go home in the middle of her shift. The joint is packed and your boss tells you to get in the kitchen and start cooking. You cook at home but you've never used a deep fryer or a meat slicer before. **What should you do?**

- a. call your mom
- b. convince the other waitresses to promote raw vegetarian dishes
- c. ask your boss to teach and assist you

You're working at Al's lumberyard. Your supervisor has asked you to use the table saw to rip some 2" x 6" boards. You've never ripped a board on a table saw before and you're not even sure exactly what it means. You heard your co-workers say that the blade was getting dull and that the boards were being ejected by the blade while they were being ripped. **What should you do?**

- a. watch Tool Time more often
- b. let your supervisor know your concerns
- c. go for lunch

You're working at a seniors residence doing odd jobs for the summer. Your supervisor asks you to get a ladder and clean the outside windows on the second floor. The ladder is small and the only way you can reach the windows is to stand on the top rung. **What should you do?**

- a. ditch the ladder and use your rock-climbing equipment to scale the side of the building
- b. put one or two thick telephone books under the ladder to help you reach
- c. find a longer ladder, if there is one, or explain the hazard to your supervisor

**Get a buddy. If you're really scared to talk to your boss, don't just give up. Find someone you trust. Get a pal at work, and if possible, talk with your boss together. Or, tell your concerns to a parent, an aunt or uncle, an older friend, a teacher, your work experience co-ordinator or a youth worker that may be able to give you advice.**





# You're not bulletproof

---

You've seen the stats, read the stories and learned the survival skills. You know what it takes to stay safe at work. If you forget the details, remember these three things.

## Get the gear

No one would think of ice climbing without proper footwear, ropes, climbing harnesses and ice axes. The risk can be just as real at work so buckle up. Protective clothing and equipment may save more than your skin. So, get the gear and learn to use it!

## Get the know-how

Imagine that in one week you're going to jump out of a plane. You need to know *how* to jump, *how* to open your parachute, and *how* to land safely. What if your chute doesn't open? Do you know your emergency procedures? Wouldn't you want these skills *before* you jump? Before you jump into work, get the skills you need. Ask for training if you've never done something and find out the hazards of your job. Get the know-how.

## Get real

Want to show the world what you can do? Great! But remember impressing others isn't worth your safety. Staying safe starts with your head. Be aware of potential hazards around you. What have you got to lose? Do you really think you're bulletproof? Get real.

## I Chose to Look the Other Way

I could have saved a life that day,  
But I chose to look the other way.  
It wasn't that I didn't care,  
I had the time and I was there.  
But I didn't want to seem the fool,  
Or argue over a safety rule.  
I knew he had done the job before,  
If I called it wrong, he might get sore.  
The chances didn't seem that bad,  
I've done the same, he knew I had.  
So I shook my head and walked on by,  
He knew the risks as well as I.  
He took the chance; I closed an eye,  
And with that act, I let him die.  
I could have saved a life that day,  
But I chose to look the other way.  
Now every time I see his wife,  
I'll know I should have saved his life.  
That guilt is something I must bear,  
But it isn't something you need to share.  
If you see a risk that others take,  
That puts their health or life at stake,  
The question asked or things you say,  
Could help them live another day.  
If you see a risk and walk away,  
Then hope you never have to say,  
I could have saved a life that day,  
But I chose to look the other way.

**-Author Unknown**

# Getting help

---

If you've got a question or a concern about workplace safety, pick up the phone and call any of these organizations. Or, if you like to surf the web, get what you need in cyberspace.

## **Alberta Human Resources and Employment Employment Standards**

Phone: (780) 427-3731 or toll-free in Alberta,  
dial 310-0000 and then (780) 427-3731

Website: [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards)

Employment standards are minimum standards of employment for employers and employees in the workplace. You can get a free copy of the Employment Standards Guide by phoning the office or downloading it from the website.

## **Alberta Human Resources and Employment Workplace Health and Safety**

Phone: 1-866-415-8690 toll-free in Alberta

Website: [www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) helps employers and workers ensure safe, healthy and productive workplaces in Alberta. More than 200 free publications on safety are available at this website or by phone request. Order your copy of Working Alone Safely or Heads Up – or check out other topics on the web. You can also phone for confidential advice.

## Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Phone: 1-800-263-8466

Website: [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)

Get answers to questions or concerns about health and safety at work.

## Job Safety Skills Society

Phone: (780) 413-6876

Website: [www.jobsafetyskills.com](http://www.jobsafetyskills.com)

A not-for-profit partnership of industry, education and government. Instructor led high school training course prepares youth to be safe workers. Over 500 Alberta junior and senior high schools offer the three 1-credit courses. Contact Job Safety Skills Society to find schools in your area that offer these courses.

## Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) – Alberta

Phone: (780) 498-3999 for general inquiries or 1-866-922-9221 toll-free in Alberta

Website: [www.wcb.ab.ca](http://www.wcb.ab.ca)



The Workers' Compensation Board – Alberta is a not-for-profit mutual insurance company funded entirely by employers. The WCB provides cost effective workplace liability and disability insurance to workers and employers. WCB can provide you with a free "Heads Up" poster and Worker Information booklet.

### Get smart

Learn more about workplace safety! If you're in high school, you can take a credit course with Job Safety Skills Society (JSSS). If you're out of high school, take a course in First Aid, CPR and/or WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System). Call (780) 413-6876 or visit [www.jobsafetyskills.com](http://www.jobsafetyskills.com). It'll look good on your résumé too!

## Other Resources

### **Alberta Career Information Hotline**

Access information on career planning, work search skills, educational options, occupational descriptions, educational funding and referrals through the Alberta Career Information Hotline consultants. Call the Hotline in Edmonton at 422-4266 or toll-free in Alberta at 1-800-661-3753. Deaf or hard of hearing individuals in Edmonton with TDD call 422-5283. Elsewhere in Alberta call 1-800-232-7215 for message relay service. You can e-mail the Hotline at [hotline@alis.gov.ab.ca](mailto:hotline@alis.gov.ab.ca)

### **Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website**

[www.alis.gov.ab.ca](http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca)

Opportunity starts here. ALIS is Alberta's leading on-line source for career, learning and employment information. You'll find the resources you need to make the most of your future. Stay informed and take control. If it has to do with your working life and your working rights, it's here.

### **Youth Connections**

If you are between the ages of 16 and 24 and looking for career planning information, then Youth Connections is for YOU! Youth Connections staff can help you access information on the labour market, résumé writing, job search, career and education options, occupations and more. Youth Connections sites are contracted by Alberta Human Resources and Employment. Call the Career Information Hotline (listed above) for the location of a Youth Connections office near you!

# WHMIS \* Hazard Classes



**Class A** – Compressed Gas



**Class B** – Flammable and Combustible Material



**Class C** – Oxidizing Material



**Class D-1** – Poisonous and Infectious Material  
(Material Causing Immediate and Serious Effects)



**Class D-2** – Poisonous and Infectious Material  
(Materials Causing Other Toxic Effects)



**Class D-3** – Poisonous and Infectious Material  
(Biohazardous Infectious Materials)



**Class E** – Corrosive Material



**Class F** – Dangerously Reactive Material

\*WHMIS – Workplace Hazardous Materials  
Information System



# Worker Orientation Safety Checklist

This checklist is a guideline for conducting a safety orientation for workers new to a company or to a department. Once completed and signed by both the supervisor and the worker, it serves as documentation that proper orientation has taken place.

Worker's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Hired \_\_\_\_\_ Orientation Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Place a check in each box to indicate that the topic has been covered.**

**1. Explain the company safety program including:**

- Orientation
- On-the-job training
- Safety meetings
- Incident investigation and reporting
- Function of the safety committee (if there is one)

**2. Personal protective equipment**

- Hard hats
- Safety glasses
- High visibility vests
- Rubber gloves
- Respiratory protective equipment
- Other protective equipment specific to job

**3. Lines of communication and responsibility for reporting incidents and "near misses"**

- When to report an injury
- How to report an injury
- To whom an injury should be reported
- Filing an incident report form
- Reporting "near misses"

Learn how to say no to  
unsafe work - it's your right  
and your responsibility.



#### 4. Review hazards related to specific job duties

**Example:** If you use a forklift truck at work, what are the hazards and how do you avoid an injury or incident?

- Physical hazards (ladders, electricity, repetitive work, hot oil etc.)
- Chemical hazards (cleaning chemicals, toxic substances, dust, paint, asbestos etc.)
- Biological hazards (bacteria, viruses, fungi, mold, insects etc.)

#### 5. First aid supplies, equipment and training

- Obtaining first aid treatment
- Location of first aid stations
- Location and names of staff with first aid training

#### 6. Emergency plan

- Exit locations and evacuation routes
- Use of fire fighting equipment (extinguishers, hose)
- Specific procedures (medical, chemical, fire etc.)

#### 7. Vehicle safety check procedure

- Safety and speed regulations
- Operating license is appropriate for vehicle

#### 8. Personal work habits

- Consequences of horseplay and not following the safety rules
- Inattention
- Smoking policy
- Good housekeeping practices
- Proper lifting techniques

The signatures below are evidence that the topics contained in this checklist have been discussed to the satisfaction of the worker and the supervisor, and that both parties accept responsibility for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Worker's Signature \_\_\_\_\_





## We'd Like to Hear From You ...

**X-treme Safety**    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Did you find the information in this publication useful?

In what way?

---

---

How could we improve it?

---

---

Do you have any suggestions for other products that would be of value to you?

---

---

### Would You Like to Receive a Catalogue of Our Products?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_



Please return this form to:  
Alberta Human Resources and Employment  
**People, Skills and Workplace Resources**  
12th Floor, Seventh Street Plaza, South Tower  
10030 - 107 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4  
Fax: 780-422-5319

# Safety is always in style!

- 1 sound gear for hearing the future
- 2 eye wear not to lose sight of
- 3 footwear that lets you go barefoot on the beach
- 4 headgear for those with a brain

*Always look  
your best -  
get Safety Smart!*

Learn how to be safe on  
the job. The life you save  
could be your own.

Find out more at

[www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

Ear Plugs

1

Safety  
Glasses

2

Steel Toe  
Boots

3

Hard Hat

4

**-TREME SAFETY**

  
WORK SAFE  
ALBERTA

Alberta



This booklet is written for youth who are new to the workforce. Inside you will find information on workplace safety that will help you to:

- identify safe and unsafe working conditions
- understand the importance of workplace safety orientations and training
- learn about rights and responsibilities of employers and workers
- make decisions that take responsibility for your safety
- demonstrate effective communication skills in stressful situations
- connect with further information and resources



the people  
& workplace  
department