

# Your Rights and Your Employer's Duties

## Employers' and Supervisors' Duties

- Employers have a **duty to accommodate** an employee's disability-related needs and employee's needs and obligations related to family status.  
*Contact your local ETFO office or Professional Relations Services (PRS) for advice.*
- Employers and supervisors have an obligation to **take every reasonable precaution** in the circumstances to protect workers.  
*Contact your local ETFO office or your Joint Health and Safety Committee representative for advice.*

## Workers' Duties

- Follow the law and workplace health and safety policies and procedures.
- Wear and use the protective equipment required by their employer.
- Work and act in a way that won't hurt themselves or anyone else.
- Report any [injuries/illnesses](#) or [hazards/exposures](#).

## Workers' Rights

### Right to know

Workers have a right to information and instruction about hazards that they are exposed to in the workplace and the protocols in place to control exposure.

*Exercise this right by asking for more information or clarification.*

### Right to participate

Workers participate through representation on the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) which is provided with additional information, the power to identify hazards and make formal recommendations.

*Exercise this right by making suggestions to your supervisor or through your JHSC.*

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For more information, visit [etfohealthandsafety.ca](http://etfohealthandsafety.ca).

## Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

Workers have an individual right to refuse unsafe work if they have a “reason to believe” their work is “likely to endanger” their health and safety. Under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), a [teacher's right](#) to refuse is limited by a requirement to ensure that the life, health, and safety of the students in their care are not in imminent jeopardy. Once at work, if the employer is not following the protocols outlined by school board and/or public health authorities, workers should first seek enforcement of the OHSA through the Internal Responsibility System by following these steps if possible:

- Take the concern to the principal.
- If the principal does not address and resolve the concern in a timely manner:
  - Contact your ETFO local and/or JHSC representative for support.
  - If still unresolved, follow their advice to determine the most effective process to resolve the concern:
    - Consider using the JHSC to make recommendations;
    - Make a [complaint](#) to the [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#); or
    - Inform the principal that you are invoking your [right to refuse unsafe work](#) and the reason why.

*Exercise this right carefully, only when necessary, preferably after consulting with your ETFO Local or health and safety representative.*

## Protection Against Reprisal

Workers have protection against reprisals while exercising their rights under OHSA.



Contact your local [ETFO office](#), your JHSC or [Provincial ETFO](#) for advice at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.