

# COMMUNICATING AT WORK



## BACKGROUND NOTES

Communication is vital to creating a safe work environment. This video will help emphasize the importance of strong and open dialogue in creating safe workplaces. It will help encourage employees to share their thoughts and beliefs about safety in your workplace.

In this video, Rod Stickman notes the importance of effective communication in creating safe workplaces.

- Having a conversation about workplace safety is the first and most important step to putting proper safety measures in place.
- Talking about safety, and reporting, investigating and controlling workplace hazards, are some of the best ways to make positive change.

This video highlights worker rights and responsibilities under Nova Scotia's *Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Act*. It discusses these three key safety rights:

- The **right to know** about hazards, including worker requests for information and employer training for safe work.
- The **right to participate**, which can include joining the safety committee, becoming a safety representative, and having regular safety conversations with co-workers and supervisors.
- The **right to refuse** work if the worker believes it could hurt him/her or someone else.

Nova Scotia's OH&S Act and thirteen regulations, including WHMIS, Workplace Violence, First Aid and Fall Protection, are based on the safety philosophy of the Internal Responsibility System – which applies to the safety functions of all workplaces. The Internal Responsibility System and effective safety communication are foundation pieces of the Act and regulations.

## QUESTION & DISCUSSION POINTS

**What hazards have you seen or experienced – here or in another workplace – which are like the ones in the video we just watched? Examples:**

- Poor safety communication, such as:

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- No or inadequate personal protective equipment, such as:

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- No training or poor training, such as:

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- Workers not knowing their rights or responsibilities, which can lead to:

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- List group's examples:

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**What hazards do we have here in our workplace?**

**What are the most risky? Examples:**

- Power equipment, such as:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Risky tasks, such as:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other hazards, ie. heavy objects, slippery floors, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Bears  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- List group's examples:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How do we control hazards in our workplace now?**

**What safety measures do we have in place?**

**Look at the listed hazards and add safety measures for them. Examples:**

- The first safety measure is understanding our three key safety rights.
- Safety controls and measures can include training, protective equipment and safety communication, such as:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What changes can we make to better control these hazards? What can be done quickly, and what would likely take more time? Examples:**

- Training about rights (to know, to refuse, to participate)
- Understanding responsibilities, like reporting hazards
- Working with the employer to find safety measures, ie. equipment or safer work processes
- List group's examples:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How can you influence safety changes? List points: what can be done now and what could be done in the future?**

**Examples:**

- Talk to supervisor
- Talk to safety representative or Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee members
- Take part in JOHS Committee
- Work with employer to identify hazards and possible controls
- Talk to other businesses with similar hazards
- Include safety projects in future planning

## CONCLUSION

- It is your right to know about any hazards you might encounter at work.
- It is your right to participate in safety efforts at work.
- It is your right to refuse unsafe work.
- If you see a hazard in your workplace, be sure to report it to your supervisor – hazards must be investigated in order to be fixed!
- Workplace safety is not only your right; it's also your responsibility. Communication is important. Make sure your voice is heard.

Rod is a great way to begin the conversation about workplace safety. But he's just the start to a safer workplace. If you see a hazard in your workplace, be sure to report it to your supervisor – all hazards must be investigated.

**WCB of Nova Scotia:** 1-800-870-3331

**NS OHS Division:** 1-800-952-2687 or 1-902-424-5400

To learn more, visit [worksafeforlife.ca](http://worksafeforlife.ca) and [someways.ca](http://someways.ca)

