

# Safety Bulletin



## Five Reasons Why Employees Should Speak Up About Safety Concerns

Words have power. On the flip side, no words also hold power. Speaking up is one of the first steps to strengthening a workplace safety program and changing the safety culture. It's often that employees will say nothing when they have an idea, suggestion, observation, or even a criticism.

Identifying hazards and discussing ways to mitigate those hazards is imperative to a healthy and safe workplace. Even companies with the most advanced safety cultures, will have unsafe conditions and behaviours occur. Their success can be attributed to the encouragement of employees speaking up about safety and the response of the company to those discussions.

There are many reasons for workers not wanting to speak up. This can range from not wanting to be judged, to fearing repercussions from their employer, to looking silly in front of their peers. As a result, employees tend to hold back on safety concerns or issues, ideas on how to address those concerns or issues and questions about what can be done to help control the hazards they face in their job tasks.

Despite the risk of the alternative, speaking out is important for the following 5 reasons:

### 1. Leading by Example

You might not be alone in your concern and it's entirely possible that your observation or conclusion is shared by your peers, and they're unwilling to speak up. When you do it first, you're not only addressing a concern, but you're also showing how easy, important, and welcomed that your opinion is. You may also give others around you the confidence to speak up about issues or suggestions they may have.

### 2. The Hazard is Unknown

We cannot make assumptions that everyone will notice or see the hazards that you see. Your personal experiences and knowledge hold value in any given situation because no one else has your unique perspective. Any safety concern is worth mentioning, no matter how big or small; what you can bring to the discussion may be the most valuable part of addressing the concerns.

### 3. We're a Team

The people you work with are part of your team. These are individuals just like you who want to come into work, do their best, and return home. Staying silent when there is exposure to a hazardous condition or situation could mean the difference between an incident for you, or a member of your team.

### 4. Implied Approval

While you may think that staying silent keeps you from being involved in any conflict or problem, but it's actually the opposite. If you disapprove and don't speak up, you are essentially saying that you agree or accept the condition or situation.

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## 5. Continual Improvement

We are always looking to improve. Whether that's our internal programs and processes, or how we present ourselves to clients and subcontractors. Input from the "front lines" of the day-to-day operations play an integral role in the development of our HSE Management System and the standards in which we hold ourselves to.

Employees want to work somewhere they feel they are valued, and their input is welcomed. Any safety concerns, ideas on how hazards should be addressed, or improvements to processes should be made, without reprisal, and met with recognition and appreciation. When an employee speaks up, it can help transform the safety culture for the better. Silence protects no one, and changes nothing.

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Report your concerns directly to your supervisor or a member of your Regional HSE team. You can also submit Near Miss / Hazard ID / Safety Opportunities and Good Catches through eCompliance.