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Workers' Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

If you believe working conditions are unsafe or unhealthful, we recommend that you bring the conditions to your employer's attention, if possible.

You may file a complaint with OSHA concerning a hazardous working condition at any time. However, you should not leave the worksite merely because you have filed a complaint. If the condition clearly presents a risk of death or serious physical harm, there is not sufficient time for OSHA to inspect, and, where possible, you have brought the condition to the attention of your employer, you may have a legal right to refuse to work in a situation in which you would be exposed to the hazard. (OSHA cannot enforce union contracts that give employees the right to refuse to work.)

Your right to refuse to do a task is protected if **all** of the following conditions are met:

- Where possible, you have asked the employer to eliminate the danger, and the employer failed to do so; and
- You refused to work in "good faith." This means that you must genuinely believe that a reasonable apprehension of death or serious injury exists; and
- A reasonable person would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury; and
- There isn't enough time, due to the urgency of the hazard, to get it corrected through regular enforcement channels, such as requesting an OSHA inspection.

You should take the following steps:

- Ask your employer to correct the hazard, or to assign other work;
- Tell your employer that you won't perform the work unless and until the hazard is corrected; and
- Remain at the worksite until ordered to leave by your employer.

If your employer retaliates against you for refusing to perform the dangerous work, contact OSHA immediately. Complaints of retaliation must be made to OSHA within 30 days of the alleged reprisal. To contact OSHA call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) and ask to be connected to your closest area office. No form is required to file a discrimination complaint, but you must call OSHA.

See the [relevant regulation](#).



Occupational Safety and Health
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200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210
☎ 800-321-6742 (OSHA)
TTY
www.OSHA.gov

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