



Health and Safety  
Santé et sécurité

# TIPS FOR DEALING WITH INSPECTORS

Sometimes employers and workers disagree on how to fix a workplace hazard. When this happens, either party may seek intervention from a government inspector. The job title of these inspectors varies across jurisdictions, but they all work to ensure compliance with occupational health and safety laws and related regulations. Involving an inspector is often an effective strategy to advance worker safety rights. However, there are important considerations to keep in mind to ensure a successful outcome.

## Resolve the dispute internally whenever possible

Unless the circumstances present an imminent danger, inspectors will usually not intervene until the internal responsibility process has been exhausted. The first step of this process typically involves raising your concern to your immediate supervisor. Your supervisor and the committee then explore how to mitigate the hazard and makes recommendations to the employer. Once the committee has reviewed the hazard and the employer has made their response, you will be in a better position to determine if an inspector should be called.

## Documentation

Gathering your documents and evidence to support your claim before you call in your concern is crucial. Make sure to state the nature of your health and safety concerns. If you know the section

of the act or the regulation that has been violated, include it in your report.

The document can include:

- first aid/accident/near-miss reports (while ensuring the confidentiality of those involved)
- workers compensation claims information
- inspection records
- minutes from health and safety committee meetings,
- emails, photos and videos
- previous governmental inspector field visit reports,
- a copy of your jurisdiction's health and safety act and regulations

Make sure you have all the information to support your claim before calling in your concern to an external inspector.

## Calling in your concern to an inspector

Give your name and contact information so the inspector will know who to contact when conducting their investigation. You have the right to submit your concern anonymously, but it's best not to. When an anonymous concern is raised, the inspector may choose to only speak with the employer or supervisor when investigating. This means they might not get the full picture.



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## Roles and powers of an inspector

Inspectors enforce compliance with occupational health and safety laws and regulations. Although inspectors have a certain level of autonomy, they are guided by their own set of rules for their job (frequently called internal operating procedures).

An inspector can provide resources and guidance to the joint health and safety committees and representatives and help employers and workers come to an agreement.

Inspectors can conduct proactive inspections of a workplace without a warrant. They also conduct investigations into raised health and safety concerns, work refusals or stoppages, incidents involving fatalities, critical injuries, and notices of occupational illness.

For more information on seeking external assistance or enforcement, consult the Seeking Enforcement document in the Health and Safety Committee Toolkit.