

## HANDOUT F: YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY RIGHTS ON THE JOB (PLAIN LANGUAGE)

**What Are My Rights on the Job?** A “right” is something the law says you can do or have.

**You have a right** to a safe and healthy place to work. OSHA protects this right. OSHA is a part of the U.S. government. Your state may also have a state OSHA office. You can find your local office on the [OSHA website](https://bit.ly/OSHAOffices). Click on your state and it will show up in a new window. You can access it here: <https://bit.ly/OSHAOffices>.

**You have a right** to tell the government about safety problems where you work. You can call OSHA or your state OSHA office if the people you work for don’t listen to your concerns. You don’t have to give your name. You can **file a complaint** with OSHA at <https://bit.ly/OSHAComplaint>.

**You have a right** to be taught about the hazards in your workplace and how to protect yourself. You should be taught in words you can understand. Your boss also must teach you how to handle emergencies. You should learn about how to stay safe when you use chemicals. OSHA, or your state OSHA office, protects this right.

**You have a right** to free safety gear to protect yourself from hazards, if you need it. This safety gear might be things like ear plugs, gloves, safety glasses, and special clothes. OSHA, or your state OSHA office, protect this right.

**You have a right** to be paid no less than what your state law says, or what the U.S. government says. This is called a “minimum wage.” The U.S. minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. In your state, it might be more. To find your state’s minimum wage, go to <https://bit.ly/MinWagebyState>.

**You have a right** not to be forced to do some types of dangerous jobs, if you are under 18 years old. To learn more about your state’s child labor laws, go to the [YouthRules! website](https://bit.ly/YouthRules) for more information on **child labor laws**. You can access it here: <https://bit.ly/YouthRules>.

**You have a right** to “workers’ compensation” if you get hurt on the job. Workers’ compensation is a special type of insurance paid for by your employer that gives you a right to:

- Get care from doctors and nurses if you get hurt on your job. You don’t have to miss time from work to get this care. Your state laws give you this right.
- Be paid for work you miss if you get hurt on the job. Each state has its own rules for this.
- Go to the “State Workers’ Compensation Officials” website and click on your state on the map to find the contact information for your state’s Workers’ Compensation office. You can access it here: <https://bit.ly/WorkersCompOffices>.

**You have a right** to work where people don't treat you worse because of the color of your skin or how you worship. They can't treat you worse because you are a man or woman. They can't treat you worse because of where you were born. They can't treat you worse because of your age, or whether you have trouble learning, walking, or if you have another kind of disability. This is called discrimination.

**You have a right** to be free from harassment at work. Harassment is when somebody bothers you on purpose and repeatedly in a way that makes you uncomfortable. Sexual harassment at work includes sexual jokes, photos, or touching, requests for sexual favors, comments that men or women don't belong in certain jobs or have certain abilities. Harassment can also be based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy. Experiencing sexual harassment is very stressful.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is a part of the government that enforces laws against job discrimination and harassment. If you are harassed or discriminated against you should get help. You can talk to your supervisor or trusted coworker. You can [report these problems to the EEOC](https://bit.ly/EE OCDiscrimination) or a state group that handles these problems on this website: <https://bit.ly/EE OCDiscrimination>.

**You have a right** to ask for changes to your workplace because of your health problem or to allow you to worship as you wish.

**You have a right** to talk with other workers about how much you earn and the conditions where you work.

**You have a right** to help someone who is looking at your workplace to see if any laws are being broken. These might include laws that protect safety, children who work, or apply to how much you get paid. Laws may also protect you from being treated worse for who you are, being bullied, or treated poorly. Your bosses can't treat workers worse or fire them because they answer questions from someone who inspects your workplace.

**You have a right** to join or start a union. A union is where workers join with one another so they can change the place they work. You can also work to make your workplace better, and you can work for better pay and benefits.

**You have a right** to learn about people who have gotten hurt or sick where you work.

**You have a right** get copies of the tests or studies that may have been done to find safety and health problems where you work.

**You have a right** to get copies of papers your bosses keep that talk about your health.

**You have a right** to tell OSHA if your workplace punishes you because you asked the government to come and find problems where you work. You can't be punished because you take advantage of other rights the law gives to workers.