

Workplace Rights

POSITION STATEMENT

Developed by the AIHA® Social Concerns Committee

Approved by the AIHA Board of Directors on February 21, 2001

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The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the largest association of industrial hygiene and occupational and environmental health professionals in the United States, believes there are basic protections workers must have to ensure a safe and healthful workplace. These protections include:

- the right to a safe and healthful workplace. Workers should go home from work as healthy as they arrived.
- the right to information about the hazards of their jobs and training about those hazards.
- the right to training about health and safety, including training on their rights and government regulations.
- the right to confidentiality of their medical and other personal records.
- the right to refuse to perform unsafe work.
- the right to file a complaint anonymously with an independent agency without fear of discrimination as a result.
- the right to participate fully in governmental compliance inspections and to be informed of inspection findings by third parties (nongovernmental).
- the right to form and serve on effective health and safety committees. Employers also have the right to expect employees to comply with rules and requirements necessary to provide a safe and healthful workplace, including the use of prescribed work practices, protective equipment, and similar components of a health and safety program.
- the right of injured workers to fair and timely compensation, paid time to recuperate, and safe return to work.

These basic protections are essential elements of a safe and healthful workplace. They need to apply to all workers, including temporary workers. Workers should not be classified as *independent contractors* to avoid providing these protections. AIHA supports workplace standards and guidelines, legislation, and regulatory approaches that embody these basic protections for all workers in the United States, and it opposes legislative and regulatory attempts that would undermine them. AIHA also supports the application of the principles underlying these protections to workers outside the United States, with respect for each country's individual characteristics.