

CLB 5 / 6

EMPLOYMENT
AT WORK

SAFE HAVEN EMPLOYMENT ENGLISH PROGRAM SPEAKING

Bringing Up a Safety Concern at Work



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SAFE HAVEN EMPLOYMENT ENGLISH PROGRAM

Bringing Up a Safety Concern at Work

TASK OBJECTIVE

Learners will be able to **communicate concerns politely** and **confidently** using **appropriate language**, and participate in a **structured safety dialogue**.

CLB INDICATORS OF ABILITY FOR ASSESSMENT & TASK CONDITIONS

CLB 5 – I

Interacting with Others

Participate in basic social conversations for some everyday purposes (such as expressing feelings; making, accepting, or declining invitations; and engaging in small talk).

- Opens and maintains a conversation
- Responds to small talk
- Takes turns by giving non-verbal and verbal signals
- Encourages conversations by using eye contact, nodding, showing interest, etc.

Profile of Ability

The speaker can:

- Communicate with some effort in short, routine social situations, and present concrete information about needs and familiar topics of personal relevance.

Feature(s) of Communication

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media
- Informal to somewhat formal
- In familiar small groups
- In moderately demanding contexts

CLB INDICATORS OF ABILITY FOR ASSESSMENT & TASK CONDITIONS

CLB 6 – I

Interacting with Others

Participate in routine social conversations for some everyday purposes (such as apologies, excuses, expressing opinions, and making suggestions or arrangements).

- Opens, maintains and closes a conversation
- Uses and responds to small talk
- Encourages conversation by adding supportive comments
- Provides appropriate explanations
- Takes turns by interrupting appropriately

Profile of Ability

The speaker can:

- Communicate with some confidence in routine social situations, and present concrete information in some detail about familiar topics of personal relevance.

Feature(s) of Communication

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media
- Informal to somewhat formal
- In mostly familiar small groups
- In moderately demanding contexts

ASSESSMENT TASK

Bring a safety concern at work to your supervisor's attention

INSTRUCTOR NOTES

This speaking task helps refugee claimants develop the communication skills needed to bring a safety concern to a supervisor in a respectful, clear, and confident manner. It supports workplace language development by focusing on appropriate tone, language for expressing concerns, and strategies for making polite but assertive requests or suggestions. This task also encourages learners to practice problem-solving and self-advocacy in professional settings, promoting greater independence and workplace readiness.

Refugee claimants may be unfamiliar with workplace expectations in Canada, including their right to a safe environment. Knowing how to raise a concern confidently can help prevent accidents, protect themselves and others, and demonstrate responsibility to employers. It also empowers learners to participate more fully and safely in Canadian work culture while reinforcing their communication skills in real-life situations.

OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE SKILL-BUILDING ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS TASK CRITERIA

Sample Activity 1

SAFETY CONCERN CARD TALK

Introducing the Task

Sample Activity 2

CONVERSATION ABOUT THE SAFETY CONCERN IN THE PICTURE

Opens and maintains a conversation

Sample Activity 3

USING ENCOURAGING STATEMENTS

Encourages conversation by showing interest and adding supportive comments

Sample Activity 4

EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PICTURES

Provides appropriate explanations

Sample Activity 5

ROLE-PLAY SAFETY CONCERN SCENARIOS

Responds to a supervisor's reaction appropriately

Assessment Task

Bring a Safety Concern to a Supervisor

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE SAFE HAVEN CURRICULUM'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Universal Design for Learning

- **Embedded:** Include multiple formats for task input: show a short video of a worker reporting a safety issue, read a sample dialogue, and display a graphic organizer showing conversation structure (e.g., concern → reason → suggestion). Offer differentiated versions of the task (e.g., short vs. extended dialogue) based on learner comfort and fluency level.
- **Suggested:** Allow learners to choose how they participate: by recording their dialogue, performing live, or completing a written script before speaking. Provide a “build-your-dialogue” activity where learners select lines from a bank of options to assemble a conversation before practicing it aloud.

Trauma-informed Practices

- **Embedded:** Use fictional characters and role cards to create emotional distance from personal experiences (e.g., “You are Alex, a warehouse worker...”). Provide clear expectations, predictable structure, and a non-evaluative tone when practicing speaking skills.
- **Suggested:** Let learners preview the speaking task alone or in small groups before performing it. Allow students to opt out of acting roles if needed and contribute by observing and giving supportive feedback. Reinforce safety and control with phrases like: “You can pause or stop at any time.”

Relevant Content

- **Embedded:** Use workplace-specific visuals and tools (e.g., mock safety posters, incident reports) to contextualize the conversation. Relate the task to Canadian workplace laws and worker rights, helping learners see the value of speaking up.
- **Suggested:** Introduce short case studies of common safety concerns (e.g., wet floor, broken equipment), and have learners practice reporting them using target language. Have learners reflect with prompts like: “*How would you report this in your job?*” or “*What challenges might you face?*”

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE SAFE HAVEN CURRICULUM'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CONT.)

Community Engagement & Classroom Connections

- **Embedded:** Integrate the task with broader employment preparation content (e.g., worker rights, WHMIS training, or safety meetings). Draw connections between this task and real-world communication learners may use in interviews or job orientations.
- **Suggested:** Partner with local employment agencies or workplace safety boards to get authentic materials or invite a guest speaker. Organize a “Workplace Role-play Circuit” where learners rotate through different scenarios (e.g., reporting a safety hazard, asking for time off, requesting training).

Accessibility

- **Embedded:** Provide learners with visual sentence frames, cue cards, and key vocabulary sheets to support memory and reduce anxiety. Include optional listening-only roles for learners who may feel overwhelmed during live speaking activities.
- **Suggested:** Use whisper reading or rehearsal with a partner before performing in larger groups. Check comprehension and comfort by asking simple questions before the task: “Do you understand the task? Would you like to practice first?”

Inclusivity, Diversity & Unity

- **Embedded:** Design scenarios that reflect a variety of workplace roles and industries (e.g., restaurant, construction, cleaning), allowing learners to choose the most relevant context. Ensure representation by using names and cultural backgrounds that reflect the class community.
- **Suggested:** Encourage learners to draw on imagined or generalized workplace experiences rather than personal stories. Emphasize that all voices matter when it comes to safety. Use inclusive prompts like: “What would you do in this situation?” instead of asking about personal history.



Speaking

CLB 5

Theme	Employment - At Work
Task	Bring a work safety concern to a supervisor/manager
Competency	I - Interacting with Others

Name: _____

Date: _____

	Holistic Your listener can...	Yes (2)	Not Yet (1)
*	Understand your concern and the reason(s) behind it		
	Analytic You can...	Yes (2)	Not Yet (1)
*	Start and maintain a polite workplace conversation about safety		
*	Express concern clearly and politely and explain the reasons		
	Respond to a supervisor's reaction appropriately		
	Use verbal cues to show engagement		

Total

_____ / 10



Speaking

CLB 5

Continue

For next time

This task was **easy** / **so-so** / **difficult** for me, because...

Success = 70% including starred* criteria

Successful overall in this task?

Yes

Not yet



Speaking

CLB 6

Theme	Employment - At Work
Task	Bring a work safety concern to your supervisor/manager.
Competency	I - Interacting with Others

Name: _____

Date: _____

	Holistic Your listener can...	Yes (2)	Not Yet (1)
*	Understand your concern and the reason(s) behind it		
	Analytic You can...	Yes (2)	Not Yet (1)
*	Start, maintain and close a polite workplace conversation about safety		
*	Provide an appropriate explanation about the reasons behind your concern		
	Respond to a supervisor's reaction appropriately		
	Encourage conversation by adding supportive comments		

Total

_____ / 10



Speaking

CLB 6

Continue

For next time

This task was **easy** / **so-so** / **difficult** for me, because...

Success = 70% including starred* criteria

Successful overall in this task?

Yes

Not yet

Sample Activity 1: Safety Concern Card Talk (Introducing the Task)

Instructions

1. Give each learner (or pair) one set of cards.
2. Ask learners to read their card and think about:
 - *Is this safe or unsafe?*
 - *What could happen?*
 - *What would you say to your supervisor?*

Provide sentence starters on the board, such as:

- *Excuse me, I noticed...*
 - *I'm a little concerned because...*
 - *Could you take a look at...?*
3. In pairs, learners take turns describing the concern on their card and explaining:
 - What the problem is
 - Why it's unsafe
 - What they would say to a supervisor

Example: “My card says there is water on the floor and no wet floor sign. That’s dangerous because someone could fall. I would say: *Excuse me, I noticed a spill near the hallway. Could we put up a sign or clean it up?*”

Encourage learners to ask each other questions like:

- *What would you do?*
 - *Have you seen this before at work?*
4. **Bring** the class back together and ask:
 - *Which safety concern was the most serious?*
 - *Which one have you seen in real life?*
 - *Was it easy or hard to think of what to say?*



There is water on the floor, but no “wet floor” sign.



A worker is lifting a heavy box without help.



Someone is using cleaning chemicals without gloves.



The fire exit is blocked by boxes.



A machine is making a strange noise, but no one reports it.



A worker is not wearing a hard hat in a construction area.



There are wires and cords on the floor where people walk.



A worker sees a sharp object on the floor but doesn't pick it up.



The lights are broken in a stairwell, and it is dark.



A person is using a ladder without anyone holding it.



There is a strong smell of gas in the lunchroom.



Someone is smoking near flammable materials.

Sample Activity 2: Conversation about the Safety Concern in the Picture

(Opens and maintains a conversation)

Instructions for Teachers on How to Approach the Criterion:

1. **Write this dialogue starter sentence on the board:**

“Hi, I just wanted to check in about the meeting tomorrow.”

2. **Ask students:**

- *Is this a formal or informal sentence?*
- *What does “check in” mean in this context?*
- *Is this a polite way to start a conversation at work?*

3. **Explain:** In Canadian workplaces, it’s important to speak politely, especially when starting or ending conversations. The way you begin and close a conversation can show respect and professionalism.

Step-by-Step Strategies for Students:

1. **Start the Conversation Politely**

Teach common polite openers:

- *Hi, do you have a moment?*
- *Excuse me, can I ask you something quickly?*
- *I just wanted to talk to you about...*

Practice:

Students role-play different polite ways to approach a colleague or supervisor.

2. **Maintain the Conversation**

Teach strategies to keep the conversation going:

- Show interest: *That makes sense. / I see what you mean.*
- Ask follow-up questions: *Could you tell me more about that? / What do you think about...?*
- Be polite if you disagree: *I understand, but I think... / That’s a good point, but have you considered...?*

Practice: In pairs, students continue a conversation based on a workplace scenario (e.g., discussing a project, asking for clarification, giving feedback).

3. Ask Follow-Up Questions

Encourage the conversation by asking:

- *How did you feel about that?*
- *What happened next?*
- *Can you tell me more?*
- *What are you planning to do next?*

Practice:

Give students sentence starters and ask them to complete them with a follow-up question.

Sample Activity 2: Conversation about the Safety Concern in the Picture (continued)

Helpful Language

Opening the conversation politely:

- *Hi, do you have a minute?*
- *I wanted to talk to you about something I noticed.*
- *Can I speak with you about a safety issue?*

Stating your concern:

- *I noticed that the boxes are stacked too high and I'm concerned they might fall.*
- *Someone could get hurt if this isn't fixed.*
- *I'm worried this could be a safety risk.*

Keeping the conversation going:

- *Do you think this is something we can fix soon?*
- *Has anyone else noticed this?*
- *What's the best way to handle this?*

Closing the conversation politely:

- *Thanks for listening - I just wanted to bring it up.*
- *Let me know if there's anything I can do to help.*
- *I'm glad we could talk about this. I feel better now.*

Sample Activity 2: Conversation about a Safety Concern (continued)

Instructions:

1. Look at the picture.
2. In pairs, use the “Useful Language” from the previous page to create a conversation between the person in the picture and his supervisor.
3. Practice the conversation. Take turns being the worker and the supervisor.

A farm worker exposed to the direct heat of the sun.



Image by Raviraj bhor from Pixabay

Self-Check: Check what you did well:

- I opened the conversation politely.
- I stated the concern clearly.
- I asked a question or gave more details.
- I used a respectful tone.
- I closed the conversation politely.

Sample Activity 3: Using Encouraging Statements

(Encourages conversation by showing interest and adding supportive comments)

Instructions for Teachers on How to Approach the Criterion:

1. **Write this sentence on the board:**

“That sounds like a great idea! How did it go?”

2. **Ask students:**

- *What is the speaker doing in this sentence?*
- *What words show support or interest?*
- *Is this a helpful way to respond to a coworker?*

3. **Explain:** In a Canadian workplace, it's important to show that you're listening and that you care about what others are saying. This builds positive relationships and teamwork. We do this by adding supportive comments and asking follow-up questions.

Step-by-Step Strategies for Students:

1. Show You Are Listening

Use phrases like:

- *Really?*
- *Oh, that's interesting.*
- *Wow, I didn't know that.*
- *No way!* (in casual but friendly settings)

Practice:

Play short audio clips of workplace conversations. Ask students to identify where someone shows interest.

2. Add Supportive Comments

Supportive comments make the other person feel heard and respected. Examples:

- *Good job on that project!*
- *That must have been a lot of work.*
- *I think you handled that really well.*
- *You explained that so clearly.*

Practice:

Students role-play giving feedback or responding to a coworker's success, mistake, or idea.

3. Close the Conversation Respectfully

Teach polite closing phrases:

- *Thanks for your time.*
- *I'll let you get back to work.*
- *Let me know if you need anything else.*

Sample Activity 3: Using Encouraging Statements (continued)

A. Read each workplace statement. Then write one encouraging statement or a question or comment to show interest.

1. "I cleaned the break room after lunch."

2. "I answered over 30 customer calls today."

3. "I accidentally sent the wrong package to a customer."

4. "I fixed the machine, and it's working again."

5. "I finished my safety training today."

6. "I'm still learning how to use the new system."

7. "I stayed late to help a coworker with their shift."

8. "I forgot to submit my timesheet on time."

9. "I'm saving money to buy protective equipment for work."

10. "It's my first week at this job."

B. Move around the classroom and say the statements to your classmates. Listen to their encouraging responses and check if they show genuine interest in what you say.

Sample Activity 4: Explain What Happens in the Pictures

(Provides appropriate explanations)

Instructions for Teachers on How to Approach the Criterion:

1. Write this sentence on the board:

"I stopped using the ladder because I noticed it was unstable."

2. Ask students:

- *What is the speaker explaining?*
- *Is this explanation appropriate in a workplace? Why or why not?*
- *Is it polite and clear?*

3. Explain:

In Canadian workplaces, safety is very important. Workers are expected to report safety issues clearly and calmly. Giving an appropriate explanation means saying what the issue is, why it matters, and what action you took or plan to take.

Step-by-Step Strategies for Students:

State the Problem Clearly and Directly

1. Give the key information:

- What you saw or experienced
- When or where it happened
- Why it's a safety concern

Examples:

- *I noticed there was a spill near the entrance, and someone could slip.*
- *The power cord was damaged and could be dangerous.*

2. Use Polite and Professional Language

Teach polite phrases:

- *I just wanted to let you know...*
- *There seems to be a safety issue with...*
- *I noticed something that could be unsafe...*
- *Can we take a look at...?*

Practice:

Students match situations to the correct polite sentence.

3. Explain What You Did or Plan to Do

Let others know what action you took or what should happen next:

- *I put up a wet floor sign and told my supervisor.*
- *I stopped the machine and reported it to maintenance.*
- *I didn't use the equipment and wrote a note to warn others.*

Sample Activity 4: Explain What Happens in the Pictures

(continued)

Instructions: In pairs, look at the picture your teacher gives you. Then, take turns explaining what is happening and why it is a safety issue.



Sample Activity 5: Role-Play Safety Concern Scenarios

(Responds to a supervisor's reaction appropriately)

Instructions for Teachers on How to Approach the Criterion:

1. Write this sentence on the board:

- Supervisor: *"Thanks for letting me know. I'll look into it."*
- Worker: *"No problem. I just wanted to make sure everyone stays safe."*

2. Ask students:

- *What is the supervisor's reaction?*
- *How did the worker respond?*
- *Is this a good way to respond in the workplace? Why or why not?*

3. **Explain:** In Canadian workplaces, how you respond to your supervisor matters. Whether the supervisor reacts positively, negatively, or with stress, workers should remain polite, respectful, and calm. This shows professionalism and helps maintain a positive working environment.

4. Let students know

- Supervisors may be busy or stressed but still appreciate respectful communication.
- A good response acknowledges the supervisor's words and stays calm and polite—even if the supervisor seems frustrated or in a hurry.

Step-by-Step Strategies for Students:

1. Listen Actively to the Supervisor

Teach students to pay attention to:

- The tone of the supervisor's voice
- The words they use (supportive, neutral, or stressed)
- Whether they give thanks, instructions, or feedback

Examples of supervisor reactions:

- *Thanks, I'll deal with it.* (supportive)
- *Okay, just leave it for now.* (neutral)
- *We don't have time for this right now!* (stressed)

2. Respond Calmly and Respectfully

Even if the supervisor is stressed or upset, students should respond in a professional way.

Useful polite responses:

- *Of course. Just wanted to let you know.*
- *Okay, I understand. Thanks.*
- *No problem. I thought it was important to mention.*
- *Sure. I'll follow up later if needed.*

3. Stay Focused on the Goal of the Conversation

Help students learn to:

- Acknowledge the supervisor's response
- Reinforce the purpose (teamwork, safety, completing tasks)
- Keep communication open

Examples:

- *That makes sense. I just wanted to make sure no one gets hurt.*
- *Understood. I'll keep an eye on it in case it gets worse.*
- *Thanks for taking a look when you can.*

Sample Activity 5: Role-Play Safety Concern Scenarios (continued)

Role-Play Practice

Give each student pair a **Role-Play Cue Card**. Each card includes a short scenario and a supervisor response. Students take turns being the worker and the supervisor. Afterward, they discuss:

- Was the worker's response professional?
- How did they acknowledge the supervisor's words?
- Did they stay calm?

Sample Cue Cards:

Scenario: You noticed water on the floor that could cause someone to slip.

Supervisor (supportive): "Thanks. I'll send someone to clean it."

Your job: Respond politely and reinforce the importance of safety.

Scenario: A machine sounds unusual.

Supervisor (neutral): "Okay, just leave it for now."

Your job: Respond respectfully and stay focused on teamwork.

Scenario: You report a scheduling conflict.

Supervisor (stressed): "We don't have time for this right now!"

Your job: Respond calmly, show understanding, and keep communication open.

Scenario: You noticed that a box is blocking the emergency exit.

Supervisor (supportive): "Good catch. I'll take care of it right away."

Your job: Respond politely and show you care about safety.

Scenario: You remind your supervisor that a delivery hasn't arrived yet.

Supervisor (neutral): "Okay. I'll check the order system later."

Your job: Respond respectfully and confirm your willingness to help.

Scenario: You report that another team is using the equipment you were assigned.

Supervisor (stressed): *“Ugh. I’m already dealing with too much today!”*

Your job: Stay calm and professional. Acknowledge their stress and keep the conversation respectful.

Scenario: You let your supervisor know that a coworker isn’t wearing safety gear.

Supervisor (supportive): *“Thanks for saying something. I’ll remind them.”*

Your job: Respond politely and reinforce your concern for safety.

Scenario: You suggest a new way to organize tools to save time.

Supervisor (neutral): *“Hmm. We’ll think about that later.”*

Your job: Respond professionally and show you’re open to feedback.

Overview of the Assessment Task

Assessment Task: Speaking – Bringing a Safety Concern to a Supervisor

Task Description

You are working in a warehouse (or another relevant workplace setting). You have noticed that one of the stair railings is loose, and you're worried someone might get hurt. Your task is to speak with your supervisor and explain the concern clearly and respectfully. You will role-play this conversation with your instructor or a classmate acting as the supervisor.

Instructions for the Learner

- Greet your supervisor politely.
- State the purpose of the conversation.
- Clearly describe the safety concern you observed.
- Explain why it is a concern (include possible consequences).
- Suggest what could be done or ask for a solution.
- Thank your supervisor at the end of the conversation.