



I Got Your Back - “Speak Up, Speak Out” Toolbox Talk

An important part of being a union member is having each other’s back. That is why SMART launched the I Got Your Back Campaign several years ago to reinforce our union solidarity. Now, as part of this campaign, all members are asked to Speak Up, Speak Out.

If you see something unsafe on the job, you know to speak up. When one of our members is harassed, bullied or mistreated on the job, we should intervene with the same sense of urgency as if a fellow member were facing unsafe work conditions. As with safety, it is important to create a culture that encourages members to speak up when they are uncomfortable or are witnessing harassment or bullying.

In fact, discrimination and harassment on construction sites can endanger the physical safety of members on the job. Due to the dangerous nature of the job, you need to be able to trust that the member next to you will keep you safe. If your co-worker is harassing you, it is hard to trust that they will ensure your safety. In addition, bullying and harassment can cause stress, anxiety and impact physical health.

We have a duty to ensure the safety and well-being of our fellow members and to encourage each other and build morale while on the job. Intervention is an effective way to curb and hopefully eliminate harassment and bullying in the workplace.

Therefore, we ask every member to Speak Up, Speak Out:

- (1) If you witness a fellow member being bullied, harassed, discriminated against or mistreated on the job, please Speak Up, Speak Out.
- (2) If you are being bullied, harassed, discriminated against or mistreated on the job, please Speak Up, Speak Out if you are comfortable doing so, or ask a trusted ally for help.

What types of behaviors warrant intervention? These include insults, offensive jokes, inappropriate sexual advances, intimidating, targeting or humiliating someone, yelling, swearing at someone, calling someone derogatory names, spreading rumors, purposefully excluding people, threats and physical or sexual assault.



What does it mean to Speak Up, Speak Out? This can take many forms depending on the situation:

- Ask the offender to stop. Here are some examples of things you can say: “This needs to stop right now.” “This is wrong, and you need to stop.” “This is not right. Leave [name] alone.”
- Ask the individual if they are okay and if they would like to report this incident. Emphasize that they did not deserve to be treated this way and that you have their back.
- Approach other bystanders and encourage them to Speak Up, Speak Out. Every voice matters, and there is power in numbers.
- If you are not comfortable saying something in the moment, you can report the incident to your union rep or the employer.

Retaliation is not tolerated in the sheet metal industry. If you or a fellow member is retaliated against for reporting an incident, please contact your union representative immediately.

When we fail to look out for one another while performing our work, incidents happen, and these can have lasting and devastating effects. It takes all of us to create a strong union where we stand up for each other and have each other’s backs. Let’s commit to Speak Up, Speak Out.

Conversation & Notes:

- How would you Speak Up, Speak Out if you witnessed bullying or harassment at the workplace?
- What can you do to create a supportive work environment?
- How do bullying and harassment lead to unsafe work conditions?

