



“STOP WORK” AUTHORITY – WHEN AND HOW TO USE IT

Every worker has the right and responsibility to stop work if they believe a task is unsafe. “Stop Work” authority is a critical safety control that prevents incidents before they happen. It is not about causing delays — it is about preventing injuries. This toolbox talk explains when and how to use stop work authority correctly.

What Is Stop Work Authority?

Stop work authority allows any worker to pause or stop a task if:

- There is an immediate danger to people.
- Conditions have changed and are no longer safe.
- Safety controls are missing or not working.
- There is uncertainty about how to perform the task safely.

It applies to everyone, regardless of position or experience.

When Should You Stop Work?

You should stop work if you notice:

- Unsafe acts or shortcuts being taken.
- Damaged or faulty equipment.
- Missing PPE or safety controls.
- Unstable loads or unsafe conditions.
- Poor visibility, weather, or environmental changes.
- You are unsure how to safely perform the task.

If something does not feel right, stop and reassess.

How to Use Stop Work Authority

When stopping work:

- Stay calm and act respectfully.
- Clearly explain the safety concern.
- Stop the task safely.
- Notify your supervisor or responsible person.
- Work together to resolve the issue.
- Only resume work once it is safe to do so.

The goal is to fix the problem, not assign blame.

What Happens After Work Is Stopped

Once work is stopped:

- The hazard must be assessed.
- Corrective actions must be implemented.
- Controls must be verified.
- Workers must understand the changes before restarting.

Stopping work early prevents more serious consequences.

No Blame – Safety First

Using stop work authority should never result in punishment when done in good faith. A strong safety culture supports workers who speak up and take action.

Failing to stop unsafe work can lead to injuries, damage, and serious consequences.

Summary

“Stop Work” authority is a powerful tool that allows workers to prevent incidents before they occur. If something is unsafe or unclear, stop the task, raise the concern, and ensure it is resolved before continuing. Safety must always come before production.

Discussion Points

1. What situations would require you to stop work on this site?
2. What makes workers hesitate to stop work?
3. How can we support each other when someone uses stop work authority?

