



# What to Do If You Are Asked to Do Something Unsafe

Raise the risk clearly, seek safe support and protect the people receiving care.

For care workers in England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland has separate employment rules: contact the Labour Relations Agency. General information, not individual legal advice. Rights depend on employment status, contract and circumstances. No assessment or certificate.

## What to do now

Do not proceed with an activity you cannot carry out safely. Explain the immediate risk and contact the responsible manager or on-call service. Keep the person safe while help is arranged; do not leave them without necessary support. Use emergency services for immediate serious danger where needed.

## What to ask

Ask for the care plan, risk assessment, appropriate equipment, competent assistance or authorised clarification. For example, if a transfer requires two trained staff and you are alone, ask the manager to arrange the second person rather than improvising. Ask who will coordinate safe alternative care.

## What to record

Record the instruction, the specific risk, who you contacted, the response and the safe action taken using approved reporting systems. Keep your own employment chronology without copying confidential resident details. Report any incident or near miss according to policy.

## What to avoid

Do not falsify records to make an unsafe task appear completed. Do not take a blanket instruction from this guide to abandon a shift or refuse all duties. Explain the particular hazard and offer safe alternatives within your competence. Do not let a personal dispute replace immediate safeguarding action.

## Words you can adapt

I cannot safely complete [task] because [specific risk]. The plan/equipment/staffing currently available is [facts]. Please arrange [support] and confirm the safe alternative. In the meantime I am [safe action] and have escalated the immediate risk to [person].

## Where to get help

Speak to a safety representative, union or Acas about employment consequences. HSE explains worker safety responsibilities. Serious care concerns may also need safeguarding or regulator reporting through the appropriate route. Whistleblowing protection has legal conditions; seek advice rather than assuming every complaint automatically qualifies.

## Your next steps

- Identify the specific danger.
- Protect the person and seek help.
- Request safe resources.
- Record and escalate appropriately.

## Sources and further help

HSE: Your health, your safety

Acas: Whistleblowing

Northern Ireland: Labour Relations Agency

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