JOBLINKS · JOBSTORY
PODCAST

EPISODE 03 · WORKSHEET

Saying no at work

Set your limits and earn respect — without closing any doors.

Keep it on your phone

This worksheet gathers everything we covered in the episode: your rights in 2026, the 4 most legitimate “no”s, the exact phrases to use, where to find help, and space to prepare your own wording.

1 Your rights in 2026 — what the law says

Two laws now protect young workers in Québec.

LAW 19

Regulating the work of young people

IN EFFECT SINCE JUNE 1, 2023

- Under 14: work is prohibited, except for regulated exceptions (family business, day camp, newspaper delivery).
- 14 to 16, during the school year: maximum 17 h per week, maximum 10 h Monday to Friday.
- Written parental consent is required for anyone under 14.
- Employer fine for exceeding the limits: $600 to $6,000 (first offence), up to $12,000 for a repeat offence.

LAW 42

Psychological harassment and sexual violence

IN EFFECT SINCE MARCH 27, 2024

- Since October 6, 2025, every employer must have a clear policy for prevention, reporting, investigation and support.
- If you fall ill within the 3 months following an incident of sexual violence at work, the law presumes it is an employment injury — it is up to the employer to prove otherwise.
- Amnesty clauses that used to erase a harasser’s record are now prohibited.

✦ **Remember:** these laws exist because young people were exploited before you. They didn’t exist for your parents. Use them.

2 The 4 most legitimate “no”s

1

No to excessive hours

LAW 19 · ACT RESPECTING LABOUR STANDARDS

14–16: max. 17 h/week during the school year. 16 and up: overtime paid at 1.5× after 40 h/week, and never imposed if it isn’t in your contract.

2

No to dangerous tasks without training

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY · RIGHT OF REFUSAL

You have the right to refuse a task you consider dangerous (ladder, machine, chemicals, delivery) if you haven’t been trained — without any risk of reprisal.

3 No to harassing or degrading behaviour

LAW 42 · HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Inappropriate comments, isolation, humiliation, intimidation: it’s never “just a joke.” Since October 6, 2025 your employer must have a clear, documented policy.

4 No to demands outside your contract

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

Using your car without compensation, covering shifts that aren’t yours, switching branch without compensation: if it’s not in the contract, you can refuse — politely but firmly.

3 How to phrase your no — 3 principles

1 Name the fact, not the feeling

Instead of: “It stresses me out when you call me at the last minute.”

Say: “The agreement requires 24 hours’ notice for replacements. I won’t be able to come this time.”

2 Put it in writing. Always.

A spoken conversation is your word against the employer’s. An email or written message becomes evidence.

“Hi X, just to sum up what we said this morning: you asked me to do Y. I’ll think it over and get back to you.”

3 Separate the no from the relationship

Refuse the request, never the person:

“I understand you need coverage tonight. I can’t this time. Can we look at next week’s schedule together?”

The 4 ways to say no

The clear, respectful no — professional, without over-justifying.

The no with an alternative — “not now… but”.

The deferred no — “let me think about it and I’ll get back to you.”

The conditional no — “yes, if the conditions change.”

THE 3 PHRASES TO MEMORIZE

“I’ll think about it and get back to you tomorrow.”
when you’re being pressured on the spot

“Can we put that in writing?”
when what you’re asked seems off

“By law, I don’t have to do that. Let’s find another solution.”
when it’s genuinely illegal

4 When it goes wrong — your recourse

1 Document

STEP 1

Write everything down: dates, times, exact words, witnesses present. A notebook or your phone’s Notes. Do it as you go, not three months later.

2 Seek support

STEP 2

Don’t stay alone with this. Talk to someone you trust outside work: a friend, a parent, a school counsellor, your family doctor.

3 Use your recourse — free and confidential

STEP 3

RESOURCE	CONTACT	WHAT FOR
CNESST	1 844 838-0808 · cnesst.gouv.qc.ca	Labour standards, health & safety, harassment
CDPDJ	cdpdj.qc.ca	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
GAIHST	search by your region	Help and information on sexual harassment at work
Legal clinics	at your cegep or university	Often free for 16–25 year-olds
Éducaloi	educaloi.qc.ca	Plain-language law — your rights explained simply
Info-Social	811, option 2	Psychosocial support, 24/7

5 · CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

Save two numbers — right now

Take out your phone. Now. And save these two numbers in your contacts:

1. **CNESST:** 1 844 838-0808 — name it “My rights at work”
2. **Info-Social:** 811, option 2 — name it “24/7 support”

It takes 30 seconds. You may never use them. But if one day you do need them, you won’t waste 20 minutes searching in a panic.

6 Your turn — prepare your own wording

Think of a real or anticipated situation at work. Use the 3 principles to prepare your no **before** you need it.

1 Situation 1

A REQUEST THAT GOES BEYOND YOUR SCHEDULE OR CONTRACT

The fact, without emotion

My wording of the no

Do I write it or say it first? How do I document it?

2 Situation 2

A TASK YOU HAVEN’T BEEN TRAINED FOR

The fact, without emotion

My wording of the no

Do I write it or say it first? How do I document it?

3 Situation 3

A COMMENT OR BEHAVIOUR THAT MADE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE

The fact, without emotion

My wording of the no

Do I write it or say it first? How do I document it?

JobStory — the podcast that talks straight about work, youth and the future.
You have the right to say no.