

Use the right help

Removing barriers to ask

Ask for help early.

The risk

When kaimahi (workers) push through by themselves or use the wrong equipment instead of asking for help when they need it, the risk of injury increases.

Why this matters

Working by themselves or using the wrong equipment increases the risk of awkward or unpredictable movement, muscle strains, fatigue and loss of control. This can lead to sudden forces on the body, resulting in injury.

Your role as a leader

Your role is to make asking for help early the easiest and safest option. This means shaping the conditions around the work so kaimahi (workers) can get help without fear, friction or delay.

What this looks like in practice:

- Make asking for help early the default choice: reinforce that asking for help, using the right equipment, or stopping to escalate are essential parts of safe work.
- Model asking for help in your own mahi (work): pause and bring in the right help early, whether it be another person, the correct equipment or escalation.
- Respond well in the moment: if the task can't be made safe and kaimahi (workers) escalate to you, respect that decision and help reset the plan. Treat escalation as good judgement, not failure.
- Remove practical barriers by managing staffing, timing, equipment and task expectations so people are not forced to 'make do'.
- Coach with curiosity, not judgement: ask 'What do you need next?' and help people think through safe options rather than pushing for completion of the task.

Barrier-busting

Here are some common barriers that stop kaimahi (workers) from asking for help and what you as a leader can remove:

- **Perceived time pressure:** reinforce that safe progress matters more than speed and you'll back people who ask for help early.
- **'Just get it done' culture:** replace 'just get it done' language with 'pause and choose the safest option'.
- **Worry about being judged or seen as not coping:** thank people when they ask early and treat it as good judgement. Model the behaviour in your own mahi (work).
- **Unclear support pathways (not sure who to call or when to escalate):** make the help pathway visible, including who to ask first, who to escalate to and when.
- **Equipment access issues:** make sure equipment is stored well, labelled and maintained so it is realistic to 'get the right equipment' in the moment.

Ask the team

Use these questions to invite a **kōrero** (conversation) about what your team is really experiencing:

1. When do you feel most pressure to do it on your own or 'just make do'?
2. What would make it easier to ask early: people, equipment access, time or knowing who to call?

Commitment

Complete this commitment with your team or with individuals eg, **'This week I/we will remove one barrier that gets in the way of using the right help'**.

This week I/we will...



Continue the kōrero (conversation):

Follow up regularly to focus on using the right help by asking curious questions, such as **'Could you tell me about any barriers you faced getting the right help today?'**.



Other resources

- **Use the right help** quick reference guide
- **Use the right help** micro card
- **Move Well: Skills for kaimahi** elearning
 - Moving techniques
 - Using equipment
- **Move Well: Focus on leaders** elearning
 - Your role
 - Applying the learning - coaching guide