



ELECTRICAL
CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION OF
ONTARIO

ANTI-RACISM TOOLBOX TALK (Part 1)

Topic: _____

Date: _____

Site/Facility: _____

Time: _____

Information Communicated

Definitions

Race: is a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the “Code”).

Racial Discrimination: illegal expression of racism. Any action, intentional or not, that has the effect of singling out people based on their race. Can often be very subtle, such as being assigned to less desirable jobs.

Racism: is a broader experience and practice than racial discrimination. Racism is a belief that one group is superior to others. Racism operates at several levels, in particular, individual, systemic and societal.

Explain Dangers

Racism can be:

Verbal: openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs

Environmental: posting derogatory posters or hate crimes such as hanging nooses on job sites

Unconscious: more deeply rooted in attitudes, values, and stereotypical beliefs.

Unfortunately, racism and racial discrimination remain a reality in society and on construction sites. We must acknowledge this fact as a starting point to effectively address racism and racial discrimination and this is why we are discussing it today.

Racism and racial discrimination negatively impact workers and the work environment.

- It can damage people’s physical and mental health
- It can decrease productivity and undermine the workplace culture
- It can have a negative impact on work relationships
- It can have a negative impact on the business financially (lost productivity, work disruptions) and on their reputation with clients, employees and the public.

Discussion Question: What do you think it means to be anti-racist?

Identify Controls

You cannot always control the behaviour of others, but you can control your own behaviour. Racism cannot and will not be tolerated on our sites and facilities and we owe it to ourselves, coworkers, our organizations, our industry and our community to do our part.

We all must be accountable, and part of our accountability is to have these uncomfortable conversations; to be willing to work through the discomfort; and to be open to discuss and deal with this issue. Part of our accountability is to be in this together.

We must

- Acknowledge that racism exists
- Get involved with organizations that are fighting it
- Elect and appoint leaders who won’t support structurally racist policies
- Demand fundamental change from institutions in our own lives
- Talk about it more

Background Information

Spectrum: From Non-Racist to Anti-Racist Advocate

(Examples adapted from [Marlon James video](#) & Dr. Gordon Hodson's article "[Being Anti-Racist, Not Non-Racist](#)" *Psychology Today*, 1/20/16)

Passive Non- Racist is:	Active Non-Racist is:	Ally behavior/action is:	Anti-Racist Advocacy is:
<u>Individual:</u> Being friendly & courteous to people of different backgrounds	Not participating in racist or derogatory remarks/humor in person or online	Expressing your surprise or disagreement; asking speaker for clarification; listening without interrupting when someone says to you "That's racist" or "white people..."	Participating in talks/ rallies/ protests against injustice & state-sponsored police brutality
<u>Communal:</u> Valuing diversity in your community	Extending your home to people of different backgrounds	Living in a neighborhood with people who look different from you; being aware of the imbalance of power and pointing out racism & injustice;	Working to secure equity in your spheres of influence (home, workplace, schools, place of worship, city, etc.); Advocating for equitable distribution of power, resources & opportunities
<u>Educational:</u> Building awareness by educating self: reading & learning about racism, white privilege & power	Observing how privilege & racism are in action in your own life and community; talking to family about respecting differences	Evaluating how you contribute to systems of oppression and working to change that in your circles: where do you get your news? How do you include people who don't look like you in your decision-making? Starting early in education by providing books on diversity to schools and supporting teachers who have culturally - responsive classrooms	Giving public attention to issues of inequity & injustice; advocating that kids in schools/activities are treated justly & have equitable opportunities for success; attending school board meetings & serving on community advisory boards
<u>Systemic:</u> Knowing who in power works toward racial justice	Signing online petitions or sharing with others information on Equity track record of companies, candidates & representatives	Building trust & relationships with others who can affect change on larger scale; challenging systemic racism when you experience unearned privileges	Campaigning for candidates who work for racial justice; using your spheres of influence to connect with larger groups & institutions to dismantle racism

Back Ground Information

Anti-racism is different from not being racist. If you reviewed the Non-Racist to Anti-Racist spectrum provided earlier, you would have noticed the different behaviours associated with each point on the spectrum. As I review the points, please think about where you fit.

- Passive non-racist: being friendly to all people regardless of background, valuing diversity, educating yourself about racism, white privilege.
- Active non-racist: not participating in racist remarks, jokes, etc., including people with different backgrounds in your life, signing petitions, sharing info
- Ally behaviour: speaking up when you hear racist jokes, letting someone explain how/why something you said or did could be racist, being aware of the imbalances of power, educating others on diversity, challenging systemic racism
- Anti-racist advocacy: participating in rallies, advocating for equity, attending school board meetings/community boards to advocate for just treatment, campaigning for those who work for racial justice