AMHSA Forums: User Guide

The AMHSA Forums have been created by AMHSA in order to foster the exchange of ideas, content, and knowledge between municipal members.

Our mission is to develop a forum community that empowers Alberta municipal OHS & HR professionals to grow their networks, spark discussion, and support the sharing of resources, knowledge, and experience. The AMHSA Forum is a natural evolution of the Safety Advisor Email List, with the added benefits of search features, post history, content categorization, moderation, and customizable notification settings.

For more information, comments, or concerns, please contact one of our AMHSA team members:

Moderators:
- RickN – Rick Northrop, LMS Coordinator (rickn@amhsa.net)
- RobR – Rob Rosete, Health and Safety Advisor (rob@amhsa.net)

Lead Administrator:
- AdminK – Krystal McDowell, Project Coordinator (krystal@amhsa.net)

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Membership

Forum membership is restricted to individuals who are employed as Safety Advisors, Disability Managers, Human Resource professionals (or equivalent) for Alberta municipalities or other member organizations.

To become a member of a forum, individuals must provide their contact information (including name, email, organization, job title) to AMHSA and must read and accept the forum guidelines, rules, privacy policy, and the platform's terms of use. We recommend registering with your municipal email to assist us in approving accounts and to help us ensure the forum remains closed to the general public.

Users are approved at AMHSA's sole discretion and access may be removed by the moderation team if the user does not abide by the Terms of Service or community guidelines.

Creating an Account

1. Visit the forum login page at https://forum.amhsa.net/

2. Click the "Sign Up" button

Welcome to AMHSA Discussion Forums

Health, safety, and environment discussion forums

Sign Up   👤 Log In

3. A pop-up window will display, with fillable fields. Any field marked with an * is a required field and you will need to enter that information to submit your application.

The form will ask you for:
   a. Email*
   b. Username*
   c. Name
   d. Password*
   e. First Name*
   f. Last Name*
   g. Organization*
   h. Organization Type*
   i. Organization Role*
   j. City
   k. Province
   l. Preferred Pronoun

The form will also ask you to agree to the:
   a. User Created Content terms*
   b. Privacy Policy*
   c. Terms of Service*

4. Click "Create your account" to submit your application form and you will see a confirmation.

Create your account

You're almost done! We sent an activation mail to ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉. Please follow the instructions in the mail to activate your account.

If it doesn't arrive, check your spam folder.

5. You will receive the below email when your account is approved:
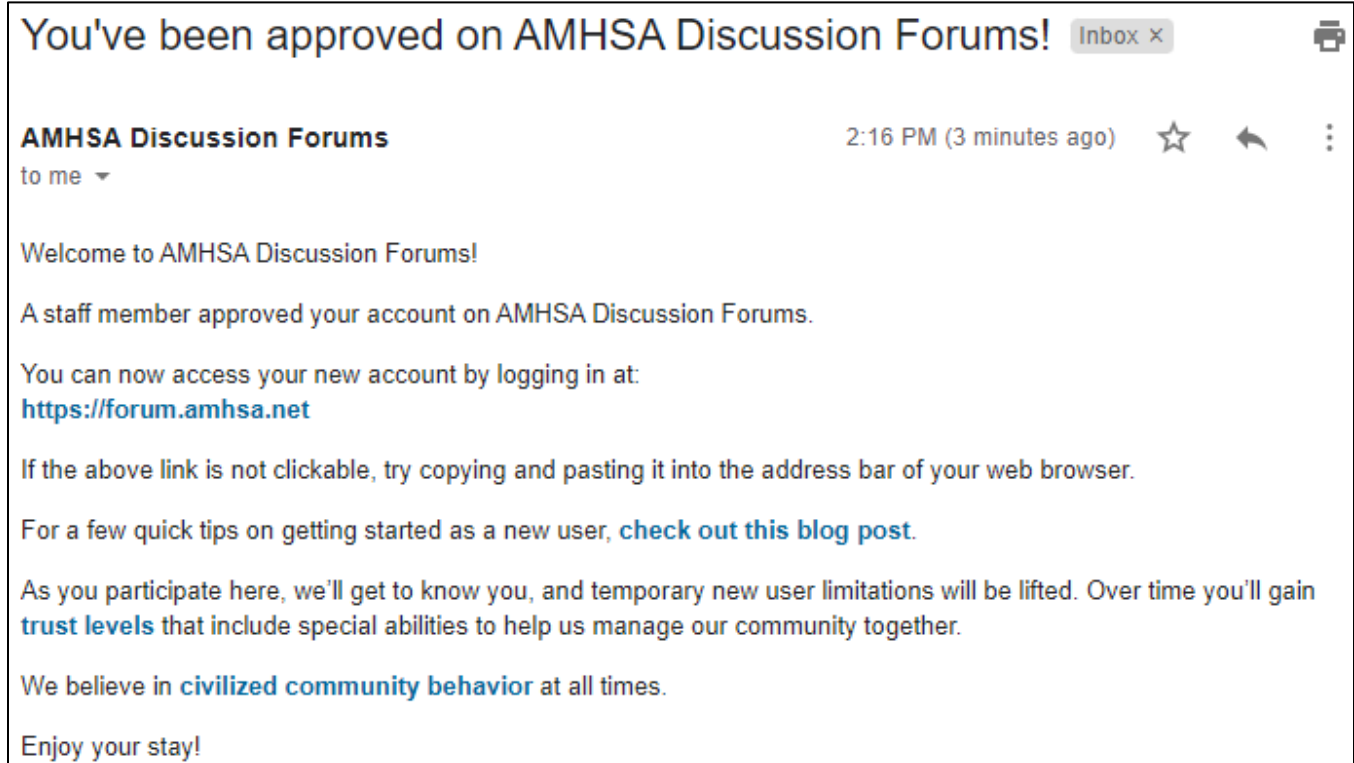

This email is automated and will come from the email address amhsa@discoursemail.com and includes some helpful links:

- Click "check out this blog post" for new user tips and tricks
- Click "trust levels" to learn more about the forum's automatic moderation features
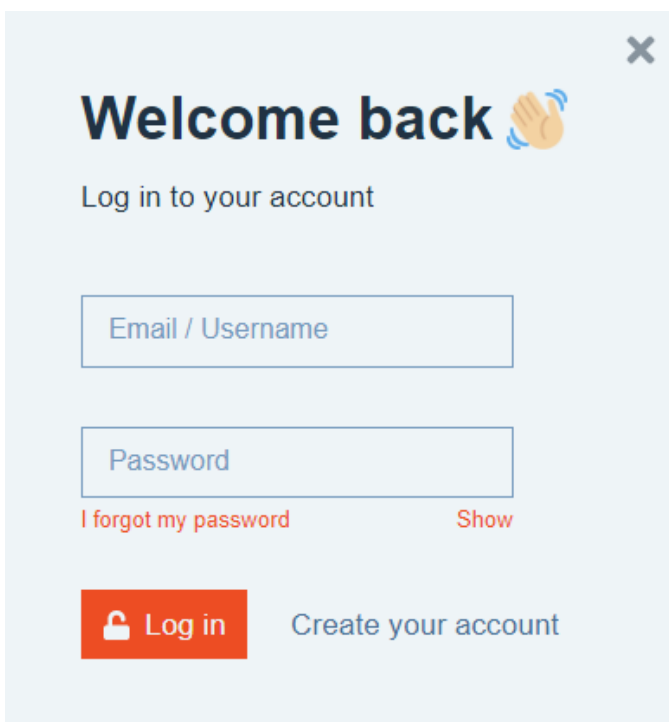- Click "civilized community behavior" for an overview of community guidelines

If you do not receive an email within 1-2 business days, and you have checked your spam/junk folder, please contact one of our moderators.

Logging In

1. Visit the forum login page at https://forum.amhsa.net/

2. Click the "Log In" button
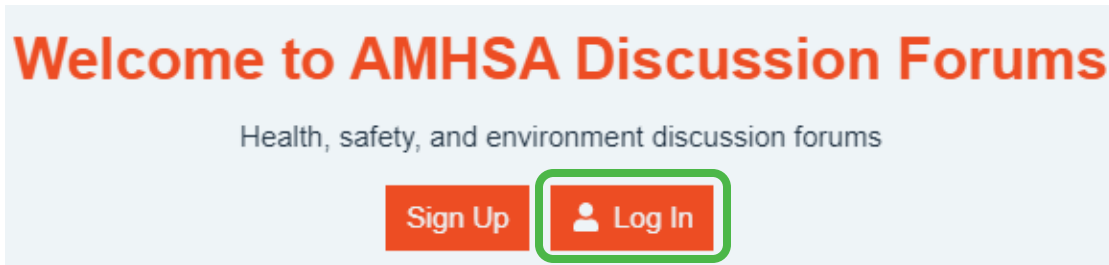
3. A pop-up window will display

4. Enter your email or username and password

5. Click the "Log In" button
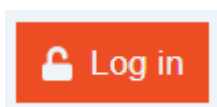
Automated Forum Tour

On your first login, the forum will automatically give you a short tour:
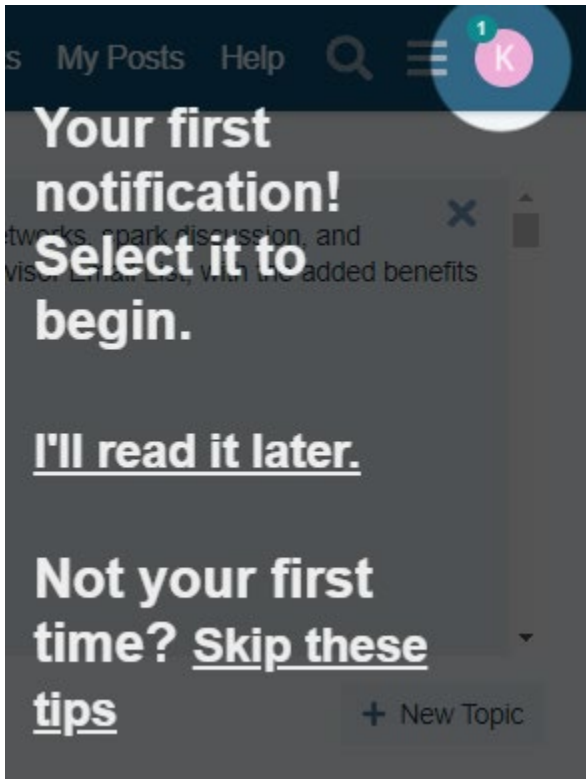
If you click this pop-up, you'll see your first notification – a message from our automod "Discobot"
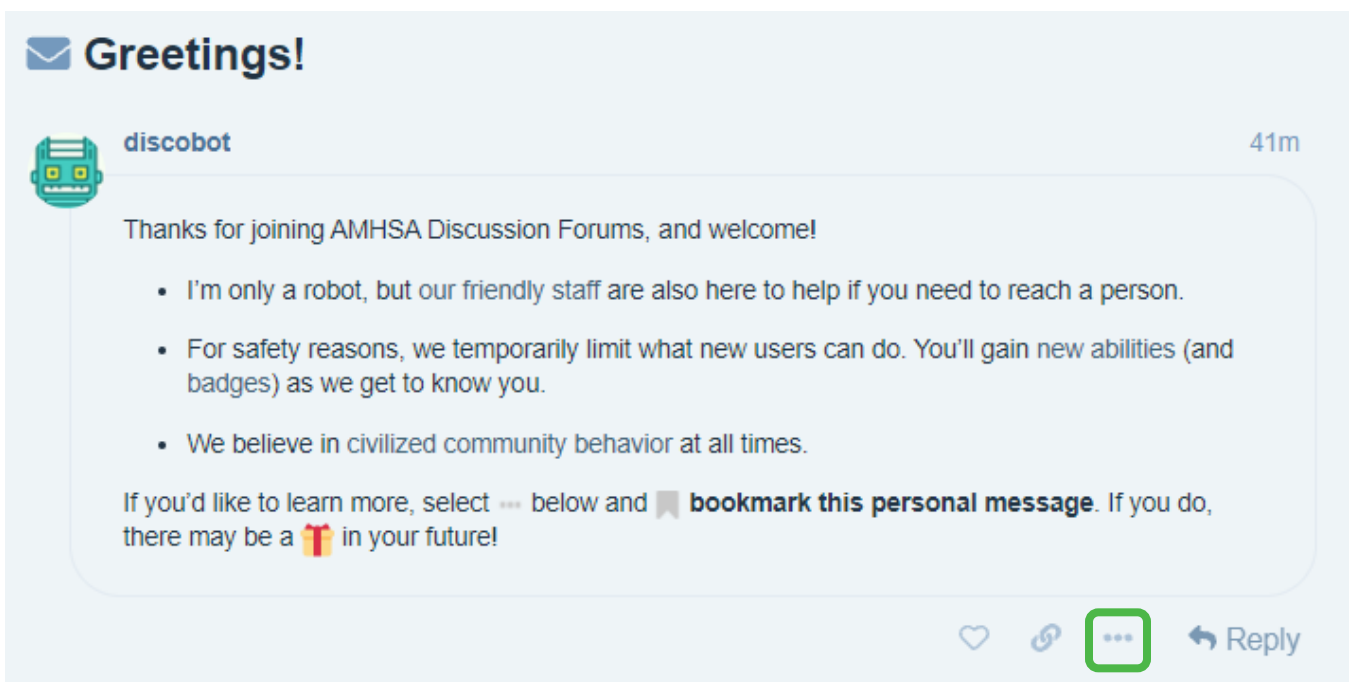
Follow Discobot's instructions ("select … below and bookmark") and Discobot will reply with another tutorial message asking you to reply with a link.
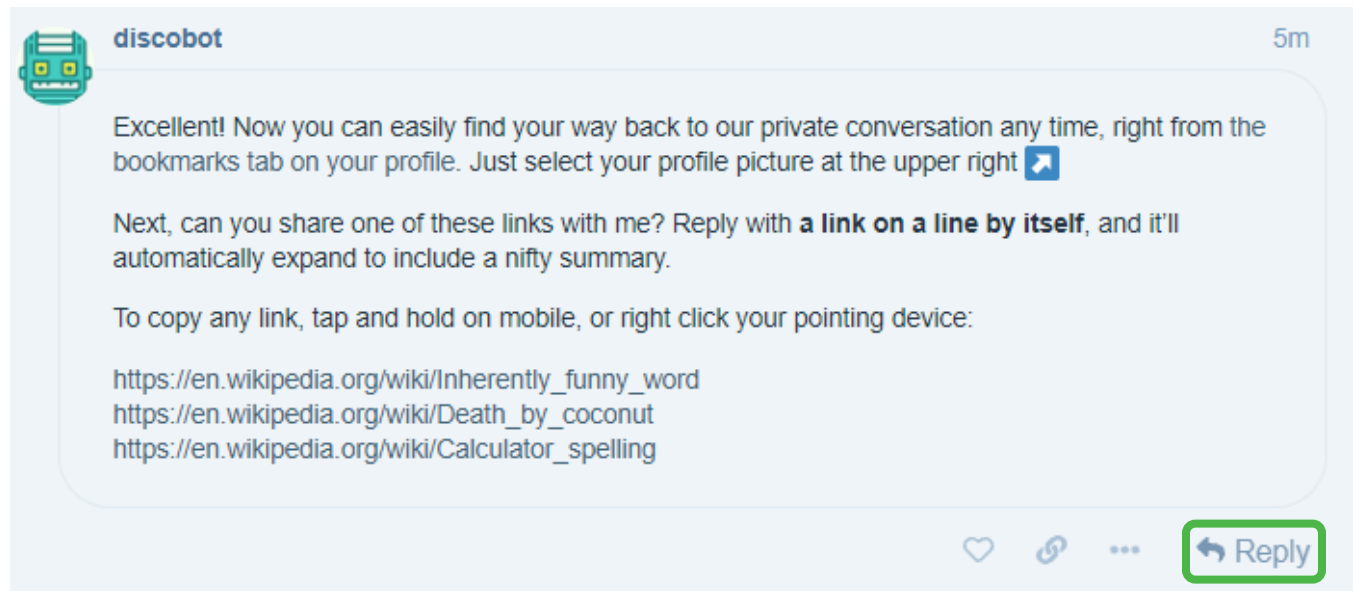
Continue to follow Discobot's instructions, and it will teach you how to:
- Reply
- Display a link with a preview
- Add an emoji
- Mention a user in your reply
- Add formatting to text
- Quote from another post
- Like a post
- Flag an inappropriate post
- Search for specific words in a post, category, or entire forum

Navigating the Forums

When you login to the forum, you'll see a screen that looks like this:

The bar along the top of your screen is the main navigation bar and will appear on every page in the forums.

- Clicking the AMHSA logo or "Home" will take you back to the main page
- "Latest Posts" will display the most recently added posts and comments
- "My Posts" will display all of the posts you have written
- "Help" will take you to our "How To" category
- The magnifying glass icon will allow you to search the forum
- The three stacked lines (often called the hamburger) will show you your menu
- The icon will display user info, including notifications, bookmarks, messages, and preferences

Below the navigation bar are several view options:

You can select a category, tags, latest posts, your posts, or bookmarks. You can also create a new post, by selecting "New Topic" – note that when posts are created from the main page, you will need to select the appropriate category, posts created within a category (such as Health & Safety Advisors, will have the category automatically selected).

Below the view options you'll find categories and latest posts.

To the left are viewable categories. Currently this includes Health & Safety Advisors and How To. To view a specific category, simply click the category name.

(Note: Only moderators are able to post in the How To category.)

To the right are the latest topics that have been posted or replied to in any of the forum categories.

New Sidebar Navigation

You can now navigate the forums using the sidebar on the left of the screen.

Click the hamburger (3 stacked lines) to hide the sidebar or view if hidden.

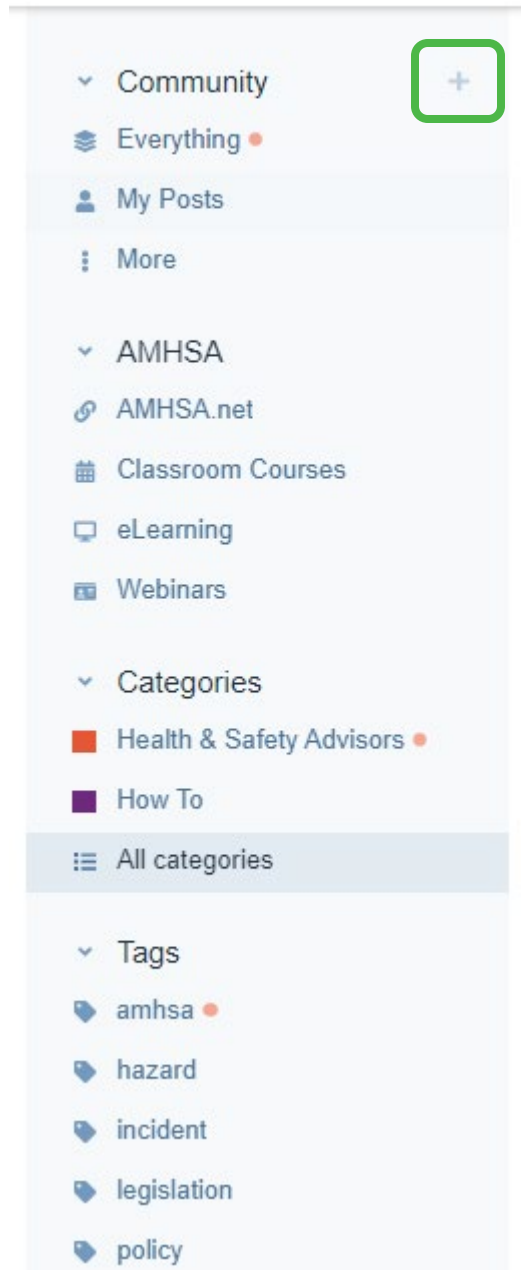Click the + icon to create a new post.

Click the v next to each section to minimize.

Click links under Community to view all posts, your posts, or more (users, badges, about, FAQ)

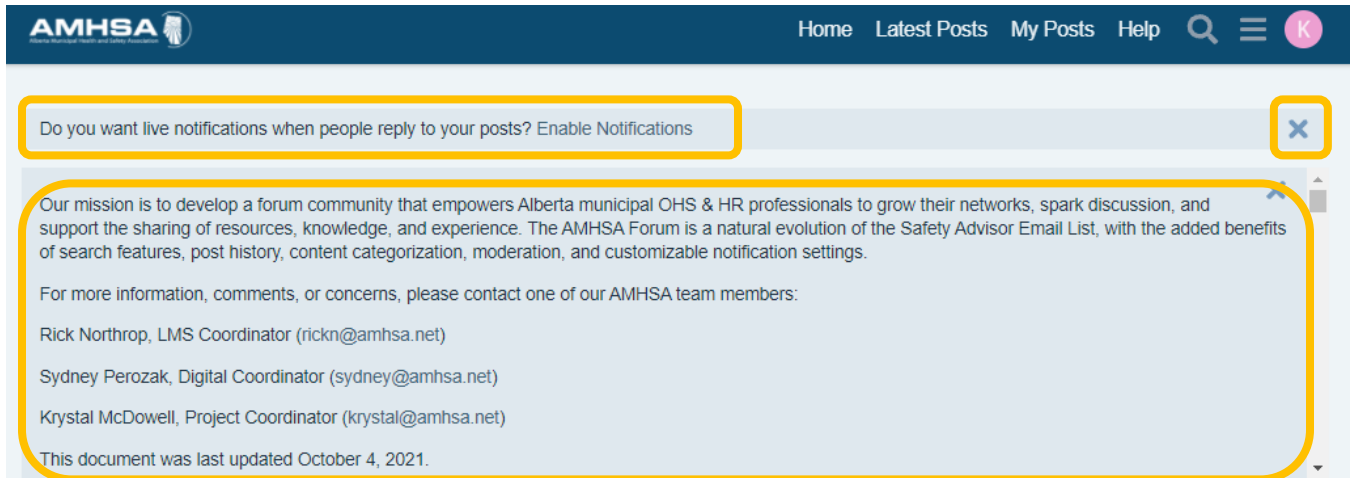Click the links under AMHSA to visit our external content.

Click Categories to navigate within the forums.

Click any of the listed Tags to view posts tagged with each commonly used tag.
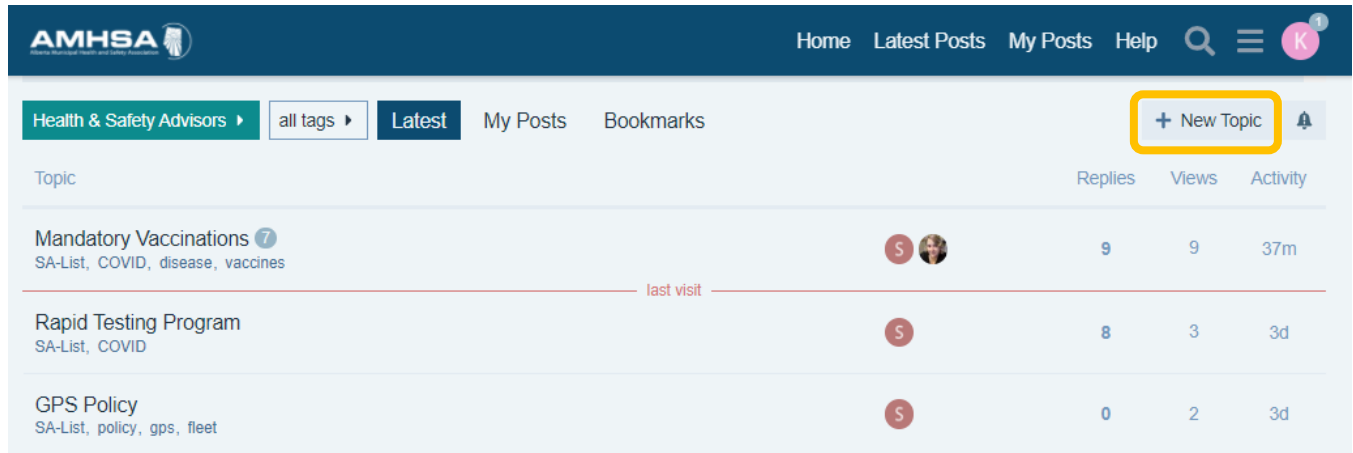
Pinned Posts

Sometimes, you may also see posts pinned to the main page.

These pinned posts can display system notifications, important information (like updates to our Terms of Service), and other updates from the moderation team. Click the X to the upper right of each notification to dismiss them.
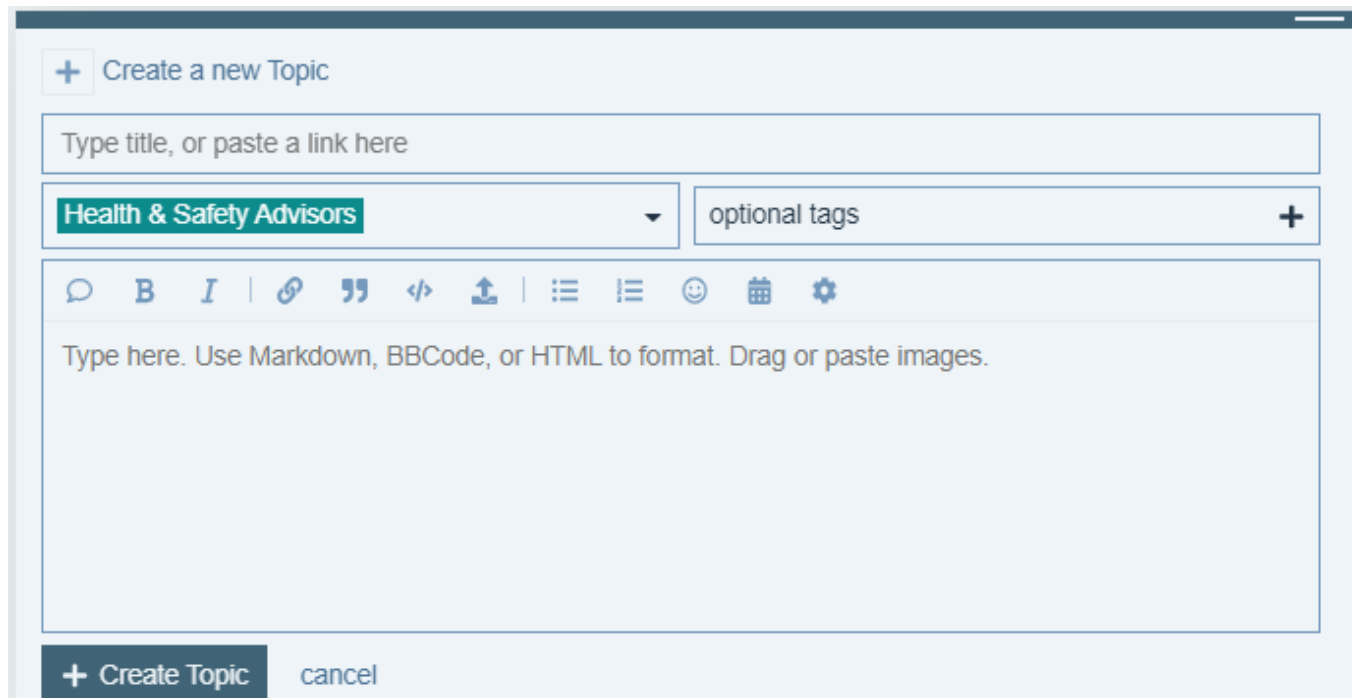
Creating a Post

To create a post, select the Health & Safety Advisors category and click "New Topic"

A window will pop-up from the bottom of your screen, with fields for a title, tags, and post content. You can use the formatting options to bold, italicize, quote, upload files, use emojis, and include links. Hover over each formatting button for a description of it's use. To the right of your post, you'll see what your content looks like with formatting added.

Enter in a descriptive post title and tag for easy searching. Click the + next "Optional Tags" to search or create new tags – start typing and possible tags will display. If you don't find an appropriate tag, select "Create" to make a new one.

Once you've finished your post, click "Create Topic" to make it public, or "cancel" to either discard the post or save it in your drafts.

Replying to a Post

To a reply to a post, select "Reply" and enter your content into the window that pops up on the bottom of your screen.
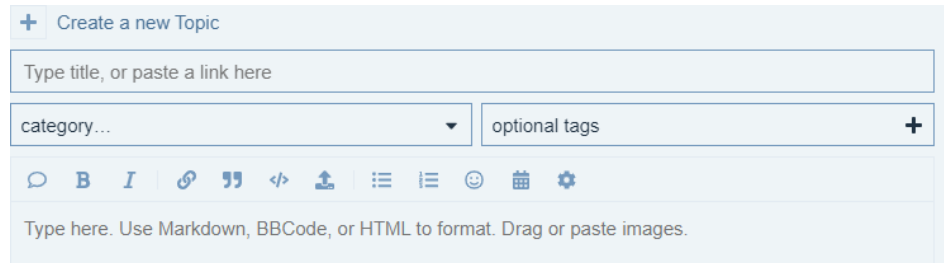
Formatting a Post

Formatting can be applied to the text in your post in a variety of ways.

Use the built-in formatting buttons to quote a post, bold text, italicize text, link, blockquote, paste pre-formatted text, upload a file, create a bullet point list, create a numbered list, add emojis, and insert day/time.

You can also create formatting with text known as Markdown syntax

- A colon and round bracket will create a smiling emoji
  :) becomes 😊

- Create headers in text by adding hashtags and a space before the text. Increasing the number of hashtags decreases the heading level.
  # Heading Level 1
  ## Heading Level 2
  ###Heading Level 3
  would display as

  # Heading Level 1
  ## Heading Level 2
  Heading Level 3

- Create bold text by adding two asterisks before and after
  This is my **bold** text would display as
  This is my **bold** text

- Create italicized text by adding an asterisk before and after the text
  This is my *italicized* text would display as
  This is my *italicized* text

- Combine italics and bold for really important text
  **This is my *very important italicized* and *bolded text* would display as
  This is my *very important italicized* and *bolded text*

- Text can be used to create numbered lists by adding a number followed by a period
  1. Item one
 2. Item two
  would display as
    1. Item one
    2. Item two

- To created nested lists, indent each item in the sublist by four spaces
  1. Item one
  2. Item two
     3. Item three
  would display as
  1. Item one
  2. Item two
  3. Item three

- You can turn text into a link, by surrounding it with <>
  This is a text link <www.amhsa.net> would display as
  This is a text link <www.amhsa.net>

- To add a link that is inline with text, put the link text in square brackets and the link address in round brackets – make sure there is no space in between the link text and the link address.
  This is a [test link](www.amhsa.net) would display as
  This is a test link.

- You can also add links in a reference format by adding square brackets and a reference number
  [This][1] is a far more complicated way of creating [reference links][1] but it works.
  [1]: https://www.markdownguide.org/basic-syntax/#links
  would display as
  This is a far more complicated way of creating reference links but it works.
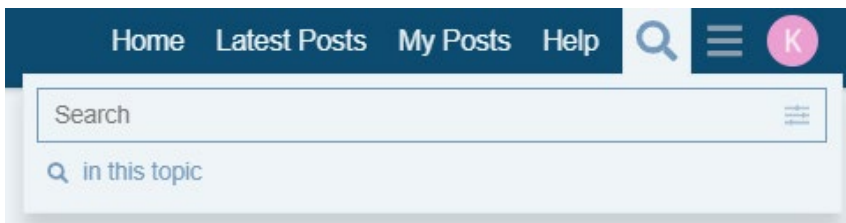
Searching the Forums

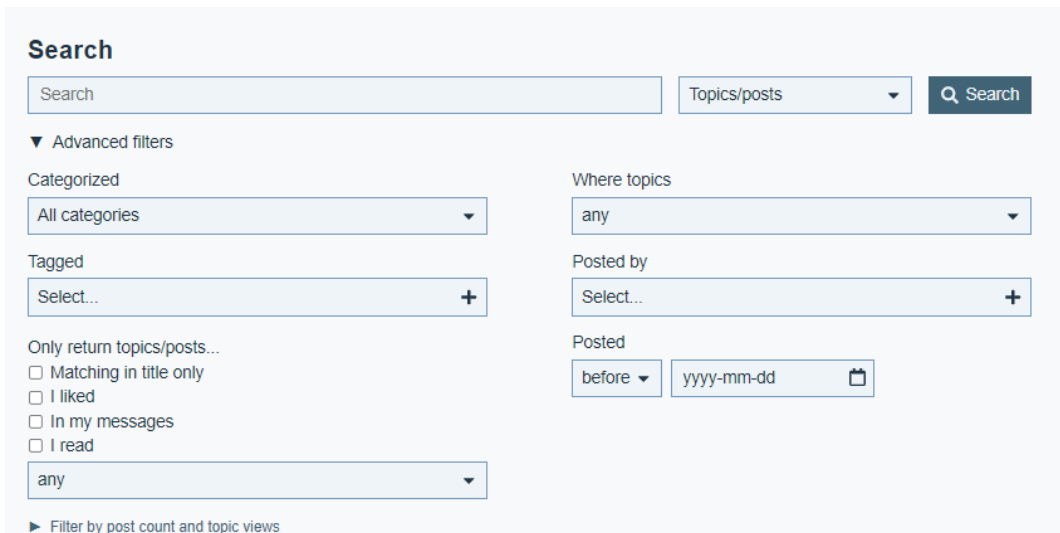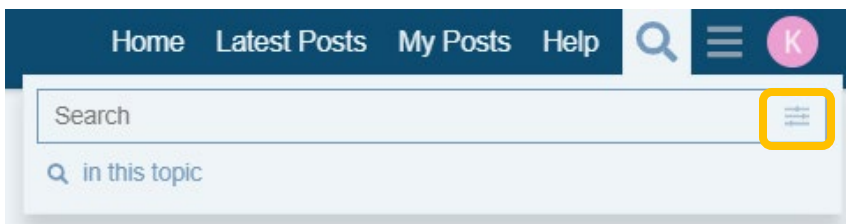To search, select the magnifying glass on the top navigation bar:

If you are in a category when select search, you'll see the option to only search within that specific category:
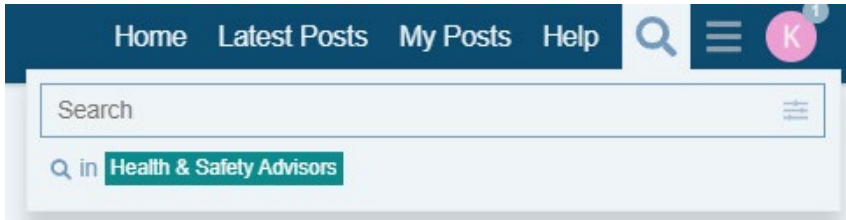
If you are in a topic, you'll see the option to search within that specific topic:
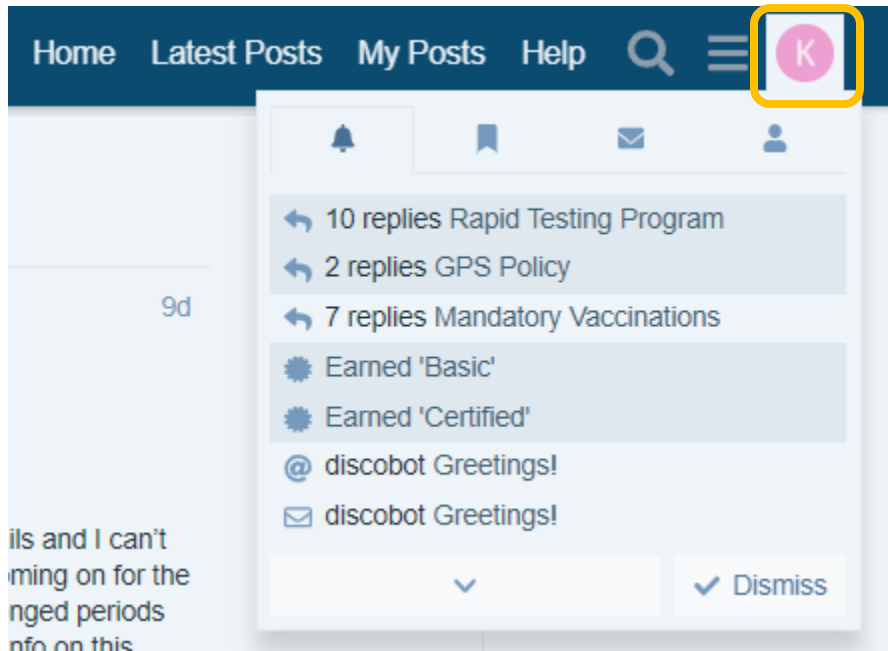

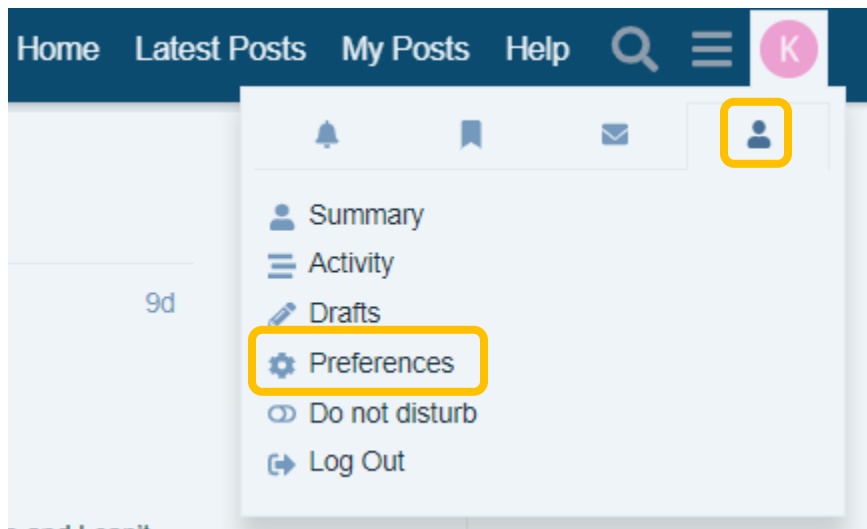To further adjust your search, select the Advanced Search icon:

Changing your Notification Preferences

Select your user icon to the far right of the blue navigation bar. A menu will expand, with tabs along the top for notifications, bookmarks, messages, and user preferences.

Select the person icon for the user preferences menu, and then "preferences" next to the cog.

There are a few notification preferences that you can customize. Select "Emails" on the left menu to adjust how often you receive an email from the forums. You can choose to receive an email when someone messages, quotes, or replies to you. You can also opt to receive a summary of popular topics and replies, on an hourly basis to once every 6 months. Make sure you click "Save Changes" to save your preferences.

If you select "Notifications" you can adjust how often you'll receive notification messages within the forums. You can opt into notifications for new topics, liked topics, or on a custom schedule. You can also to allow other users to message you directly. Under notifications, you'll also see "Categories", "Users", and "Tags" with further customization options such as notifications for specific categories or watched tags

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I register for the forums?
You can access the forums at https://forum.amhsa.net/. Click the "Sign Up" button to register and complete the registration form. The questions asked during registration are to ensure that the forum remains closed to the general public and is open only to our members. All accounts are approved by AMHSA staff during business hours – if you've registered and haven't been approved within 1-2 business days, please contact one of our moderators. You may also want to check your email's spam/junk folder – emails sent from the forum system are automated and can get caught by filters.

Who is the moderation team?
The forums are monitored and moderated by Rick Northrop (Rickn@amhsa.net) and Rob Rosete (Rob@amhsa.net). Lead forum administrator is Krystal McDowell (krystal@amhsa.net). You may also see our automated moderator, DiscoBot from time to time.

What kind of moderation can I expect?
While we plan to maintain an active moderation schedule, our goal is to be unobtrusive. If necessary, moderators will step in when the terms of service or community guidelines have been breached, and may lock threads, provide warnings, and in extreme cases, may level a temporary or permanent ban. The Safety Advisor eList has long been a valuable and professional community and it is extremely rare for AMHSA staff to intervene. Its more likely you'll see us participating in discussions, posting information, and answering questions!

Do I need to download a program or have a specific platform?
No – the forums are web-based and only require a browser and internet access.

I'm unfamiliar with using a forum, how do I learn more?
If you would like to schedule a one-on-one walkthrough and introduction to the forums, please contact Rick (rickn@amhsa.net). Once you've registered for the forums, you'll also receive a message from DiscoBot, who will walk you through a brief tour.

Do I have to regularly check the forums, or can I receive notifications?
Currently, you'll receive a daily summary of new content, however your notifications are entirely customizable! You may choose to receive no emails, a daily/weekly digest, notifications for specific tags/users/categories, notification of replies to your posts, or you can opt into notifications within your browser. For more information on customizing your notifications, view Changing your Notification Preferences or visit the How To category in the forum.

How was previous SA eList content added?
The majority of SA eList content from March 2021 to current have been added to the Health & Safety Advisors category on the forums. All content has been added under the account "SafetyAdvisorList" and attributed to the original writer in the body of the post and comments. Posts have also been tagged as "SA List" for ease of searching.