

Health and safety representatives - WHS animation transcript

Workplace Health and safety is everybody's business, and we all have a role to play in keeping WA's workplaces healthy and safe.

Persons conducting a business or undertaking or PCBUs are responsible for making decisions regarding health and safety in the workplace. It's important that PCBUs consult with their workers directly or through representatives before making changes or implementing measures that could negatively affect health and safety.

Health and safety representatives are defined in the Work Health and Safety Act and play a key part in consultation to maintain healthy and safe workplaces.

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Health and Safety Representatives are workers elected to represent their work group on health and safety matters that affect them. They contribute to improved health and safety outcomes by supporting communication and consultation in the workplace.

The main role of a health and safety representative is to represent the workers in their work group regarding health and safety matters.

So what are some of the things that a health and safety representative can do?

After giving the PCBU notice, they can inspect the workplace...

...They can inquire into potential risks to the health and safety of their work group...

...They can accompany a WorkSafe inspector during an inspection...

...With the worker's consent, they can attend a meeting between the worker or a group of workers and the PCBU or an inspector...

...When issues cannot be resolved through usual consultation processes, the Health and Safety Representative may consider issuing a provisional improvement notice provided that they've completed the initial five day training course.

To find out more about the benefits of effective consultation in a workplace, we have a video in this series called "Consultation and Representation."

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Any worker can ask the PCBU for the election of one or more health and safety representatives for their workplace.

A work group is a group of workers who share a similar work situation. There may be one or more work groups.

If work groups have not been established in the workplace, The PCBU will first consult with workers to determine how many work groups and how many health and safety representatives are needed.

A health and safety representative is elected to represent their work group. Once elected, their term of office is three years and the role is non-transferable.

If a representative is no longer able to represent their work group, for example, if they resign, there will need to be another election.

A deputy health and safety representative may also be elected to provide coverage for when the Health and Safety Representative is unable to fulfil their role; For example, when on holidays.

The PCBU must allow representatives and deputies to attend the five day training course for health and safety representatives if requested.

Representatives and deputies cannot issue provisional improvement notices or direct the cessation of work unless they've completed this initial five day training.

After completing the initial training they may wish to attend a one day refresher training course once a year to refresh their knowledge.

If the representative or deputy is re-elected after three years, they're not required to do the five day training course again.

During the training, health and safety representatives learn about their powers and functions under the WHS Act and how to perform their role.

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Health and safety representatives and deputies are elected by their work group to represent the workers on health and safety matters. They play an important role in consultation between their work group and management regarding health and safety issues. There's a range of WHS guidance on our website, including other videos in this series. So you can learn more about how you can help to keep WA's workplaces healthy and safe.

For more information on work health and safety, visit the DMIRS website at dmirs.wa.gov.au/whs.

Workplace health and safety is everybody's business and we all have a role to play in keeping our workplaces healthy and safe.