Health and safety representatives

Health and safety representatives (HSRs) play an important role in representing workers on health and safety and bringing issues to the attention of the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU).

THE ROLE OF HSRs

HSRs are workers who:

- represent other workers in their work group on health and safety matters
- monitor how the PCBU is meeting their WHS duties
- investigate WHS complaints from workers
- inquire into WHS risks to workers, and
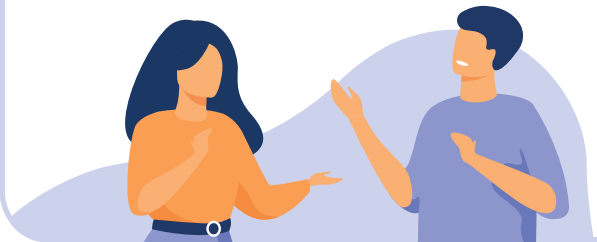- in some circumstances, direct unsafe work to cease or issue a provisional improvement notice.

It is up to HSRs to decide if, and when they exercise their powers and perform their functions. HSRs are not responsible for fixing problems.

DUTIES OF PCBUs

PCBUs have a duty to assist HSRs to perform their functions. This includes:

- providing access to the workplace, resources, paid time, facilities and assistance to HSRs
- consulting with HSRs on work health and safety matters
- sharing information with HSRs about hazards, risks and the health and safety of workers (de-identified information unless worker consents)
- providing HSRs paid time off work to attend HSR training and paying costs
- displaying the list of HSRs in an accessible place, and
- allowing HSRs to accompany an inspector during workplace inspections and attend interviews between workers and the PCBU or an inspector (with worker consent).

HOW HSRS ARE ELECTED

It is **not mandatory** for a business or undertaking to have an HSR, unless requested by workers.

If a worker makes this request, a work group or groups must be negotiated. HSRs and any deputy HSRs are then elected by workers in the work group they will represent.

A PCBU **must** provide any resources and assistance to facilitate the election. Workers may seek the assistance of a union or other organisation to help with the election.

Further advice

Go to the Consultation page on the Safe Work Australia website.

If you need help, please contact your work health and safety regulator.

safe work australia