

Information for workers and prospective health and safety representatives

Health and safety representatives (HSRs) play a key role in ensuring healthier and safer workplaces by representing the views of their work group about work health and safety (WHS) matters.

HSRs are elected by their work group and consult with employers to help support good WHS outcomes.

HSRs are not professional safety officers. They do not manage WHS and do not need WHS experience to be eligible. A HSR does *not* have an additional duty of care or statutory liability. WHS legislation gives the HSR role special functions, rights, powers and training to enable them to undertake this voluntary role during their usual work hours. **If you want to help your work colleagues have a healthier and safer workplace, being a HSR could be for you.**

Electing a health and safety representative

Any worker may ask their employer (otherwise referred to as a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU)) for a HSR to be elected to represent them on WHS matters. If a worker makes this request, the PCBU must establish a work group or groups to facilitate the election. Any worker in a work group is eligible to be elected as a HSR, unless they have been disqualified from acting as a HSR.

Once elected, a HSR provides important services for their work group and workplace, such as:

- consulting with their work group about WHS matters and investigate their concerns
- inspecting the workplace to identify WHS hazards and risks, and investigating WHS complaints
- representing their work group in consulting with the PCBU in resolving WHS issues
- monitoring measures made by the PCBU to comply with WHS laws.

To enable HSRs to perform their functions, HSRs have various powers under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, such as:

- receiving information concerning the work health and safety of workers in the work group
- requesting to establish a health and safety committee
- accompanying entry permit holders and inspectors when they attend the workplace
- in certain circumstances, directing work to cease and issuing provisional improvement notices.

Further information

Learn more about requesting an election of a HSR, the processes for establishing a work group and electing a HSR and the powers and functions of HSRs in the Worker representation and participation guide available at WorkSafe.qld.gov.au.

Use these references to navigate the guide to quickly find the information you need.

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