

UNION FACT SHEET 4 - Victoria

Occupational Health & Safety



OHS Committees and Representatives *Part 7 of the Victorian OHS Act 2004*

Businesses in Victoria must establish OHS committees. Employees can initiate the formation of a Designated Work Group (DWG) which is the mechanism for electing Health and Safety Representatives (HSR). Elections are held every 3 years.

What is the Purpose of OHS Committees and HSR's?

An OHS committee provides a consultation mechanism between employers and employees on matters that affect occupational health and safety in the workplace. An OHS committee is an advisory body and does not make decisions about OHS issues, but assists the employer to make more informed decisions.

Under the provisions of the *OHS Act* the functions of OHS committees and representatives are able to:

- Inspect any part of a workplace in which a member of the DWG works after giving reasonable notice, or without delay in the event of an incident or immediate risk to health or safety.
- Accompany an inspector during a workplace inspection involving their DWG.
- Require the establishment of an Health and Safety Committee.
- If the member of the DWG consents, attend interviews on health or safety matters between that person and an inspector or employer.
- Seek the assistance of any person whenever necessary.
- Issue a Provisional Improvement Notice
- Call for a cease work- stop work on a particular job or a specific piece of equipment if they identify it is dangerous and breaches the OHS Act or regulations.

HSR's contribute to health and safety in the workplace but are not responsible for it.

According to the OHS Act 2004 an employer must allow their HSRs and deputy HSRs to:

- attend initial occupational health and safety 5 day training
- undertake refresher training at least once a year

Call WorkSafe Victoria Advisory Service **1800 136 089** (toll free) for more information

Contact us on 1800 060 556 Free call

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