

# Health and Safety Committees

This bulletin provides guidance for Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) and workers on the provisions of the [Work Health and Safety \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act](#) (WHS Act) that relate to worker representation on health and safety matters. For additional information, refer to Part 5 of the WHS Act, Chapter 2 of the [Work Health and Safety \(National Uniform Legislation\) Regulations](#) (WHS Regulations), the approved Code of Practice for [Work Health and Safety Consultation, Co-operation and Co-ordination](#) and the [Worker Representation and Participation Guide](#) which are available on the NT WorkSafe website.

## Health and Safety Committees

Under the WHS Act, a Health and Safety Committee (HSC) brings together workers and management to assist in the development and review of health and safety policies and procedures for the workplace.

### *How is a Health and Safety Committee established?*

A Health and Safety Representative (HSR) or five or more workers at a workplace may request the creation of a HSC. The PCBU must establish the HSC within two months of the request.

A PCBU may establish an HSC at any time under their own initiative.

### *Health and Safety Committees will usually represent one workplace*

HSCs may be established for workers who carry out work at one or more locations or for those who do not have a fixed place of work.

### *Who can be a Health and Safety Committee member?*

To ensure genuine worker representation, at least half of the members of a HSC must be workers who are not nominated by the PCBU. If there is a HSR at the workplace, they may choose to be a member.

The remaining membership is agreed between the PCBU and the workers at the workplace.

If an agreement cannot be reached about the HSC in a reasonable time, either party can ask the regulator to appoint an inspector to decide on the make-up of the HSC, or whether it should be established at all.

### *Functions of a Health and Safety Committee*

A HSC must meet at least once every three months and at any other reasonable time at the request of at least half of the HSC members. Other matters regarding the operation of the HSC are for the members to determine.

The functions of an HSC are:

- to facilitate cooperation between the PCBU and workers in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the workers' health and safety at work;
- to assist in developing standards, rules and procedures relating to health and safety that are to be followed or complied with at the workplace;
- any functions prescribed by WHS Regulations, and
- any other functions agreed between the person conducting the business or undertaking and the HSC.

HSC members are entitled to:

- spend reasonably necessary paid work time attending meetings and carrying out their functions as committee members, and
- have access to information that the person conducting a business or undertaking has in relation to hazards, risk assessments and the health and safety of workers at the workplace.

The entitlement to access information in relation to health and safety of workers does not extend to personal or medical information unless the worker consents. However, consent is not required if the information does not identify the worker or could not reasonably be expected to identify the worker.

### ***Meetings of Health and Safety Committee***

A HSC must meet at any reasonable time at the request of at least half of its members and at least once every three months.

**For further information contact NT WorkSafe on 1800 019 115 or go to [www.worksafe.nt.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au)**