

## What's the role of a Health and Safety representative?

The Health and Safety representative has a very important role in the workplace. Your responsibilities are to: make regular inspections of the workplace; report to and liaise with managers concerning actual or potential hazards in the workplace; inform colleagues that you're the Health & Safety Representative and invite input; use your considerable powers under the Act as and when necessary. [include link to 'Get Involved' page]

### Must Know - Health and Safety Representative Information.

The first thing to remember is that the role of the HSR originates in the ACT Work Health & Safety Act 2011. In Part 5 of that legislation, the role, and powers of the HSR are clearly mapped out. Every school must have an ELECTED Health and safety representative. It is important that this person is elected by the workers at each site. While we are all motivated to be '*health & safety conscious*' we also need someone to keep an extra eye out for us, to ensure we work in a safe environment.

The role is filled by an election co-ordinated by the AEU office every 3 years and managed by the Electoral Commission. If a HSR transfers to a new site they do not carry their HSR status with them and will have to nominate to fill the next vacancy at their new site if they wish to continue. If your Work Group HSR was transferred at the end of last year and you need to fill the vacancy, you do that as a Sub-Branch/Work Group on the form provided in the Union mail drop delivered to schools in February and also available on the AEU website.

Where an untrained individual is elected by the Work Group to fill the role, the elected person should **request training immediately** through their principal. Training **must** be provided as soon as possible after the election but within 3 months from the time the request for training is made. This training can not be denied to the HSR rep. Training is provided by WorkWatch, 6249 1099] the H&S trainers at UnionsACT and paid for by the school [\$750.00 for a 5 days course] Relief costs are covered by ETD. The same rules apply to the Deputy HSR  
It is NOT the HSR's role to draft the H&S or related policies for the Work Group. That is a role for the H&S Committee. The HSR may be on the committee and may even chair that committee but should not be burdened with the total responsibility of policy development.

The HSR must be provided with adequate time to fulfil the role. The functions are determined under the Act and the time required should be negotiated by the HSR, Deputy HSR, and the Principal. If there are safety issues raised with the HSR by members of the Work Group requiring inspection/investigation, the HSR/Deputy HSR must be provided with sufficient time to inspect and report to the principal and the work group. If the HSR is uncertain then they may request the assistance of any person. They should always accompany an external inspector who is called in to inspect the workplace and there are numerous other time-taking functions required of the HSR. Therefore, the position is NOT one that is manageable without a time allocation for the HSR and it is NOT acceptable to ask the HSR to fulfil their functions in their own time.

Last point: it is NOT appropriate that a Principal or Deputy assume the role of HSR in the absence of any other member of staff nominating for the position. While they are classified as workers under the Act, with management or control of the workplace, the former are also the delegates of the Directorate and would often be placed in situations of conflicting of interests. Members should recognise the importance of the role and the issue of time allocation should be taken to the Workload Committee to ensure that the position is not only filled but supported by the whole Work Group.

One function for which HSRs receive some training is completing **Risk Assessments**. It is a requirement for the majority of teachers now to complete risk assessments for classes they teach, excursions they arrange and events they attend with their students. The lack of training for teachers in this area is a concern that has recently been raised by members and will be raised at the next WH&S Policy Committee meeting in March.