

The role of Health and Safety Representatives: A guide for H&S Reps



WORKSAFE
Mahi Haumarū Aotearoa

Foreword

Waka serves to connect people to the land, the sea, and to connect people with history and whakapapa. Each person within the waka has a specific role to play to ensure the smooth operation and movement.

Kaihautū = The Leader (at the centre)

Kaiwhakaterere = The Navigator

Kaitia = The Steerer (at the stern)

Kaihoe = The Paddlers (throughout the waka)

We consider the role of the H&S Rep within the waka as that of the kaiwhakaterere, the Navigator. Kaiwhakaterere work at the intersection of the kaihautū, senior leaders, management and workforce (kaitia and kaihoe) throughout an organisation. Just like the kaiwhakaterere, an H&S Rep needs to consider the mission at hand – where are we rowing to? While also being aware of what the potential dangers the workers, kaihoe, might encounter, ensuring this information is passed to the leaders of the waka to allow the kaihautū to take the safest course possible for everyone, so they can arrive at their destination.

He Waka Eke Noa

We are all in one canoe, with no exceptions

The GHSL would like to thank the representatives from Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry of Social Development, Kāinga Ora, and Te Puni Kōikiri for their willingness to engage with and provide guidance for the Te Ao Māori view on this piece of work.



Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Health and Safety Representative (H&S Rep) Role Principles:

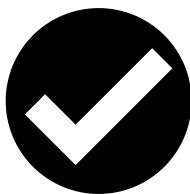
For H&S Reps:

The principles in this brochure are intended to provide a common understanding of what you need as an elected H&S Rep to be able to do your role successfully, what workers can expect from their H&S Rep, and the expectations of and support that you should expect from your organisation.

This document is aimed at:



Anyone considering becoming a health and safety representative.



A newly elected health and safety representative.



Existing health and safety representatives.

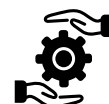
1. H&S Rep Vision:

To be able to support, represent, advise and advocate for the wellbeing, health, and safety (WHS) of everyone who works in my organisation; to understand how to engage with and represent workers and to be respected by all for my contribution to wellbeing, health, and safety.



2. H&S Rep Purpose

To help support the organisation to create a physically and psychologically healthy workplace where everyone can go home safe and well at the end of the day.



- Provide leadership in representing and advocating for workers in wellbeing, health, and safety.
- Work collaboratively with workers, people leaders and union representatives to get good WHS outcomes.
- Help to identify WHS risks and issues, and where necessary prepare a formal recommendation for organisation response with up-to-date health and safety legislation, policies and requirements.
- Promote good practice and engagement in WHS initiatives within your immediate team and across the organisation.
- Engage in open and transparent communication with your people leaders within your organisation.

3. H&S Rep Support



The commitment provided by your organisation.

- A clear understanding of the time commitment made by the organisation to enable the H&S Rep to undertake their role.
- A clear statement of expectations of their People Leader and other managers across their organisation.
- A clear and accessible escalation process, including in-confidence processes for sensitive situations.

4. Generic Role Requirements



What should your organisation expect from you as an H&S Rep

- Represent and advocate for fellow workers on WHS matters, including their investigations.
- Foster good WHS practice and worker engagement – supporting workers and encouraging reporting.
- Support diversity and inclusion in the workplace through representation and advocacy for all workers.
- Identification and notification of risks and hazards to the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) as defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 2015 and monitor controls.
- Understand and correctly enact provisions of the HSWA 2015, such as the process for the issuance of a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN).
- Support the organisation with H&S audits, inspections and incident reviews. Noting that lead responsibility for these tasks must always sit with the organisation (PCBU).

5. Training and Development



- Participation in mandatory minimum training requirements under the HSWA (including achievement of Unit Standard 29315)
- Participation in training for any variations to the minimum requirements (e.g., for offshore posts, for specialist work areas).
- Undertake a minimum of two days WHS training and development each year, as per the HSWA 2015.

In discussion with your People Leader:

- Identify and participate in additional skills and training – both specific and generic e.g., higher level New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) standards, Risk Management, injury management, leadership, negotiation, communication.
- Identify and participate in appropriate internal opportunities e.g., shadow Health and Safety (H&S) team members, attendance at H&S Governance Committee.
- Identify opportunities to participate in external WHS training and development opportunities e.g., SafeGuard H&S Rep Conference, Government Health and Safety (GHSL) Rep of the Year Awards Conference; GHSL Early in Careers Workshops, Health and Safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ) biennial conference.

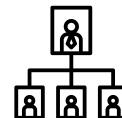
6. Performance and Recognition



- Incorporate role objectives in performance reporting e.g., performance objectives and annual performance reporting.
- Include H&S development objectives in annual Development Plan.
- Be aware of and utilise organisation specific initiatives such as awards, shout-outs, and development opportunities.

7. Governance and H&S Committees

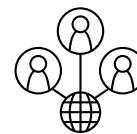
understanding of how to access working level governance H&S committees.



- Details of H&S Committee structure, systems and procedures.
- How to go about becoming a committee member
- Local H&S committees, including co-location committees.
- Other H&S Committees – Regional, national, specialist work area etc.

8. Networking and Engagement

Understanding the importance of networking and engagement to deliver positive WHS outcomes:



- Being a part of building and supporting a strong Community of H&S practice that includes a transparent and effective worker engagement system to support the organisation's H&S policy/strategy/vision/charter
- Work with other H&S Reps – within the organisation and externally.
- Actively engage with fellow workers
- Work collaboratively with Unions.
- Work together with People Leaders.

9. Using Tools and Resources



- Understand and use the tools and resources your organisation has to support H&S Reps.
- Engage with the employer on development and maintenance of worker participation agreements.
- Have access to guidance on how to become nominated as a H&S Rep, the election process and the defined responsibilities and expectations for this role.
- Have access to and understanding of your organisation's H&S policy/strategy/vision/charter and supporting Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), including any references to the role of the H&S Rep.
- The location and use of H&S Noticeboards and other effective communication tools to disseminate information such as safety notices.
- Contribute to the review and preparation of new H&S tools for employees e.g., job safety assessment checklists.

Worker is defined within this document as:

A worker means an individual who carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU, including work as:

- an employee; or a contractor or subcontractor; or
- an employee of a contractor or subcontractor; or
- an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the business or undertaking; or
- an outworker (including a homeworker); or
- an apprentice or a trainee; or
- a person gaining work experience or undertaking a work trial;
- a volunteer worker; or
- a person of a prescribed class.