



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority



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**Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Authority**

Pocket Guide

**Health and Safety
Representatives
(HSR) in the
Maritime Industry**

A health and safety representative (HSR) plays a significant role in the promotion of, and cooperation on workplace health and safety.

The pamphlet provides an overview of the role of a HSR. While the information is applicable to HSR under the Seacare Scheme, the information is equally relevant to HSR under other WHS regimes.

The role of a HSR

The role of a HSR is to represent a designated work group on work health and safety matters. It is not the responsibility of a HSR to resolve safety problems at the workplace, nor is it expected that a HSR be an expert on work health and safety issues.

An employee is taken to have been selected as a HSR for a designated work group if:

- all employees in the designated work group unanimously agree to the selection; or



- the person has been elected as the HSR for the designated work group.

A **designated work group** should comprise of a group of employees with similar responsibilities and duties. The establishment of a designated work group is not mandatory unless a request to the operator has been made by an employee or involved union.

The number of HSRs should reflect the number of employees and designated work groups on board. This will ensure that employees of all levels have effective representation. Where possible, the HSR should have more than 2 years of sea service.

If a safety issue has been identified, the HSR must first consult with the supervisor or person in command. They are obliged to discuss the concerns raised by HSRs. It is important to remember that the legislative process emphasises resolution through consultation.



Powers of a HSR

A HSR, generally, has the power to:

- Inspect a workplace of the designated work group if:
 - there has been a recent accident or dangerous occurrence; or
 - an immediate threat of an accident or dangerous occurrence; or
 - the representative has given the operator reasonable notice of the inspection.
- Represent members of the designated work group in health and safety related consultations and interviews;
- Request the Inspectorate to conduct an investigation if a workplace health and safety



issue has not been resolved after reasonable efforts. The person in command must be notified if this occurs;

- Investigate safety concerns of the designated work group;
- Accompany an inspector during an investigation at the workplace;
- Access relevant information and documentation relating to the health and safety risks of the designated work group. This does not apply to confidential information; and
- Issue provisional improvement notice (PIN).

A template for the PIN can be found (as form 1) in the schedule to the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Regulations 1995*.



HSR Training

Before deciding to attend a work health and safety training course, the HSR should ensure that the training course has been:

- approved by the jurisdiction's work health and safety regulator; and
- chosen in consultation with the operator.

For example, a HSR for a designated work group on a vessel applicable under the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS(MI) Act) must undertake a HSR training course accredited by the Seacare Authority. The operator must permit a HSR to take time off, without loss of pay, to undertake the training.



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