



*Harrogate Local
Government Branch*

**Trade Union appointed
Health and Safety Representative**

Health and safety representatives have functions given by law.

- If you are a trade union appointed health and safety representative, your functions are set out in the **Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977**
- If you are a representative of employee safety, your functions are set out in the **Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996**

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees 1977 regulations

If an employer recognises trade unions in any part of it's business:

- The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 will apply
- The trade union may appoint health and safety representatives (referred to as "safety representatives" in the regulations)
- The employer must consult the union-appointed health and safety representatives on health and safety matters affecting the employees they represent.

There may be:

- different representatives from the same union for different parts of the business
- different representatives from different unions for different parts of the business
- union representatives representing employees who belong to other unions by agreement with the other unions
- union representatives representing employees who are not union members

The role of the health and safety representative is **independent of management**.

Representatives are there to represent the interests and concerns of their co-workers and respond on their behalf, providing valuable insight, skills and resources that help employers and their co-workers.

The law says they can:

- represent the workforce on health and safety generally, or make representations on potential hazards and dangers
- attend training courses
- have contact with inspectors

Functions of union-appointed health and safety representatives

The law makes it clear that they can:

- represent employees generally and when the employer consults them about specific matters that will affect the health, safety and welfare of the employees;
- represent employees when Health and Safety Inspectors from HSE or local authorities consult them
- investigate accidents, near misses, and other potential hazards and dangerous occurrences in the workplace
- investigate complaints made by an employee they represent about their health, safety or welfare in the workplace

Functions of union-appointed health and safety representatives (cont'd)

The law makes it clear that they can:

- present the findings of investigations to the employer
- inspect the workplace;
- with at least one other appointed representative, request in writing that the employer sets up a health and safety committee
- attend Health and Safety Committee meetings as a representative of the employees

Other things to note;

- Time off
- Facilities
- Legal protection of safety reps and members

What UNISON is currently involved with at HBC:

- Protection from the harm of the sun for our members working outdoors
- Stress
- Lone Working arrangements
- Verbal and physical assaults on our members
- Changes to policies and procedures
- Individual representation