



What is a health and safety committee?

Health and safety committees bring together workers and management in the development and review of health and safety policies and procedures for the workplace. HSCs enable a business and its worker representatives to meet regularly and work cooperatively to improve work health and safety.

What are the functions of an HSC?

The functions of an HSC are to:

- Facilitate cooperation between the business and workers in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure workers' health and safety at work.
- Assist in developing any standards, rules, policies, or procedures relating to health and safety.
- Make recommendations relating to work health and safety.

- Carry out other tasks that are agreed between the business and the committee.
- Perform any other functions that are agreed between the business and the committee.

HSCs are particularly effective in workplaces with multiple businesses such as a construction site or university campus, with committee members drawn from each business. This helps a business which shares responsibility for work health and safety with other businesses, to meet the HSWA requirement to consult, cooperate with, and coordinate activities with each other.



When must a business consider an HSC?

A business must consider having an HSC if it receives a request from five or more workers or an HSR. The business can decline if it has fewer than 20 workers and is not in a high-risk industry as prescribed by the regulations.

The business may also decline the request if it is satisfied that its existing worker participation practices meet the requirements of HSWA.

The request must be genuinely considered, and valid explanations must be offered for any refusal. Any business can voluntarily establish an HSC.

An HSC must meet:

- Regularly, at the times agreed by the members of the committee, but at least once every three months, and
- At any other reasonable time, on the request of a simple majority of members of the committee.

What are the obligations of the business to an HSC?

The business must:

- Consult with the HSC about health and safety matters.
- Allow each member of the HSC to spend as much time as necessary to attend meetings or carry out functions as a member of the committee.
- Provide the HSC with the necessary information to perform its functions, including information relating to hazards and the health and safety of workers at the workplace.

If the HSC makes a recommendation regarding work health and safety, the business must either adopt the recommendation, or provide a written statement advising the HSC of the reasons for not adopting the recommendation.