

Health and Safety Representatives and Committees

Bulletin accompaniment to Micro-Learn video COR Episode 6, Element 4

The first component of any safety program is the recognition by senior management that a safety program is an essential part of the operation. In a Certificate of Recognition (COR), or Small Employer Certificate of Recognition (SECOR), this is referred to as management commitment.

What is a committee and a representative?

Joint health and safety committees and representatives in the workplace provide an opportunity for employers and workers to discuss their concerns and work together to make everyone safer.

Health and safety committees and representatives also help support and inform workers of their rights to know about hazards present in their work, to participate in decisions related to hazards in their work, and to refuse dangerous work.



A health and safety committee (HSC) is a group of worker and employer representatives working together to address health and safety concerns. A health and safety representative (HSR) is a worker who is designated as the health and safety representative for an employer as required by occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation.

Requirements for committees/ reps, both for provincial and federal

Alberta OHS legislation has the following HSC/HSR requirements:

- An HSC is required when an employer regularly employs 20 or more workers
- An HSR is required when an employer regularly employs between five and 19 workers

Federally regulated employers have the following requirements:

- An HSC must be established by employers employing 20 or more regularly employed people
- An HSR is required for an employer with less than 20 people



An example of an effective HSC

The Health and Safety Committee plays an important role in the occupational health and safety program, giving workers and employers a way to work together to identify and find solutions to workplace health and safety issues.

1. Worker brings concern to committee

Worker identifies situation that may be unhealthy or unsafe and report the concern to the committee.

2. Committee discusses

The committee discuss the concern relating to the health and safety and decide on the course of action. If the issue can be dealt with by a member of the committee, informal recommendation can be made without further consultation. This can be documented in the meeting minutes with the recommendation and the action taken.

3. Committee brings to management

If the issue requires formal recommendation to management for management to take action, a committee member will write a proposal to the employer outlining the HSC's recommendation.

4. Problem addressed

The employer may accept the HSC recommendation or give reason for not accepting the recommendation. If the employer rejects the recommendation, the HSC should review the reasons and determine whether a revised recommendation is appropriate.

5. Committee reports back and creates appropriate documents

The results of recommendation should be communicated in writing to workers.

Basic summary of COR audit requirements for this element

Health and Safety Committees and Health and Safety Representatives are a key element of the Internal Responsibility System. A Certificate of Recognition (COR) auditor will verify whether an employer is meeting its requirements for this element by checking the appropriate legislation and then verifying compliance through interviews with staff and the reviewing of documentation.

Need Help? Contact AMTA

AMTA can provide carriers with guidance on the information presented in this bulletin. If you have any questions, please contact AMTA and our experienced staff will be happy to help. For your safety and compliance questions, please email Workplace Support Services (WSS) directly at wss@amta.ca. For more updates like this on a variety of topics related to the transportation industry, please [sign up for our eNews](#).

References

The content in these Micro-Learn videos and bulletins is aligned with the content from Partnerships in Injury Reduction and in AMTA's Health and Safety Systems Building course.