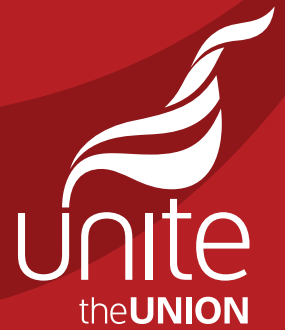


# Safety Reps – Know Your Rights



April 2023

## The role of safety reps has never been more important.

With the HSE's operational budget continued to be cut since 2009-2010, organised Health and Safety Committees are crucial for safer workplaces.



The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SRSCR) give recognised trade unions the legal right to appoint workplace safety representatives.

The regulations set out the rights and functions to safety reps and employers' obligations with regard to consultation and provision of facilities, assistance and information.



## Safety reps have the right to:

- take an active part in workplace risk assessments;
- investigate potential hazards and 'dangerous occurrences', and examine the accident book;
- investigate members' complaints;
- carry out inspections of the workplace in work time, at least every three months;
- require their employer to set up and attend a safety committee (where two or more safety reps request this);
- be consulted on new working practices and new technology;
- receive safety information from their employer (e.g. inspectors' reports, hygiene surveys and risk assessments);
- attend union-approved training courses without loss of pay; and
- have access to a phone and office equipment, and paid time off work, both to carry out inspections and to meet staff and other safety reps.

## The duty of the employer to consult safety representatives

SRSCR Regulation 4A requires employers to consult "in good time" over:

- The introduction of any measures which may substantially affect health and safety
- The arrangements for appointing competent people (e.g. to carry out risk assessments) to assist with health and safety and implementing procedures for serious and imminent risk
- Any health and safety information the employer is required to provide by law
- The planning and organisation of health and safety training
- The health and safety implications of the introduction (or planning) of any new technology
- The appointment of a person to oversee emergency procedures.

"In good time" is not defined but the guidance suggests that it should be sufficient for a safety rep to take an informed view about the proposals. The employer should therefore allow time to provide safety reps with information about what is being proposed, allow time to enable the opportunity for the safety rep to express their views, and allow time to take account of any response.

### Resources for Health and Safety Representatives:

<https://resources.unitetheunion.org/unite-at-work-bargaining-support/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-guidance>

<https://resources.unitetheunion.org/media/2057/safety-reps-brown-book.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/prepare/law/1977.htm>