Good reasons why you should have safety representatives



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Safety representative and committees can be an effective part of a consultation system between management and employees regarding workplace safety for the following reasons:

- They can increase participation and constructive discussion about safety and health.
- They can bring your employees' OSH concerns to your attention when you otherwise might not be aware and help resolve any disputes.
- They encourage employees to use safe work practices.
- Safety representatives receive excellent training (at no cost to the school) to provide the skills and knowledge to help keep the workplace safe.
- They can identify hazards in your workplace that might otherwise go unnoticed – until an accident happens.
- They are elected by employees and therefore employees will feel more comfortable to approach them with their OSH concerns.
- They can help school leaders and managers to meet their duty of care under the OSH legislation.
- They can help establish a safety culture in the workplace which will improve productivity and reduce injuries, ill-health and lost time through absence.

In order for safety representatives and committees to be effective they need support and resources.

It is essential that managers acknowledge the important role they play in improving safety in the workplace and respect the valuable work that they do in a voluntary capacity.

There is a legal requirement that OSH representatives be provided with sufficient time to carry out their functions and be released for training.

Safety representatives need to be consulted on all matters that might impact on the safety and health of staff and given an opportunity to provide input on such matters.

The safety representative's role is a leadership role and if it is resourced and supported, your workplace will reap the benefits.

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