

Unite safety representatives are a key part of providing better health and safety for Unite members at work.

**Safety reps have specific legal rights and functions, which enable them to:**

- Inspect the workplace regularly.
- Investigate employee complaints concerning health and safety issues at work.
- Investigate accidents, dangerous occurrences and potential hazards.
- Represent workers on health, safety, and welfare matters to their employer.
- Inspect health and safety documents.
- Receive information from HSE Inspectors.
- Establish a joint union-management Safety Committee.
- Receive time off to fulfil these rights and receive training.

**Employers are required to consult safety reps, especially about:**

- Measures introduced at a workplace that may substantially affect health and safety.
- Arrangements for appointing health & safety competent persons and emergencies.
- Health & safety information required to be provided to employees.
- Health & safety training arrangements for the workforce, such as induction training.
- New technology introduced and planned, regarding consequences to health & safety.

**Employers must provide safety reps with the resources to carry out their role.**

**ACAS suggest:**

- Room with desk and chairs at work, for carrying out interviews and meetings.
- Secure facilities for storing documents.
- Access to internal and external telephones, word processor (now IT facilities).
- Access to duplicating facilities.
- Notice board.

Other facilities should include copies of relevant statutes, Regulations, Approved Codes of Practice and HSE guidance, copies of safety journals, and legal and international standards that are relevant to the workplace.



## Looking for Trouble on Health & Safety

# Look for it Find it Fix it

## Unite the Union - Looking for Trouble on Health and Safety

Unite is committed to improving the working conditions of all of its members. That is why Unite is looking for trouble on workplace health and safety issues. If the union does not look for trouble, trouble will develop anyway, and potentially get worse before it is identified.

Unite is looking for trouble on health and safety so that we can find problems and fix them.

Unite expects employers to be doing this as part of their duties on health and safety at work. It is often the case that to identify problems it is necessary to go out and look for them. Having found problems, something must be done about them.

The main elements of the Unite agenda for good health and safety include:

- Hazard and Body Mapping
- Workplace Audits
- Risk Assessment
- Accident and Near Miss Investigation
- Designing work to fit the workers
- Promoting justice, fairness and equality
- Workers knowing how to raise concerns and feeling able to do so without fear of victimisation
- All of the main health and safety issues facing Unite members

Good workplace health and safety is made possible by:

- The activities of Unite appointed health and safety representatives
- Strong union H&S organisation
- Strong health and safety committees
- Good agreements
- Good training, much of it by workers

***"If we don't look for trouble, trouble is going to come looking for us."***

***"Look for trouble, find it, fix it."***

## Worker participation

Although employers have a legal responsibility to ensure that workplace risks are properly assessed and controlled, it is essential that workers are also involved. Workers and their Unite safety representatives have the best understanding of the problems that can occur in their workplace. By sharing that knowledge with managers and employers, they can help to shape planning and implement solutions.

Worker participation requires more than just feedback from the bottom up. It needs a two-way dialogue between employers and the workforce, which involves both parties:

- **talking to one another;**
- **listening to each other's concerns;**
- **sharing views and information; and**
- **making decisions together**

Worker involvement is particularly crucial to successfully dealing with stress and psychosocial risks in the workplace because, by consulting and involving workers, managers should be helping to create a climate of trust in which workers will feel comfortable about raising concerns. .

Involving workers in developing preventive measures will also improve overall morale and ensure that the measures put in place are both appropriate and effective.

Health and safety information can be found on the Unite website at: <http://www.unitetheunion.org/unite-at-work/healthsafety/>  
Specific queries can be raised with Regional Offices or emailed to [healthandsafety@unitetheunion.org](mailto:healthandsafety@unitetheunion.org)

