



Australian Government

Comcare

Health and safety representative (HSR) bridging training for joining licensees

Overview

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (the Act) requires that all HSRs in the Commonwealth jurisdiction undergo a course of training. To ensure that HSRs have the appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their role, employers are encouraged to provide them with access to a training course accredited under section 27 of the Act as soon as possible.

As HSRs of self insurers joining the jurisdiction may have attended extensive training in the relevant State/Territory jurisdiction, some elements of which will be very similar to training covered by the Safety Rehabilitation and Safety Commission (the Commission) accredited courses, the Commission has agreed to allow HSRs in the joining licensees to attend bridging courses for HSRs, under certain conditions which are listed below.

The aim of bridging courses will be to ensure that these HSRs have a good knowledge of the Commonwealth legislative framework, including workplace consultative arrangements.

Bridging courses cover the Commonwealth specific aspects of the full accredited courses, such as Commonwealth legislation relating to HSRs, the Commonwealth regulatory framework and the powers/role/functions of HSRs in the Commonwealth jurisdiction. It is expected that bridging courses would be run over two days or less to effectively cover all required material.

Conditions

The following conditions will need to be met for HSRs to be eligible to attend a bridging course instead of the full course:

- a) The HSR must have completed a State/Territory approved/accredited HSR training course within the last two years prior to the date of the organisation joining the Commonwealth jurisdiction. Proof of this will need to be provided to Comcare in the form of a certificate of attainment or equivalent document.
- b) The State/Territory HSR course attended must have covered all the generic non-Commonwealth elements of the Training Objectives for Commonwealth accredited courses (listed below). Evidence of this could be provision of a course outline of the State/Territory approved/accredited course completed, which lists the topics covered and how much time was spent on each one. This must be provided to Comcare.

Demonstrated prior learning

HSRs will need to provide evidence that they have successfully completed the following training objectives during a prior State/Territory approved/accredited HSR training course before they are granted permission to undertake a bridging course.

Training objective 3: develop the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the role of a health and safety representative within their designated work group.

On completion of an accredited training course, health and safety representatives (HSRs) should:

- have developed basic consultation and negotiation skills;
- understand the basics of OHS risk management within the workplace;
- be familiar with their own agency's OHS policy and agreement;
- be able to determine which codes of practice apply to their designated work group (DWG);
- understand specific health and safety issues and the nature of the common hazards which may affect their DWG, and the process by which the hazards should be controlled.

Training objective 4: to gain practical skills for implementing the health and safety representative role in the workplace.

On completion of an accredited training course, health and safety representatives (HSRs) should:

- be able to represent the health and safety concerns of members of the designated work group (DWG) to supervisors and in consultative forums;
- be able to investigate complaints made by members of the DWG;
- be able to inspect a workplace, identify hazards and prepare a report of the inspection;
- be able to consult widely within their DWG on OHS issues;
- be able to research and prepare a case for consultation and/or negotiation with the employer/management; and,
- be able to consult and negotiate with the employer/management on resolving OHS issues.

Process for seeking approval for HSRs to attend bridging courses

Organisations should write to the Convenor (address below) providing the information outlined in the 'conditions' above. This will be assessed by Comcare to determine if it meets the conditions, and organisations will be advised accordingly.

Convenor
OHS Training Panel
Comcare
GPO Box 9905
CANBERRA
ACT 2601