

***Moratorium on accepting new courses***

*At its meeting on 10 December 2008, the SRCC agreed to a Review of the HSR Training Course Accreditation Program. In light of this decision, Comcare is no longer accepting new training courses for accreditation. In some cases exceptions may be considered, for further information please contact Colleen Kelly on 1300 366 979 or email [ohs.policy@comcare.gov.au](mailto:ohs.policy@comcare.gov.au).*

**Guidelines for  
Accreditation of Occupational  
Health and Safety training  
courses for Health and Safety  
Representatives under the  
Occupational Health and Safety  
Act 1991**

**Information for Training Providers**

**As approved by the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation  
Commission**

**August 2007**

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**ACCREDITATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY  
TRAINING COURSES FOR  
HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES  
UNDER THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 1991**

**INTRODUCTION**

*The Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (the Act) outlines the role of health and safety representatives (HSR) and the requirement for them to undertake occupational health and safety training. The Act provides that the training must be provided through a course that is accredited by the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (the Commission).

These guidelines have been developed to assist organisations and training providers who wish to submit their HSR training course for accreditation by the Commission.

They provide information on:

- the process for accreditation and re-accreditation of HSR training courses;
- course content and training objectives;
- the criteria against which each course is assessed; and
- submission content.

**1. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS**

**1.1 The role of a health and safety representative**

A health and safety representative (HSR) is an employee who is elected or selected for this role, and represents the health and safety interests of employees within their designated work group. In this role they can use the prescribed powers of a HSR to help resolve health and safety issues in the workplace through consultation with their employer.

The powers of an HSR are described in detail in Section 28 of the Act. For further information refer to Comcare's *HSR Handbook - A guide for HSRs in the Commonwealth jurisdiction (OHS 4)*.

**1.2 General goals and objectives of the training course**

The goal of HSR training is for participants to acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to exercise their powers for the purpose of promoting and ensuring the health and safety at work of the members of their designated work group.

Two types of courses can be accredited - the full training course and a bridging training course. The Commission has approved four training objectives for each type

of course. The detailed components to be covered in each of these training objectives are outlined in detail in Sections 4 and 5.

In broad terms the full training course should provide HSRs with:

- an understanding of the objectives of the Act and their role under the Act;
- knowledge of their powers under the legislation and how to effectively exercise them;
- skills in representing the members of their designated work group including consulting and negotiating with their employer;
- skills in identifying common workplace hazards and the process by which they should be controlled;
- practical examples of health and safety issues and solutions;
- knowledge of where and how to obtain assistance in dealing with hazards and dangerous situations; and
- an understanding of the role of the HSR in the workplace in the prevention of accidents, injury and disease.

### **1.3 Bridging Courses**

The Commission has determined that HSRs from self insurer organisations joining the Commonwealth jurisdiction may be able to complete a bridging course rather than the full course, subject to the conditions in 1.4.

### **1.4 Who can do the bridging course?**

The following conditions 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.
- b) The State/Territory HSR course must cover all the generic non-Commonwealth elements of the full training course, ie all elements other than those Training Objectives for Commonwealth accredited bridging courses as outlined in Section 5.

## **2. ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

### **2.1 What is accreditation?**

Accreditation is official recognition by the Commission that a training course for health and safety representatives satisfies the criteria agreed to by the Commission. It only applies to a course that is conducted under the auspices of the provider/s who submitted the course.

Accreditation is granted by an officer of Comcare, to whom the Commission has delegated the power, or the Commission itself.

The Commission has established a tripartite accreditation advisory panel, the Occupational Health and Safety Training Panel (OHS Training Panel). It consists of Comcare, an employer and an employee representative. The panel assesses courses submitted for accreditation and advises the Commission on whether a course meets certain criteria, including the course goals and objectives outlined in these guidelines. The OHS Training Panel may seek expert advice to assist it with technical or accreditation issues as necessary.

## **2.2 Period of accreditation**

Existing courses may be re-accredited for up to three years. New courses can be accredited for between one and two years. The period of accreditation is at the discretion of the OHS Training Panel and the Commission.

## **2.3 Conditions of accreditation**

The following conditions apply during the period of accreditation.

### **2.3.1 Updates and amendments**

Training providers are required to:

- make any changes to courses as required during the accreditation period, for example to reflect relevant legislative changes, and provide documented evidence of these to Comcare; and
- advise Comcare in writing of any significant changes made by the training provider to the course during the accreditation period.

### **2.3.2 Reporting requirements**

Training providers are required to report the following information to Comcare at the end of each financial year:

- the number of courses run per year;
- the number of participants per course; and
- the number of participants by agency.

### **2.3.3 Monitoring**

To monitor the quality of courses and their delivery, a Comcare representative may attend a training session to ensure that the course continues to meet the accreditation assessment criteria.

Comcare may also undertake an evaluation of a course. This may involve attendance at a full course, discussion with trainers and participants and access to completed evaluation forms. Evaluation feedback will be given to training providers and an action plan for improvement may need to be developed by the provider.

### **2.4 Cost**

There is no fee for accreditation or re-accreditation.

## 2.5 Timeframe for course accreditation

Courses are considered by the OHS Training Panel twice a year within the following time frame:

<b>Mid -Year Cycle</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Comcare sends a reminder letter for courses due for re-accreditation	January
Training providers intending to submit new course for accreditation are to advise Comcare in writing	31 January
Course materials and documentation for accreditation and re-accreditation must reach Comcare	31 March
Accreditation/re-accreditation commences	Mid June

<b>End -Year Cycle</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Comcare sends a reminder letter for courses due for re-accreditation	July
Training providers intending to submit new course for accreditation are to advise Comcare in writing	31 July
Course materials and documentation for accreditation and re-accreditation must reach Comcare	30 September
Accreditation/re-accreditation commences	Mid December

Courses not submitted by the due dates cannot be guaranteed accreditation in that cycle and may need to be considered in the following cycle. Courses will only be considered at other times under special circumstances.

Requests for extension of an existing accreditation are required three months before the existing accreditation is due to expire. If a course is re-accredited after the due date, the period of accreditation will be shortened to bring it back in line with one of the cycles.

Courses which are not re-accredited by the due date, or granted an extension, cease to be an accredited course under the Act.

### **3. COURSE CONTENT REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.1 Training Objectives**

Courses must cover all required components of the four training objectives as approved by the Commission.

- Training objective 1:** To understand the structure, purpose and key provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991 (the Act).
- Training objective 2:** To understand the role, function and powers of a health and safety representative.
- 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.
- Training objective 4:** To gain practical skills for implementing the health and safety representative role in the workplace.

The detailed components of each training objective are set out in Section 4 for the full course and Section 5 for the bridging course.

#### **3.2 Format and mode of delivery**

There are no set requirements for course length, the format of courses or how the course is delivered. In the past, full courses have been run over five consecutive days in a classroom setting. It is expected that bridging courses would be run over two days (or less) to effectively cover all required material.

Other, more flexible, options may include dividing the course into shorter blocks and making use of e-learning. Courses submitted for accreditation will be assessed against the established criteria for assessment, as outlined in Section 6 of these guidelines. Submissions for accreditation, regardless of the course length, format and mode of delivery, need to show that there is sufficient time to cover the required content and that the chosen format and mode of delivery ensure that practical elements are adequately covered.

#### **3.3 Adult Learning Principles**

It is essential that the course incorporates adult learning principles.

Key points in adult learning:

- acknowledge the valuable experience adult learners bring to the learning situation;
- adults like to have some control over how they learn - make planning for training a mutual activity;

- adults learn better if actively involved rather than passively observing - they appreciate a collaborative learning environment;
- repeat key points and their importance to reinforce learning;
- adults like to see the relevance of what they are learning to their work and life;
- provide opportunities for adult learners to debate and challenge ideas and theories; and
- let adult learners know how the learning can be applied;

Evidence of incorporating adult learning principles includes, but is not limited to:

- encouragement of self-direction and acknowledgement of experience;
- consideration of different learning styles and personalities;
- encouragement of motivation and engagement of participants;
- provision of time and encouragement for participants to debate and challenge ideas and theories;
- review/assessment in each training session to aid learning; and
- practical exercises and opportunities to use knowledge and skills.

#### **4. TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE STRUCTURE FOR FULL TRAINING COURSES**

##### **4.1 Training Objectives**

Accredited full courses must meet all of the following objectives and cover the components described.

##### **TRAINING OBJECTIVE 1**

**To understand the structure, purpose and key provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991 (the Act).**

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

- (a) the objectives of the Act and their importance to the health and safety of employees;
- (b) the duty of care and related provisions as they apply to employers and employees;
- (c) workplace arrangements including designated work groups, HSRs and health and safety committees;
- (d) the distinction between legislation, Codes of Practice and agency policy (or Health and Safety Management Arrangements HSMAs), and know their relationship to each other;

- (e) the role of manufacturers, installers and suppliers within the context of the Act;
- (f) the links between occupational health and safety, workers compensation and rehabilitation of injured workers;
- (g) the role of trade unions and employee representatives, and their approach to dealing with health and safety issues in the context of the Act; and
- (h) the role of management in relation to the objectives of the Act.

## **TRAINING OBJECTIVE 2**

### **To understand the role, function and powers of a health and safety representative.**

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

- (a) know the prescribed powers given to a HSR;
- (b) understand the purpose of workplace inspections and investigations;
- (c) understand the purpose and use of provisional improvement notices and requirements for consultation;
- (d) know the procedures for ordering a cessation of work, including the process for consultation with the workplace supervisor;
- (e) know the provisions and procedures for using an investigator and for appealing against an investigation decision; and
- (f) understand the role of consultants and how they can be used.

## **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 should:

- (a) understand the structure and function of health and safety committees and how they should operate;
- (b) have developed basic consultation and negotiation skills;
- (c) understand the basics of OHS risk management within the workplace;
- (d) be familiar with their own agency's OHS policy and agreement or HSMAs;
- (e) be able to determine which codes of practice apply to their designated work group (DWG);
- (f) 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;

- (g) know the types of information which must be gathered about accidents and dangerous occurrences; and
- (h) know the types of information under the employer's control that relates to the risks to the health and safety of those employees within their DWG and how to access and use this information.

#### **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 should be able to:

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

#### **4.2 Course structure**

All training objectives must be covered in the course. As further guidance on structure, courses must ensure the following topics are covered comprehensively allowing adequate time for discussion and practical application.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time</b>
Legislation - objectives, broad framework	3-4 hours
HSR powers and roles	3-4 hours
Risk management	2-3 hours
Workplace hazard identification and control	2-3 hours
Workplace visit and inspection	3 hours
Inspection report writing and action plans	3 hours
Negotiation/consultation	4 hours

Practical exercises must be included on:

- issuing a PIN;
- workplace inspection; and
- negotiating with management.

## **5. TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE STRUCTURE FOR BRIDGING TRAINING COURSES**

### **5.1 Training Objectives**

Accredited bridging courses must meet all of the following objectives and cover the components described.

#### **TRAINING OBJECTIVE 1**

**To understand the structure, purpose and key provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991 (the Act).**

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

- (a) the objectives of the Act and their importance to the health and safety of employees;
- (b) the duty of care and related provisions as they apply to employers and employees;
- (c) workplace arrangements including designated work groups, HSRs and health and safety committees;
- (d) the distinction between legislation, Codes of Practice and agency policy (or HSMAs), and know their relationship to each other;
- (e) the role of manufacturers, installers and suppliers within the context of the Act;
- (f) the links between occupational health and safety, workers compensation and rehabilitation of injured workers;
- (g) the role of trade unions and employee representatives, and their approach to dealing with health and safety issues in the context of the Act; and
- (h) the role of management in relation to the objectives of the Act.

#### **TRAINING OBJECTIVE 2**

**To understand the role, function and powers of a health and safety representative.**

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

- (a) know the prescribed powers given to a HSR;
- (b) understand the purpose of workplace inspections and investigations;
- (c) understand the purpose and use of provisional improvement notices and requirements for consultation;

- (d) know the procedures for ordering a cessation of work, including the process for consultation with the workplace supervisor;
- (e) know the provisions and procedures for using an investigator and for appealing against an investigation decision; and
- (f) understand the role of consultants and how they can be used.

### **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 should:

- (a) understand the structure and function of health and safety committees and how they should operate;
- (b) know the types of information which must be gathered about accidents and dangerous occurrences; and
- (c) know the types of information under the employer's control that relates to the risks to the health and safety of those employees within their DWG and how to access and use this information.

### **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 should be able to:

- (a) issue a provisional improvement notice.

## **5.2 Course structure**

All training objectives must be covered in the course. As further guidance on structure, courses must ensure the following topics are covered comprehensively allowing adequate time for discussion and practical application.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Time</b>
Legislation - objectives, broad framework	3-4 hours
HSR powers and roles	3-4 hours

Practical exercises must be included on:

- issuing a PIN;

## **6. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Courses submitted for accreditation as either full courses or bridging course are assessed against the following criteria:

- all information required is provided (please refer to submission checklist – Appendix A);
- course content meets the training objectives and covers all required components within the objectives;
- the course is based on adult learning principles and incorporates appropriate teaching and learning techniques, including practical exercises for skill development;
- the course incorporates relevant agency-specific policies and agreements/HSMAs or provides for such inclusion where appropriate;
- the course incorporates course assessment, evaluation and feedback;
- the course is accurate and up-to-date, for example in regard to legislative provisions and resources such as publications and websites;
- the course is based on current OHS knowledge and practice;
- the course is of good quality, for example, it is:
  - internally consistent, including providing clear links between the trainers manual, participants manual and overheads etc;
  - objective and relevant;
  - sufficiently informative;
  - easy to understand;
  - well set out; and
  - has page numbers.
- course notes and training materials are footnoted for version control;
- all activities and practical exercises are outlined in adequate detail and the answers are provided in the trainer's manual, for example a correctly completed PIN; and
- the trainers' OHS and training qualifications/experience are at an appropriate level. They should have a minimum of Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment and two years' relevant OHS experience.

## **7. SUBMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION**

The following material and information is required in a submission for re-accreditation or accreditation of a new training course:

- for existing accredited courses - three copies of all material to be used in each segment of the course including trainer's notes and exercises (content, approach and duration of activity), participants' manual, handouts and overheads;
- for new courses - in the first instance, a single copy of all material to be used in each segment of the course (as identified above) for screening by Comcare

prior to being submitted to the OHS Training Panel. If considered suitable for submission, three copies of the final version will be required for review by the OHS Training Panel;

- a copy of the course evaluation form;
- a summary of compiled evaluation comments, and as a result of these, an outline of any course improvements (for existing accredited courses);
- a summary of key changes made to the course, with page references (for existing accredited courses);
- timetable for the course;
- a statement outlining the mode (e.g. face to face) and format of delivery (e.g. 2 sessions of 2.5 days each) and use of any flexible learning arrangements;
- method to be used to record participation/attendance;
- proposed ratio of trainers to trainees;
- information about the trainers to be used including names, qualifications and relevant experience;
- a statement that the course content is technically accurate and up to date. If a course is resubmitted more than twice for review by the OHS Training Panel, Comcare reserves the right to have the course reviewed and/or verified by a third party at the expense of the training provider;
- locations in which the course will be run and special arrangements (if any) for training in remote areas;
- facilities and equipment to be used;
- itemised list of training materials, eg articles, videos, references;
- a statement that training will be conducted under the auspices of the training provider that submitted the course; and
- completed submission checklist (refer Appendix A).

Submissions and any other correspondence should be addressed to:

Attn: Convenor  
OHS Training Panel  
Comcare  
GPO Box 9905  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Further information about HSR training and the course accreditation process can be obtained by contacting Comcare on 1300 366 979.

**APPENDIX A**

<b>COURSE SUBMISSION CHECKLIST</b>
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<b>Course Submission Requirement</b>	<b>Included Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
• Trainers notes/manual		
• Participants notes/handouts/manual		
• Overhead transparencies		
• PowerPoint presentations		
• Exercises that are to be carried out, with answers		
• Course Timetable		
• Course assessment/evaluation form		
• Trainer's details – names, qualifications, relevant experience		
• Record of participation / attendance - method to be used		
• Proposed ratio of trainers to trainees		
• Locations of courses and any special arrangements, including training in remote areas.		
• Facilities and equipment to be used		
• A statement that training will be conducted under the auspices of the training provider that submitted the course		
• A quality assurance statement		
• Copy of participant's statement of participation		

Course Submission Requirement	Included Yes / No	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of training materials and references</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A statement addressing the mode and format of delivery requirements (refer 3.2 and 6)</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For re-accreditation; a summary of changes made to the course</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For re-accreditation; a summary of evaluation comments and an outline of any associated improvements</li> </ul>		