**Health and Safety Committee Guide**

A Health and Safety Committee (HSC) is a good way for employers and employees to **work together** to help make the workplace safer for everyone.

Committee meetings bring together employees' **experience** of what their job entails and the employer's **experience** of the workplace and business requirements. They also provide a regular forum to **address ongoing and emerging concerns, as well as collaborating on Safety Management and Hazard minimisation.**

An HSC does not have to be large, but it must suit the **particular needs of your workplace** and should represent **all the different types of employees**.

## Health and Safety Committee versus OHS Working Group

When determining what decision making structure is appropriate for your workplace, there is a choice between an **Health and Safety Committee** or an **OHS Working Group**. The differences in requirements are outlined as follows:

| **Health and Safety Committee** | **OHS Working Group** |
| --- | --- |
| Must consist of at least 51% employees to 49% management staff. | Can be made up of any ratio of management to employees. |
| HSR recommended attending as an HSC Member. | HSR recommended attending as a Committee Member. |
| Must meet every three months as a minimum with the meeting scheduled in the *OHS Activities Calendar*, or every time 50% or more members request a meeting be held. | No minimum number of meetings per year (although it is recommended that they meet at least once a term). |
| Consists of an elected chairperson and secretary. | No assigned roles unless decided by the working group. |
| Minutes must be recorded using the HSC Meeting Minutes (see example below) template or equivalent and posted on the OHS Notice Board. | Minutes are recommended but not mandatory. Information regarding decisions made can be communicated through staff meetings, where they will be minuted and displayed on the OHS Notice Board. |
| Has a Charter outlining the HSC’s commitment to safety and its assigned responsibilities, as per the Health and Safety Committee Charter (see example below). | Does not require a charter. |
| Resignation from the HSC must be in writing. | Resignation from the OHS Working Group can be verbal. |

# Health and Safety Committee (HSC) Charter - *Example Template*

1. Name of Health and Safety Committee

[**Insert name of Department workplace**] Health and Safety Committee.

## Purpose:

To provide a forum for consultation and dissemination of information on matters which are likely to affect the health, safety and welfare of [insert name of Department workplace] in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 *(*OHS Act 2004*)*.

### Functions

The functions of the HSC are to:

* Review measures taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of persons at [**insert name of Department workplace**].
* Investigate any matter that may be a risk to the health, safety and welfare of persons at [**insert name of Department workplace**].
* Ensure that information pertaining to the function and role of the HSC is formulated, reviewed and disseminated to all employees (in other languages if appropriate) at [**insert name of Department workplace**].

### Scope

The scope of the HSC involves:

* OHS training and education of employees, HSC members, HSR and Deputy HSR.
* Monitoring and review of workplace inspections, workplace hazards, incidents, injuries and investigations.
* Developing and reviewing risk assessments and risk controls.
* Reviewing safe work procedures (SWP).
* Reviewing any purchasing checklists/guidance for items with OHS implications.
* Developing safety rules and information.
* Reviewing emergency procedures and drills.

### Decision making procedures

The HSC has the power to make recommendations to the workplace management relating to any matters listed under Scope above or any other matters set out in the OHS legislation.

The HSC does not have the power to implement those recommendations.

Should a HSC recommendation be rejected by the **Workplace Manager** the HSC may elect to follow the workplaces agreed OHS Issue Resolution Process.

### Membership

It is a requirement under the OHS Act 2004 that there be at least equal numbers of employees to representatives of management. Management representation will be appointed by the **Workplace Manager** and/or the **Management OHS Nominee**.

The HSC comprises:

* [**Insert number**] employee representatives as elected by the work group.
* [**Insert number**] employer representatives as nominated by the **Workplace Manager** and/or the **Management OHS Nominee**.

The term of office for employee HSC members is one year.

Employee representatives may resign from the HSC at any time. Resignation must be by written notification to the Chair of the HSC.

Management representatives may request to resign from the HSC by written application to the Workplace Manager and/or the Management OHS Nominee. The **Workplace Manager** and/or the **OHS Management Nominee** shall decide to accept the resignation and appoint a new representative or to reject the resignation.

Any HSC member who resigns from [**insert name of Department workplace**] will automatically be removed from the HSC.

### Officeholders of the Health and Safety Committee

The HSC will elect a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chair must act as the Chairperson.

In the absence of the Secretary, another HSC member may act as the Secretary.

Chairperson responsibilities include:

* chairing HSC meetings
* referring recommendations made by the HSC to management for consideration and reporting the outcomes of such deliberations back to the HSC
* ensuring that actions arising are assigned to a responsible person within an agreed timeframe
* ensuring that any actions are finalised and signed off in a timely fashion
* reviewing and signing off on meeting minutes before distribution.

Secretary responsibilities include:

* scheduling the meeting times and locations and notifying HSC members of the schedule
* preparing and distributing the meeting agenda at least one week prior to the meeting
* displaying the HSC agenda on the OHS Notice Board at least one week prior to the meeting
* taking notes of the meeting and preparing the minutes of the meeting
* distributing the meeting minutes and other correspondence to all HSC members
* ensuring that the meeting minutes are displayed on the OHS Notice Board and archived appropriately.

### Attendance of Health and Safety Committee members

HSC members will cease to be a member of the HSC if they:

* resign from the HSC (subject to the guidance above)
* fail to attend [insert number] consecutive meetings without providing apologies to the Chairperson
* resign from Department employment.

### Quorum

A quorum of members must be present before the meeting can proceed. A minimum of [insert number] employee representatives and [insert number] management representatives must be present to make up a quorum for the meeting to proceed.

### Meetings

Meetings shall be held at [**insert time**] in the **[insert location**] on the [**insert meeting day** – e.g. 2nd Wednesday of every month].

If a vote is necessary for matters that cannot be resolved by discussion in the HSC, each member may cast one vote and the matter will be resolved according to the majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson will cast the deciding vote.

An extraordinary meeting may be called by:

* HSC Chairperson
* half of the HSC members
* the Workplace Manager and/or the **Management OHS Nominee.**

### Attendance of Non Members at the Health and Safety Committee Meeting

Any person with special knowledge of a particular matter or supervisor in charge of a particular area may attend by invitation from the Chairperson or by request to the Chairperson in writing as an invited guest. An invited guest does not have voting rights on the HSC and may be requested to leave at any time by the HSC Chair.

Observers, such as employees from the DWG, may attend at the discretion of the HSC as invited guests.

### Procedure for changing the Charter

The HSC Charter shall be reviewed annually from the date of approval.

Any proposal to amend or change the HSC Charter must be tabled at the HSC meeting with agreement of the majority committee members.

This HSC Charter has been agreed to by:

|  | **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** |
| --- | --- |
|  | Chairperson (on behalf of the HSC) |
|  | Date |

**Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes** - *Example Template*

DATE

TIME

LOCATION

**Attendees:**

**Apologies:**

| **Agenda** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item no. | **Agenda Item** | |
|  | Welcome | |
|  | Review of Previous Minutes: | |
|  | e.g. Outcome of workplace Inspections. Discuss controls to be implemented | |
|  | e.g. Incident or injuries since last meeting | |
|  | e.g. Update on OHS goals to be achieve this year | |
|  | e.g. Update on OHS Activities conducted to date and planned | |
| **Next meeting to be held on:** | | Date: / / |
| **HSC Chairperson name and signature:** | | Name:  Signature: |
| **Workplace Manager and/or Management OHS Nominee name and signature:** | | Name:  Signature: |

|  | | **Minutes** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No.** | **Discussion Points and Action Items** | | **Responsible person** | **Due Date** | **Actual Date Completed** |
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**HSC** to maintain original completed forms. **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** to maintain copies.