

Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation

1.0 Purpose

Why we have this standard

This standard sets out the approach to worker engagement, participation and representation on health, safety & wellbeing (HSW) matters at New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC). Strong worker engagement and participation means a healthier and safer workplace, and a positive culture for all NZRC people.

2.0 Scope and coverage

When to apply it

For this standard, “worker” means anyone who carries out activities for, or on behalf, of NZRC. This includes our employees, members who volunteer their time, contractors/sub-contractors, and people gaining work experience.

As a PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking) under the [Health and Safety at Work Act \(HSWA\) 2015](#), NZRC must have systems in place for worker engagement, participation and representation. The legal requirements for a formal system do not apply to volunteer workers, however NZRC will include ways for members to engage and participate in HSW matters, so that all our people can be safe and healthy at work and when carrying out activities for NZRC.

This standard sets out NZRC’s approach to worker engagement, participation and representation, including Health and Safety Representatives (HSR’s) in line with the [Health and Safety at Work \(Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation\) Regulations 2016](#).

3.0 Background

Background to these standards

Everyone has a role to play in making NZRC a safe and healthy workplace. Good engagement and participation can improve workplace health, safety and wellbeing as our people are in the best position to know how activities are done and suggest improvements. Effective engagement and participation make NZRC a safer place to work and volunteer and create a positive HSW culture for everyone.

This standard explains what worker engagement, participation and representation is, why it is important and how we do it at NZRC. It also sets out roles and responsibilities for maintaining an effective approach.

4.0 Standards

What you need to do

4.1 Worker engagement, participation, and representation at NZRC

The following section sets out our system at NZRC regarding worker engagement, participation, and representation and how to do it.

- NZRC must engage with workers on HSW matters that will or are likely to impact them at work (for example, a change in a system or process, or new equipment).

- NZRC must provide ways for workers to participate effectively in improving HSW.
- Workers should be encouraged to share information, ask questions, identify risks, and suggest ideas related to workplace HSW.
- NZRC guidance documents will set out some helpful tips on good worker engagement and participation: [HSW Quick Guide - How to have a proactive health, safety & wellbeing kōrero](#) contains some helpful tips on good worker engagement and participation.
- Worker representation is a way that workers can participate in HSW at NZRC. Formal methods of worker representation set out in HSWA 2015 are: HSRs (discussed in section 4.2), and Health and Safety Committees (section 4.5). Another form of representation at NZRC is HSW Champions (4.3), this is not set out by legislation, but is an additional way that people can be involved at NZRC.
- Other ways that workers can be represented and participate by raising concerns, asking questions, and sharing ideas about HSW are:
 - discussing HSW matters at meetings (Area Council meetings, site meetings, team meetings)
 - regular briefings during work or volunteering activity where HSW is discussed
 - speaking to your people leader
 - contacting the HSW team
 - making a formal report via NZRC's HSW reporting system (e.g., to report a hazard or an incident).

4.2 Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)

Worker representation is way that workers can participate in HSW at NZRC, by having a voice in matters that impact them. HSR's are a formal way described in the legislation that workers can be represented in their work groups. Refer to section 4.4 for a description of work groups at NZRC.

- An HSR is a worker that is nominated, and may be elected to represent their work group, to have a say in health, safety and wellbeing issues that impact their work group. An HSR must be an employee of NZRC (a member/volunteer can be a Health, Safety & Wellbeing Champion (section 4.3). An HSR must:
 - be a part of the work group they are representing
 - be willing and keen to act as an HSR
 - work regularly enough and for enough hours to act effectively as an HSR.
- An HSR can be nominated by someone else in their work group or self-nominate for the position. People leaders are workers, so can become HSR's, however most HSR's should be workers who are directly engaged in the work activities of the organisation.
- If more HSRs are nominated than there are positions available, an election must be held to select the HSR that will represent that work group. If the number of nominees matches the number of positions available, an election is not needed. Once appointed, an HSR's term of office is for a maximum of three years, or for less than that if agreed by NZRC management and the HSR. An HSR can be appointed multiple times, and if an HSR is not re-appointed at the end of their term, their position will end.
- HSR's must complete an in-house induction, plus formal training (2 days duration) with an approved NZQA training provider. The formal training will allow HSRs to hold certain powers under HSWA 2015.
- More information on the role of an HSR can be found on the Worksafe website: Health and Safety Representatives and "The role of HSRs and HSW Champions at NZRC" (in development).

4.3 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champions

In addition to HSRs, an HSW Champion is a way that Red Cross people can participate in HSW at NZRC, and this role is available to employees and members. This role is not set out in the legislation (such as the HSR role).

- An HSW Champion may be nominated by someone else in their work group or self-nominate for the role.
- There is no minimum requirement for HSW Champions. It is recommended that up to 5 Champions cover each broad work group/work activity.
- It is at the discretion of the General Manager and/or Director of each work group to determine the desired number of HSCs.
- The role of an HSW Champion is to actively raise awareness of health, safety and wellbeing activities and initiatives in their work group. They do not hold legal powers under HSWA 2015.
- HSW Champions must complete an in-house induction which covers a background to HSW at NZRC, and their role in how they can contribute to having a voice and improving HSW.

4.4 Work Groups

HSRs and HSW Champions are aligned to their work group, as opposed to their geographical office or worksite. This is because the nature of HSW risks is similar across work groups, and so that HSW matters can be addressed according to management lines. Site HSW matters can be raised with an HSR and/or HSW Champion, however these issues should be managed according to site facilities management processes.

The work groups and allocation of HSRs and HSW Champions is shown in Table 1. *Note that this model will be gradually implemented at NZRC from mid-2024, and the number of HSRs/Champions recommended will be reviewed annually. As these are voluntary positions, it is possible they may not all be filled, but should be made available.*

Table 1. HSR & HSW Champion Positions available for NZRC Work Groups

| NZRC Work Group | Number of HSR Positions (employees only) | Number of HSW Champion Positions (employees and/or members) |
|--|--|---|
| People Experience and Support (PES) | 2 | Up to 5 |
| Engagement and Enterprise (E&E) | 3 | Up to 5 |
| Organisational Services (OS) and Office of the Secretary General (OSG) | 2 | Up to 5 |
| Migration | 3 | Up to 5 |
| Emergency Management and International (EMI) | 2 | Up to 5 |
| Total no. of Positions | 12 | Up to 25 |

4.5 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees

A Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee is a formal way recognised in the legislation that HSRs, management representatives and others (such as HSW Champions) can meet to discuss HSW issues and share ideas.

- NZRC does not currently have any formal HSW Committees in place, as the HSR and HSW Champion model will be gradually implemented from mid-2024.
- Once HSRs and HSW Champions are in place, consultation will occur to decide whether a formal Committee (or Committees) is required, or whether other forms of participation are preferred and may be more effective (such as regular informal meetings and/or networks for sharing communications).
- If a formal HSW Committee is established (or Committees), it must meet at least quarterly. Further information about HSW Committees can be found on the [Worksafe Website: Health and Safety Committees](#).
- If an HSW Committee is set up at NZRC in future, terms of reference will be created to ensure the Committee runs effectively with a clear purpose.

5.0 Leadership support

Leadership support is crucial for worker engagement, participation, and representation to be successful. Leaders play an important role which includes:

- Consulting with workers on matters that may impact health, safety and wellbeing in their team, worksite or work group (such as a change to a system or process, of the introduction of new equipment).
- Providing time for an HSR or HSW Champion to fulfil their role and attend training and induction.
- Listening without judgement to any issues or ideas that may be raised by an HSR or HSW Champion and supporting them to escalate or address any matters raised. Refer to the [HSW Risk Management Standard](#) for more information on managing specific risks.
- Ensuring that HSW matters are discussed at team or site meetings, and that any issues raised are followed up or escalated up in a timely manner.
- Encouraging all workers to speak up about any HSW issues, concerns, or ideas for improvement.

6.0 Roles and responsibilities

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|--|---|
| National Board, Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Secretary General | As “officers” under HSWA 2015, must ensure that NZRC has an effective system in place for worker engagement, participation, and representation. To monitor this system and take action to improve performance if needed. To ensure that sufficient resources are in place for successful implementation of this standard. |
| Area Council Chairs | To support the role of officers in meeting their due diligence responsibilities. To support worker engagement structures and raise awareness of their role and function at NZRC. To encourage all workers to speak up about any HSW issues, concerns, or ideas for improvement. |

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| All People Leaders | To support HSRs and HSW Champions and raise awareness of their role and function at NZRC. To encourage all workers to speak up about any HSW issues, concerns, or ideas for improvement. |
| HSW Team | To develop and oversee NZRC's system of work for worker engagement, participation, and representation, monitor its effectiveness, and provide regular reporting to ELT and the National Board. |
| Health and Safety Representative (HSR)s | A worker (must be an employee) that acts as a voice and advocate for health, safety & wellbeing in their work area. Must be nominated and elected (if required) by their work group to formally represent them on HSW matters. Must be formally trained to be able to exercise duties and powers under HSWA 2015. |
| Health and Safety Champions | A worker (can be an employee or member/those who volunteer their time) that acts as a voice and advocate for health, safety & wellbeing in their work area. Does not have powers under HSWA 2015. |

7.0 Definitions

Key technical terms in this document

For the purposes of this standard, the following definitions apply:

HSWA 2015 refer to the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 2015.

Officer refers to the duties of senior leadership at NZRC who hold due diligence responsibilities to ensure that NZRC meets its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 2015. At NZRC, officers are National Board, Secretary General and the Executive Leadership Team.

PCBU Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking as defined in section 17 of HSWA 2015.

Member refers to a person who has joined as a member of NZRC.

Volunteer/those who volunteer their time is a member who carries out unpaid activities for NZRC.

Worker is defined in section 19 of HSWA 2015 as an individual who carries out any work for a PCBU, including work as an employee, contractor, trainee or volunteer.

8.0 References and relevant information

Health and Safety Representatives and Committees, Guidance on Legislative Requirements (Worksafe Sept 2023)

Worksafe Website: Health and Safety Committees.

Worksafe website: Health and Safety Representatives.

9.0 Information about this Standard

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|---------------------|---|
| Policy | <u>NZRC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Framework</u> |
| Guidance Documents | <u>HSW Quick Guide - How to have a proactive health, safety & wellbeing kōrero</u> <u>The role of a HSR and HSW Champion (FAQ Sheet)</u> |
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