

## 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, Safety & Wellbeing Safety Representatives (HSWRs) in line with the [Health and Safety at Work \(Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation\) Regulations 2016](#). Note that the legislation refers to a Health & Safety Representative (HSR), however at NZRC this role is referred to as a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWR).

### 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 impact them 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 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 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representatives (HSWRs - discussed in section 4.2), and Health and Safety Committees (section 4.5). Another form of representation at NZRC is Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champions (HSWCs – discussed in section 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, Safety and Wellbeing Representatives (HSWRs)

Worker representation is a way that workers can participate in HSW at NZRC, by having a voice in matters that impact them. HSWR'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 HSWR 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 HSWR must be an employee of NZRC (a member/volunteer can be a Health, Safety & Wellbeing Champion (HSWC - section 4.3). An HSWR must:
  - be a part of the work group they are representing
  - be willing and keen to act as an HSWR
  - work regularly enough and for enough hours to act effectively as an HSWR.
- An HSWR can be nominated by someone else in their work group or self-nominate for the position. People leaders are workers, so can become HSWR's, however most HSWR's should be workers who are directly engaged in the work activities of the organisation.

- If more HSWRs are nominated than there are positions available, an election must be held to select the HSWR 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 HSWR's term of office is for a maximum of three years, or for less than that if agreed by NZRC management and the HSWR. An HSWR can be appointed multiple times, and if an HSR is not re-appointed at the end of their term, their position will end.
- HSWR's must complete an in-house induction, plus formal training (2 days duration) with an approved NZQA training provider. The formal training will allow HSWRs to hold certain powers under HSWA 2015.
- More information on the role of an HSWR can be found on the WorkSafe website: Health and Safety Representatives and "The role of a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWR) and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion (HSWC) at NZRC".

### 4.3 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champions (HSWCs)

In addition to HSWRs, HSWCs are another 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 HSWR role).

- An HSWC may be nominated by someone else in their work group or self-nominate for the role.
- There is no minimum requirement for HSWCs. It is recommended that up to 5 HSW 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 HSWCs.
- The role of an HSWC 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.
- HSWCs 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

HSWRs and HSWCs 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 HSWR and/or an HSWC, however, these issues should be managed according to site facilities management processes.

The work groups and allocation of HSWRs and HSWCs are shown in Table 1. *Note that this model will be gradually implemented at NZRC from mid-2024, and the number of HSWRs/HSWCs 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. HSW Representative & HSW Champion Positions available for NZRC Work Groups**

NZRC Work Group	Number of HSWR Positions (employees only)	Number of HSWC 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

<b>NZRC Work Group</b>	<b>Number of HSWR Positions</b> (employees only)	<b>Number of HSWC Positions</b> (employees and/or members)
Migration	3	Up to 5
Emergency Management and International (EMI)	2	Up to 5
<b>Total no. of Positions</b>	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 HSWRs, management representatives, and others (such as HSWCs) can meet to discuss HSW issues and share ideas.

- NZRC does not currently have any formal HSW Committees in place, as the HSWR and HSWC model will be gradually implemented from mid-2024.
- Once HSWRs and HSWCs 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 HSWR or HSWC to fulfil their role and attend training and induction.
- Listening without judgement to any issues or ideas that may be raised by an HSWR or HSWC 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, 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.
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.
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	As senior leaders, ELT must ensure that their work groups have an effective system in place for worker engagement, participation, and representation. Must monitor effectiveness, and ensure adequate resources and support are made available to ensure the system is operating as intended.
All People Leaders	To support HSWRs and HSWCs 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, the Secretary General and the National Board.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Representative (HSWRs)	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, Safety and Wellbeing Champions (HSWCs)	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](#).

**Health** means mental and physical health under 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, and the Secretary General.

**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.

**Wellbeing** means feeling good, functioning well and connecting with others (Source: [Mental Health Foundation](#))

**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

Policy	<a href="#">NZRC Health, Safety &amp; Wellbeing Framework</a>
Guidance Documents	The role of a HSW Representative & HSW Champion at NZRC – FAQ Sheet HSW Quick Guide - How to have a proactive HSW kōrero
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