

## The Role of a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and Health and Safety Champion (HSC)

People are at the centre of New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC). Everyone has a role to play in making sure NZRC is a healthy and safe place to work and participate in volunteering activities. So, everyone should have a say, and everyone’s views and contributions should be considered and valued!

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and Health and Safety Champions (HSCs) play an important role in ensuring our people participate, are engaged and are represented in HSW at NZRC. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) resource explains what these roles are.

### 1 What is a Health and Safety Representative (HSR)?

A Health and Safety representative (HSR) is an **employee**, who is nominated (and elected if needed), by their work group to represent them on HSW matters. An employee can also nominate themselves.

As set out in the *HSW Standard for Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation*, NZRC has 6 work groups as per our organisational structure – People Experience & Support, Migration, Emergency Management & International, Engagement & Enterprise, Organisational Services and Office of the Secretary General.

The role and function of an HSR is set out in legislation ([Health and Safety at Work Act 2015/HSWA 2015](#)). HSRs hold legal powers and functions once formally trained with an approved/accredited external provider.

### 2 What is a Health and Safety Champion (HSC)?

A Health and Safety Champion (HSC) can be an **employee or member/volunteer**. An HSC can be elected by someone else in their workgroup or nominate themselves.

In the HSC role you can be a voice for HSW matters in your work group. You may work closely with HSRs in the same work group to help improve HSW for your colleagues.

### 3 Summary – differences between HSR and HSC roles

Refer to the *HSW Standard for Worker Engagement, Participation & Representation*, which provides more detail on work groups, and the number of HSR positions available. The main differences between HSRs and HSCs are:

	HSR	HSC
<b>Who</b>	Employees only	Employees <b>and</b> members who volunteer
<b>Legal powers</b>	As set out in HSWA 2015. Able to formally represent other workers once formally	No legal powers

	trained. Full details will be covered in training.	
<b>Training</b>	In-house induction plus 2-day training with an external provider, gaining NZQA unit standard 29315. Up to two days' paid leave per year to attend health and safety training.	In-house induction only
<b>Time commitment</b>	Approximately 4 hours per month (this may vary)	Approximately 2 hours per month (this may vary)
<b>Number of roles</b>	Approximately 2-3 per work group as set out in the Standard	Up to 5 per work group as set out in the Standard. Final number is at the discretion of the work group's GM and/or Director
<b>Meetings</b>	Attendance at HSW meetings (e.g. Committee meetings) as required	Opportunities to attend HSW meetings (e.g. Committee meetings), but not a requirement
<b>What it doesn't involve</b>	Managing site safety issues e.g., issues with service centre building or facilities – these are to be managed as per site processes	

## 4 What do HSRs and HSCs do?

HSRs and HSCs play important roles in keeping NZRC people healthy and safe. Both roles are voluntary, no one can be forced to take on the role. Key responsibilities are to:

- Act as a voice and advocate for HSW matters in their work group;
- Listen and engage with people in their work group to find ideas and suggestions on how work could be made safer and healthier;
- Talk to people leaders on behalf of their work group to raise issues or share ideas if needed;
- Provide feedback and suggestions for solutions on HSW risks, issues or concerns; for example, be consulted as part of process of learnings from incident or hazard investigations;
- Provide feedback on how NZRC can improve HSW systems and processes;
- Attend meetings to share ideas, learnings and track progress on HSW matters raised;
- Raise awareness of HSW issues and promote HSW initiatives with their teams and work group.
- Be a positive influence and set an example, e.g. by pro-actively reporting incidents and hazards;

HSRs and HSCs need to:

- be a part of the work group they are acting for
- be willing and keen to act in the role
- be able to dedicate 2-4 hours per month to their HSR or HSC role alongside your normal work or volunteering duties. Have a chat with your people leader if you're not sure.

**Note:** People leaders are workers so can become HSRs or HSCs. However, most HSRs and HSCs should be people who directly carry out work or volunteer activities for NZRC, i.e. working with the public, clients or customers.

## 5 What are the key attributes of an HSR and HSC?

Being an effective HSR or HSC starts by caring about the health, safety and wellbeing of other NZRC people. You don't need to have lots of HSW knowledge!

Our HSRs and HSCs will:

- Be positive, friendly and approachable;
- Have great listening skills and be interested in others' views on HSW;
- Be constructive and keen to work with others;
- Be confident to speak up about issues and suggest improvements.

## 6 Who will support me?

Leadership support is crucial for HSRs and HSCs to operate effectively. People leaders will support these roles by:

- Raising awareness of the HSR and HSC roles and their function at NZRC;
- Consulting with HSRs and HSCs (and others if needed) on matters that may impact HSW (such as a change to a system or process, or the introduction of new equipment);
- Providing time for HSRs and HSCs to fulfil their role and attend the required training and induction, and to discuss HSW matters with their work group,
- Listening without judgement to any issues or ideas raised by an HSR or HSC and supporting the escalation of issues as needed;

## 7 What training is provided?

HSRs must complete an in-house induction, plus formal training (2 days duration) with a Worksafe approved external NZQA training provider. The formal training will allow HSRs to hold certain powers and functions under HSWA 2015. Also, HSRs are entitled to 2 x days of formal refresher training annually. This training is recognised outside of NZRC so this could be a great personal development opportunity!

HSCs must complete an in-house induction which covers a background to HSW at NZRC, and how they can contribute by having a voice and improving HSW.

The HSW team will arrange training once HSR and HSC nomination and election processes (if needed) are complete.

## 8 How do I become a HSR or HSC?

We'll put out communication seeking expressions of interest for people keen on being HSRs or HSCs. This communication will include information about how to nominate yourself or others, deadlines for applying, and what happens if we receive more nominations than roles available (e.g. HSR elections).

More information about this process is found in the Standard.

## 9 Information about this FAQ Sheet

Policy/ Standard	<a href="#">NZRC Health, Safety &amp; Wellbeing Framework</a> HSW Standard for Worker Engagement, Participation & Representation
Other Documents	Refer to the <a href="#">HSW Engagement &amp; Participation Folder on the Intranet</a>
Audience	All Red Cross people
Approval date	TBC May 2024
Effective date	TBC May 2024
Review date	TBC May 2027
Document Reference	HSWI03
Version	1
Questions?	Contact <a href="mailto:hsw@redcross.org.nz">hsw@redcross.org.nz</a> for any questions
Approving authority	General Manager, People Experience and Support