# Health and safety committee templates

This document contains templates that PCBUs may wish to use or refer to when forming health and safety committees (HSCs), including examples of:

* an HSC constitution
* an HSC agenda
* an HSC minutes

Note: these templates should be considered in conjunction with the information contained in [Worker Representation and Participation Guide](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/worker-representation-and-participation-guide).

These templates are intended to provide a starting point for health and safety committees and should be adapted by the committee to suit its needs.

Refer to the [Work Health and Safety Act](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-work-health-and-safety-act) (Part 5, Division 4) for specific requirements for health and safety committees.

**[insert PCBU name]**

### Health and Safety Committee (HSC) – Constitution

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Responsible Officer:** | [insert name/ position title] |
| **Responsible area:** | [insert unit title] |
| **Approved by:**  | [insert position title] |
| **Approved and commenced:** | [insert date] |
| **Review by:**  | [insert date] |

1. **Purpose of the HSC**

Requirements under the WHS laws: there are no specific requirements in the WHS laws for what this section of a constitution should include. However, you should ensure the purpose is consistent with the HSC’s agreed functions (see item 2).

Notes: It may be useful to include a section on the purpose of the HSC, so everyone is clear about its role and importance.

**Sample text**

This purpose of the HSC is to provide (insert PCBU) and its workers with opportunities for effective consultation and participation in decision making about workplace health and safety matters.

The HSC provides a forum where work health and safety matters can be raised and discussed freely and respectfully.

1. **Function of the HSC**

Requirements under the WHS laws: The basic functions of an HSC are set out in the WHS Act (s 77). This is reflected in the basic text below.

Notes: The PCBU and the HSC can agree to additional functions for the HSC.

You may also want to explain the functions of the HSC in more detail, just so everyone is clear exactly what is expected.

**Sample text - basic**

The HSC will consider and make recommendations on health and safety issues.

The role of the HSC is to:

* provide an environment for cooperation and consultation between (insert PCBU) and workers on health and safety issues
* assist in developing health and safety standards, rules and procedures that will be followed at the workplace
* perform other functions as agreed to by the HSC and (insert PCBU)

The HSC reports to the (insert position/team title).

**Sample text – more detailed**

The HSC will consider and make recommendations on health and safety issues.

The role of the HSC is to: (adjust for workplace)

* provide an environment for cooperation and consultation between (insert PCBU) and workers in initiating, developing and implementing measures to ensure the health and safety of workers
* consider and make recommendations on proposed changes to the workplace, work organisation or work practices that may affect the health and safety of workers
* assist in the development of health and safety standards, rules and procedures that will be followed or complied with at the workplace
* recommend the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of procedures and programs concerning worker health and safety
* keep informed about relevant topics on health and safety, including (insert – you may like to specify)
* consider and make recommendations related to the training, education and promotion of work health and safety
* examine health and safety audit or monitoring reports, and reports of hazards and work-related incidents, and make recommendations about any changes that need to be made in the workplace
* develop procedures for selecting new plant for the workplace
* provide advice on the selection of workplace health and safety consultants
* perform other functions as agreed to by the HSC and the (insert PCBU)

The HSC is a consultative committee not a management committee. It will not consider matters which can be and should be decided by management or by the individual(s) closest to the source of the issue or grievance.

The HSC reports to the (insert position/team title).

1. **Membership**

Requirements under the WHS laws: The requirements for membership are set out in the WHS Act (s 76). The membership may be agreed between the PCBU and the workers, as long as:

* at least half of the members are workers who are not nominated by the PCBU, and
* any health and safety representatives are members (if they consent).

If there is more than one HSR at the workplace, the HSRs may agree who will be on the HSC. They may agree to have more than one HSR on the HSC.

Notes: The WHS laws do not specify who should represent the PCBU on an HSC. However, representatives of the PCBU should provide the necessary level of authority to make decisions, and knowledge and expertise regarding company policy, production needs and technical matters.

**Sample text - basic**

The HSC will comprise of (insert list of positions).

At least half of the members of the committee must be workers and not personnel nominated by (insert PCBU).

Observers or guests may also be invited to sit in at meetings.

The list of HSC members will be made available to all workers via[insert any or all of the mechanisms you will use to communicate the list of HSC members e.g. email, intranet, noticeboard etc].

**Sample text – more detailed**

The HSC will comprise of: (adjust for workplace)

* health and safety representatives
* other worker representatives (authorised by workers)

(insert PCBU)*-nominated representatives, e.g.*

* Health and Safety Manager
* Area/Departmental Manager or their delegate
* nominated Secretary
* xxx
* xxx.

At least half of the members of the committee must be workers and not personnel nominated by (insert PCBU).

The HSC can request personnel with specific expertise to join the committee from time to time.

The HSC may agree to form sub-committees to complete specific work arising from the HSC.

The list of HSC members will be made available to all workers via [insert any or all of the mechanisms you will use to communicate the list of HSC members e.g. email, intranet, noticeboard etc].

Observers or guests may also be invited to sit in at meetings.

1. **Appointment process**

Requirements under the WHS laws: There are no specific requirements in the WHS laws for how members join the committee or the term of membership.

Notes: However, HSRs are automatically members of the HSC if they consent. The WHS Act (s 60-64) specifies election procedures and terms of office for HSRs, which would determine their time on the HSC.

If there are no HSRs, then the PCBU and workers may decide to hold a nomination/election process for worker representatives on the HSC.

You may choose to set out how the Chair will be decided. The Chair could be the occupant of a specific position, or involve the HSC agreeing or electing a member for a specific term.

**Sample text - basic**

The Chair is agreed by the HSC.

HSRs are automatically members of the HSC if they consent.

HSRs whose term is still current will be permitted to renew membership in line with their elected period.

(If needed e.g. no HSRs)Workers may be nominated to the HSC by the workers. If the number of nominees is greater than the number of vacancies, then an election will be held.

(insert PCBU)-nominated members are appointed by (insert PCBU).

**Sample text – more detailed**

The Chair is a member of the HSC, elected by the HSC. A Deputy Chair will also be elected.

The election for the Chair’s position is called as soon as practicable after a position becomes vacant and are held at least every X years.

HSRs are automatically members of the HSC if they consent.

(If needed, e.g. no HSRs) The election for worker representatives is called as soon as practicable after a position becomes vacant and are held at least every X years.

HSRs whose term is still current will be permitted to renew membership in line with their elected period.

Elections may be required more frequently if a member resigns, ceases to be a worker in the work group for which they were elected or is removed by a majority of the members of the work group.

1. **Decision making procedure**

Requirements under the WHS laws: There are no specific requirements in the WHS laws for how the HSC is to make decisions.

Notes: In performing its functions, it is likely that the HSC will need to come to agreement on some matters (e.g. what recommendations it will make or advice it will provide). The HSC may agree that it will make decisions by consensus. In this case, the HSC will need to decide how matters will be dealt with when consensus cannot be reached.

It is important to note the WHS Act encourages PCBUs to agree on issue resolution procedures with their workers. While the HSC may provide advice on issues, resolving individual matters may not be a role for the HSC. For example, the HSC may not include the parties to a particular issue. For more information on issue resolution, refer to the Chapter 7 of the [Worker Representation and Participation Guide](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/worker-representation-and-participation-guide).

**Sample text - basic**

The HSC will make decisions with the agreement of all members. If all members are not in agreement, if possible, the issue will be reconsidered at a later meeting. If agreement is still not achieved, it will be referred to the (insert PCBU position title/team).

**Sample text – more detailed**

The HSC will decide issues by consensus. Where a consensus cannot be reached, if possible, the issue may be adjourned to allow for further consideration. If the issue can still not be agreed, it can be referred to the (insert PCBU position title/team).

A motion moved by an HSC member must be seconded to be carried to consensus or vote.

Resolving issues or disputes within the workplace will be dealt with in accordance with (insert PCBU) agreed procedures for health and safety issue resolution (insert name/link if exists, or default procedure).

1. **Meetings and minutes**

Requirements under the WHS laws: The WHS Act (s 78) requires HSCs to meet at least once every 3 months and at any reasonable time at the request of at least half of the members. There are no specific requirements for how the HSC should run or record meetings.

To meet the requirement in the WHS Act (s 76) for at least half of the members to be workers who are not nominated by the PCBU, it is important to consider the appropriate quorum for a meeting.

Notes: The HSC can agree on the procedures and rules for HSC meetings. You might consider what is best practice for committees. For example, inviting members to nominate items for the agenda, circulating the agenda and any meeting papers at least a week prior to the meeting, circulating minutes promptly after meetings, and sharing minutes with all workers.

**Sample text –basic**

Meetings will be held every xxmonths (at least once every 3 months). Special meetings can be called at any reasonable time, if at least half of the members make a request.

A meeting agenda will be circulated at least one week prior to the meeting.

A quorum is considered the Chair plus half of the HSC members. At least half of the members in attendance must be worker representatives.

The draft minutes will be circulated to members for comment as soon as possible after the meeting. The minutes will be amended/accepted by members at the following meeting.

**Sample text – more detailed**

Meetings will be held every xx months (at least once every 3 months)**.** The meeting length should reflect the agenda but should generally be between xx and xx hours long.

The meetings will be scheduled during working time and accommodate the likely availability of members to attend.

Special meetings can be called at any reasonable time, if at least half of the members make a request.

A meeting agenda will be prepared by the Secretary/Chair with input from all HSC members, and will be circulated at least one week prior to the meeting.

A quorum is considered the Chair plus half of the HSC members. At least half of the members in attendance must be worker representatives.

The Secretary will prepare the draft minutes of the meeting as soon as is practicable after the meeting and circulate them to members for comment and provided to (insert any other positions/committees that minutes should be referred to).

Minutes from the previous meeting shall be ratified or amended at the commencement of the following meeting.

Minutes will be made available to all workers via (insert mechanism e.g. email, intranet etc).

1. **Responsibilities of the PCBU**

Requirements under the WHS laws: The WHS Act (s 79) sets out the duties of the PCBU in relation to HSCs. These duties are reflected in the sample text below.

Notes: Additional items may be included if decided by the HSC. This may reflect the items needed for the HSC to meet its agreed functions. The more detailed sample text below includes examples of additional items that may be necessary.

**Sample text –basic**

(Insert PCBU) has the following responsibilities to the HSC:

* provide access to information relating to hazards (and associated risks) at the workplace, and the health and safety of workers at the workplace
* allow each HSC member reasonable time to attend HSC meetings and carry out functions as an HSC member, and
* pay workers what they would be entitled to receive for performing their normal duties during that period.

Any information provided to the HSC should be de-identified to the extent it does not reasonably lead to identification of personal or health information of any worker. Members of the HSC will not be permitted access to personal or medical information of any worker without their expressed consent.

**Sample text – more detailed**

(Insert PCBU) has the following responsibilities to the HSC:

* provide access to information relating to hazards (and risks) in the workplace including plant, substances and systems of work
* provide access to information relating to the health and safety of workers at the workplace
* allow each HSC member to spend the time that is reasonably necessary to attend HSC meeting or to carry out functions as an HSC member
* pay workers what they would otherwise be entitled to receive for performing their normal duties during that period
* provide the HSC with reasonable facilities and assistance
* consult with the HSC on any proposed changes to the workplace that may affect employee health and safety
* notify the HSC of work-related health and safety incidents as soon as possible
* at the request of an Inspector, enable a committee member to accompany the Inspector on an inspection of the workplace, and
* support the provision of training for HSC members, as training needs are identified.

Any information provided to the HSC should be de-identified to the extent it does not reasonably lead to identification of personal or health information of any worker. Members of the HSC will not be permitted access to personal or medical information of any worker without their expressed consent.

1. **Review or amendment of Constitution**

Requirements under the WHS laws: There are no requirements in the WHS laws about when a constitution should be reviewed or amended.

Notes: It is good practice to outline the process for amending and reviewing a constitution. The HSC may also decide to consult with workers more broadly on the constitution and potential amendments.

This constitution may be amended by the members of the HSC.

It will be reviewed every by the HSC every (insert number e.g. 3)years. An HSC member may make a request to the Chair that the constitution be reviewed at an earlier time.

**ATTACHMENT TO CONSTITUTION - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Requirements under the WHS laws: There are no requirements in the WHS laws about the specific roles and responsibilities of HSC committee members.

Notes: It is good practice to outline the roles and responsibilities of the various positions on the HSC. However, not all HSCs will have all these positions.

Refer to sections 3 and 4 for information on HSC membership and the appointment process.

**Chair**

The Chair is responsible for making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted according to the constitution and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.

Before each meeting, the Chair will:

* review the draft minutes of the previous meeting
* work with (insert PCBU) representatives to ensure that tasks / action items from the previous meetings are completed or on track for completion, and
* settle the agenda for each meeting, in consultation with (insert PCBU) representatives and Secretary, after calling for agenda items from HSC members.

At the meeting, the Chair will:

* open the meeting
* check whether there is a quorum
* note the apologies
* invite members to comment on any corrections to the minutes (previously circulated) and, once agreed by the meeting, endorse them as the final version of the minutes
* conduct the business of the meeting in order of the agenda paper, unless it is altered with the consent of the meeting
* confine discussion to the current agenda item, ensuring it is dealt with before passing on to the next item, and
* close the meeting when all matters are attended to.

In the Chair's absence, the Deputy Chair will assume the responsibilities of the Chair. In the absence of both, the meeting will choose a member to act as Chair for that meeting.

**Secretariat**

Before each meeting, the Secretariat will:

* ensure that all arrangements are made for the HSC meetings (book meeting rooms, set up teleconference and videoconference facilities for the meetings, etc.)
* provide the (insert PCBU) representative and Chair, with any reports or other papers to be issued for review before distributing to the HSC members
* at least one week before the meeting (and after the agenda is settled), distribute to all HSC members a copy of:
1. the agenda for the meeting
2. any reports or papers to be considered at the meeting, and
3. the list of corrections requested to the draft minutes of the previous meeting.
* ensure appropriate records management of all meeting papers, and
* ensure a copy of all papers requested for the meeting are available and accessible at the meeting.

At the Committee meeting, the Secretariat will:

* record the names of all apologies and those present
* check with the Chair that a quorum is present before any business is done
* note any amendments to the draft Minutes of the previous meeting and the meeting’s agreement of the Minutes
* take notes of the business of the meeting (discussion, decisions, action items) for the minutes
* assist the Chair with any information required, and
* record any action items and the dates they are due to be completed.

After the meeting, the Secretariat will:

* draft the Minutes and provide them to the Chair and (insert PCBU) representative(s) for review, prior to distribution, within one week of the meeting
* circulate the draft Minutes to HSC members seeking comments on proposed corrections, within two weeks of the meeting, and
* ensure that (insert PCBU) distributes the draft Minutes to the workplace (intranet/notice boards etc) noting their 'Draft' status, within two weeks of the meeting.

**All members**

Members will:

* respect the views of others and will encourage other members to participate in discussions
* ensure that a speaker has a chance to complete what they want to say without interruption, and
* provide advance notice, wherever possible, of matters to be raised at the meeting by placing them on the agenda. This will ensure time allowed is adequate to discuss all items on the agenda.

**[insert PCBU name]**

### Health and Safety Committee - Agenda

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting number:** | [#number] |
| **Meeting to be held:** | [date] in [location] |

Attendees: list attendees

Apologies: list known apologies

1. Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country

Refer to advice provided by the [National Indigenous Australians Agency](https://www.indigenous.gov.au/contact-us/welcome_acknowledgement-country#:~:text=%20Welcome%20to%20Country%20or%20Acknowledgement%20of%20Country,Traditional%20Owners%20of%20the%20land%20on...%20More%20)

1. Attendees and apologies
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Agree minutes of previous meeting

Circulated for comment prior to meeting

1. Progress updates from:
* Management update, PCBU representative(s)
* Worker representative(s) / health and safety representative(s)
1. Items for discussion

Items should be aligned to the agreed functions of the HSC.

Examples

* Review WHS injury/incident statistics and data
* New or ongoing hazards or risks for discussion
* Emerging WHS issues, trends or reports
* Findings of workplace inspections
* Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of controls
* Requests or issues to be considered by workers and management
* Progress on any internal or external reviews of policies, processes and procedures
* WHS training needs of workers
* Draft WHS procedures for the workplace
* Updates to legislation, codes of practice, guidance materials
1. Outstanding issues from previous meetings
* Refer to action items still to be completed
1. Other business
* Members to raise any other matters
1. Meeting close and confirm date of next meeting

Next meeting: [Insert time, date and location]

**[insert PCBU name]**

### Health and Safety Committee - Minutes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting number:** | [#number] |
| **Meeting held on:** | [date] in [location] |

**Attendees:**

* List all members in attendance and position titles
* List any non-member observers and guests

**Apologies:**

* List apologies

**Key discussion points and outcomes:**

* For each agenda item, provide a summary of the main points of discussion and outcomes

**Action items:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Agenda item | Action to be taken | Person responsible for action | Priority level | Timeframe | Date action completed |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Minutes circulated to all workers and other relevant stakeholders.

[ ]  Notice board

[ ]  Lunchroom

[ ]  Toolbox talks

[ ]  Board meetings

[ ]  Emails

[ ]  Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_