

Commitment 6 – Worker Involvement

1. Introduction

This guidance outlines how companies can raise awareness of the importance of workforce involvement, specifically health & safety representatives and other workers' representatives, in the management of Occupational Health.

2. What are the Benefits?

People who feel valued and involved in decision-making play a big part in a high-performing workplace. Empowering your workforce, giving them the right skills, and getting them involved in making decisions shows them that you take their health, safety and wellbeing seriously. They raise concerns and offer solutions.

Other benefits include:

- lower accident rates

Accident rates are lower where employees genuinely feel they have a say in health and safety matters (14%), compared with workplaces where employees do not get involved (26%).

- a more positive health and safety climate

Employee involvement in health and safety management relates to a more positive health and safety climate - 77% of employees felt encouraged to raise concerns in a good health and safety climate compared to 20% who felt encouraged to do so in a poor health and safety climate. In poor health and safety climates accident rates are highest among workplaces where employees do not feel they can have a say.

- greater awareness of workplace risks

Employers can learn about the risks through consultation - the risk of stress and slips and trips occur practically everywhere, but awareness of them is higher where there is employee involvement (62%) compared to where there is no involvement (28%).

Research has also shown that workplaces with health and safety committees where some members are selected by unions have significantly lower rates of work-related injury than found in workplaces with no co-operative health and safety management.

- better control of workplace risks

Stronger employee involvement means better control of common workplace risks such as slips and trips - very effective in 76% of cases where employees felt they were always consulted but only very effective in 40% of cases if they thought they were rarely, or never consulted.

Source: HSE Fit3 (Fit for Work, Fit for Life, Fit for Tomorrow) employer and employee surveys 2005/06 (provisional results) and Nichols T, Walters D and Tasiran AC (2007) *Journal of Industrial Relations*; 49: 211-225

3. Legislation

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) – relevant to Energy Sector because trades unions are recognised and can act as conduit to consultation for *all* staff

Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended) – not relevant to Energy Sector

4. Best Practice

- See TUC 'Union Effect' webpage:
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-8382-f0.cfm>
- See HSE case studies at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/casestudies.htm>

5. Further Information

- Consulting your workforce on health and safety. Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended). Approved Code of Practice and guidance **L146** HSE Books ISBN 978 0 7176 6311 8
- Involving your workforce in health and safety: Good practice for all workplaces **HSG263** HSE Books 2008 ISBN 978 0 7176 6227 2
- Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law **INDG232 (rev1)** HSE Books 2008. ISBN 978 0 7176 6312 5
- Employee Communications and Consultation - Acas Advisory booklet
www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=663
- “Guidance on effective workforce involvement in health and safety” by the Energy Institute

