



	Guideline Document		
Ref: NHSF:030:01:G2	Re: Selection of Safety Representatives		
Issue date:	March 2016	Revised date:	May 2025
Author(s):	National Health & Safety Function		
Consultation with:	National Health & Safety Function		
Responsibility for Implementation:	HSE Managers and Employees		
Note:	<p>Section 25 (1) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 entitles employees to decide on, select and appoint a safety representative or, by agreement with their employer, more than one safety representative to represent them in consultations with the employer on matters of safety, health and welfare at the place of work.</p> <p><i>The information provided is for general guidance only, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational health and safety issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management.</i></p>		



Table of Contents	Page
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Safety Representative	3
2.1 Functions of the Safety Representative	3
2.2 Selection of Safety Representative(s)	3
2.3 Period of Office	4
2.4 Training	4
2.5 Resources	4
Appendices:	
Appendix 1: Resource Pack for the selection of Safety Representative(s)	5
Appendix 2: References	11



1.0 Introduction

Section 25, of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 entitles employees to decide on, select and appoint a Safety Representative or, by agreement with their employer, more than one Safety Representative to represent them in consultations with the employer on matters of safety, health and welfare at the place of work.

The HSE recognises the importance and the value of Safety Representatives and fully supports their appointment from all disciplines within the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Note: A Safety Representative is not a Safety Officer or Safety Advisor, and is protected against penalisation (Section 27 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005)

2.0 Safety Representative

2.1 Functions of the Safety Representative(s)

The Safety Representative does not have *duties*, as opposed to *functions*, under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 other than those that apply to employees generally.

Safety Representatives may:

- Make representations to their employer on any aspects of safety, health and welfare at the place of work
- Inspect the place of work after giving reasonable notice to their employer. The frequency and schedule of inspections must be agreed between the Safety Representative and the employer in advance
- Inspect the place of work in the event of an incident, dangerous occurrence (situation of imminent danger) or risk to health and safety
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences provided they do not interfere with or obstruct any person fulfilling their legal duty
- After giving reasonable notice to their employer, investigate complaints made by employees whom they represent
- Accompany the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) Inspector on a tour of inspection
- At the discretion of the HSA Inspector, accompany the Inspector while they are investigating an incident or dangerous occurrence
- Make oral or written representation to the HSA Inspector(s) on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work
- Receive advice and information from the HSA Inspector(s) on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at the place of work
- Consult and liaise with other Safety Representatives appointed in the organisation

2.2 Selection of Safety Representative(s)

The number of Safety Representatives should be proportionate to the size of the workplace, and should ensure work activities, departments or occupations are represented. Factors to take into account when deciding on the number of safety representatives to be appointed include:

- the number of employees to be represented;
- the nature of the work and the relative degree of risk;
- the operation of shift systems;



National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, National HR Division

- the existence of many workplaces under the employer's control spread over many locations; and
- the constituency of the employees to be represented, including variations between different occupations and distinct locations within the place of work.
(Health and Safety Authority, 2016)

To select a Safety Representative, employees may use the normal process for selecting employee representatives within their workplace or they may ballot all employees.

If a selection process does not already exist, the resource pack in Appendix 1 may be of assistance.

2.3 Period of Office

No specific term of office is laid down in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. However, to benefit from knowledge acquired and training received during the period, a term of office of three years is deemed appropriate. At the end of a term of office the outgoing Safety Representative is eligible for re-selection/re-election.

2.4 Training

In order to acquire this knowledge and skill, employers must allow Safety Representatives reasonable time off from work, without loss of earnings.

The HSE provides training for new Safety Representatives. The course content is based on the national agreed syllabus and participation on the course provides training in general on the functions of the Safety Representative. This training programme is 3 days duration and can be applied for by the Line Manager through the [National Health and Safety Helpdesk](#). Should a Safety Representative be selected for a further term of 3 years there is no requirement to undertake this training.

Please note Local Management is responsible for training Safety Representatives on the specific hazards and safe systems of work in their own workplaces.

Following successful completion of the course, Safety Representatives trained by the National Health and Safety Function (NHSF) will be offered ongoing support to fulfil their function.

2.5 Resources

The following resources for the Safety Representatives are available on the [Safety Representative HSE Webpage](#):

- Safety Representative Role Poster
- Safety Representative Inspection Checklist
- Safety Representative Networking Sessions



Appendix 1

Resource Pack for the selection of Safety Representative(s)

- Procedure for the appointment of Safety Representative(s)
- Nomination Poster - Selection of Safety Representative(s)
- Nomination Form for the position of Safety Representative(s)
- Timetable for the selection/election of Safety Representative(s)



Procedure for the appointment of Safety Representatives

The selection/election of Safety Representatives takes place every 3 years. A named co-ordinator assumes the responsibility of overseeing the selection process within each facility. The **procedure** for **appointing** a staff member(s) to the position of **Safety Representative** is as follows:

Step 1

- The co-ordinator notifies all employees of the pending selection process
- **Posters** are displayed in all locations advising of the selection process and where nomination forms can be obtained
- The co-ordinator issues the **Nominations forms** (to include the following information, the location, nominee, proposer and seconder)

Note: Agency staff are not eligible to act as a Safety Representative.

Step 2

In the event that the number of nominees proposed equates to the number of Safety Representative vacancies, these nominees are automatically appointed. Where the number of nominees exceeds, steps 3-5 outlined below must be followed.

Step 3

In the event that an election is required, please note the following:

- A **list** of all **staff** that are currently employed in your location and are eligible to vote must be **compiled**. This includes permanent, temporary, seasonal, locum and part-time staff. Persons who are not entitled to vote should not be included in this list
- It will be necessary to ensure that there is a **designated room/area** in a central location to facilitate the voting procedure which should afford a voter the necessary privacy to undertake voting. A competent person (i.e. knowledge of procedure) must be assigned the duty of Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer should be available to answer any queries which may arise during voting, they will supervise the count and assist in checking the ballot
- It is essential that the **details of balloting** be properly **advertised** i.e. balloting dates, times, names and professional title of nominated staff e.g. Mary Murphy, Staff Officer etc. The posters should also be placed in prominent positions in each work location e.g. staff tea rooms and staff notice board. Allow a number of days for voting, and voting should be arranged to take place at different times e.g. 08:30am to 12pm or 2pm-5pm to facilitate staff
- Each **nominee** must be **notified** of details of the **ballot** and when and where the counting of votes will take place, nominees should be advised that they may attend the count if they wish to do so
- There must be at least one competent person in the designated room/area at all times when voting is taking place, this person will tick the staff members name on the list and hand out the **ballot paper** (which is stamped). **Ballot boxes** and **stamps** are supplied by a named person.

Step 4

Voting procedure

When an employee asks to vote, the following is the procedure:

- (a) If the employee is one of the categories entitled to vote and is on the list of those entitled to vote, mark the name off the sheet by drawing a line through the name



National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, National HR Division

- (b) If the employee is unknown to you, ask the employee for their name, grade and ID
- (c) If you are in doubt as to the identity of the employee, request identification or check with the Presiding Officer.
- (d) If the employee is not listed you must satisfy yourself as to the employees identity and the employee’s entitlement to vote
- (e) If you are in doubt as to the employee’s entitlement to vote, check with (1) the Presiding Officer, (2) the administrator
- (f) If you issue a ballot paper to someone not on the list, record their name and grade on the list and a draw a line through it
- (g) Issue ballot paper(s) and ensure that the official stamp is on the ballot paper
- (h) If a person spoils a ballot paper by mistake and advises you of this prior to the paper being placed in the ballot box, you may re-issue a fresh ballot paper provided you receive the spoiled ballot paper first, which you should destroy immediately
- (i) At the close of voting, count the number of persons who have voted by counting the number of marks on the list and write the number on the attached form. Place the completed form and the lists in the envelope and tape the envelope over the open slot of the Ballot Box
- (j) Ensure the Ballot Box is locked away in a secure place

Step 5

Guidelines for the Count

1. The ballot box will be opened by the named Presiding Officer
2. The named Presiding Officer, will supervise the counting and assist in the checking of the ballots
3. Ballot papers for each nominee should be separated
4. Ballot papers should then be arranged and counted and checked
5. Spoiled votes should be left aside and checked before exclusion
6. The final figures are to be entered into the results sheet
7. Any queries by staff representatives should be directed through the Presiding Officer and not to any member of the counting staff
8. In the unlikely event that two or more nominees receive exactly the same number of votes, the names of these individuals will be placed in a hat. The first name pulled from the hat will be deemed elected, as Safety Representative, and the second name pulled from the hat will be deemed elected as deputy Safety Representative

Note: Staff and Union representatives are permitted to observe the election count.

A 3 day training course will be provided for selected/elected Safety Representatives by the HSE.

The following table presents information regarding individuals engaged in the process of selecting Safety Representatives:

Table 1:

Title	Name
Coordinator of the Selection/Election of Safety Representative	
Provider of Ballot boxes and stamps	
Presiding Officer	



National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, National HR Division

NOMINATION POSTER

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK ACT, 2005

SELECTION OF SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE(S)

(Insert location) propose to carry out a selection process to appoint (insert number) Safety Representative(s) to represent staff on safety, health and welfare issues.

Nominations are invited for the above position(s) in accordance with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005. Where more than (insert number) staff member(s) is/are nominated they shall enter an election open to all staff in that location.

Following the election, the successful candidate(s) shall hold the position of Safety Representative for the location for a period of three years.

Nomination forms for the above position are available from (insert person's name).

Nomination forms are to be returned to (insert name) on or before (insert date).

Signed by: _____
Site/Service Manager





NOMINATION FORM

Nominations are invited for the position of **Safety Representative(s)** in accordance with the Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005. Following the selection/election the successful candidate(s) shall hold the position of **Safety Representative(s) of the location for a period of 3 years.**

Please ensure the name of the co-ordinator is inserted prior to submission (Part 4).

Part 1 To be completed by Nominee

Location: _____

Nominee: _____

Part 2 To be completed by Proposer

Proposer: _____
(Print Name)

Proposer: _____
Signature

Part 3 To be completed by Seconder

Seconder: _____
(Print Name)

Seconder: _____
Signature

Part 4 To be completed by Nominee prior to submission to co-ordinator

I _____ (nominee signature) _____ (insert nominee *employee number) accept that my name be put forward for the position of Safety Representative.

This nomination paper must be returned to (Co-ordinator) _____ (insert name)

Instructions:

- Part 1 Nominee to insert location and name
- Part 2 Proposer to print Name and sign
- Part 3 Seconder to print Name and sign
- Part 4 Nominee to sign, insert employee number* and insert co-ordinator name
- Return form to Co-ordinator

NOTE: Nomination forms without candidate's signature are invalid.

***Please ensure employee number is ONLY INSERTED immediately before submitting.**



National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, National HR Division

ELECTION OF SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES TIMETABLE

IDENTIFY MANAGER(S) WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO CO-ORDINATE THE SELECTION/ELECTION PROCESS:

(INSERT DATE)

POSTERS TO BE DISPLAYED IN ALL LOCATIONS BY:

(INSERT DATE)

NOMINATION FORMS TO BE RETURNED BY:

(INSERT DATE)

ELECTIONS (IF APPLICABLE) TO BE HELD ON:

(INSERT DATE)

COUNTING OF VOTES ON:

(INSERT DATE)

TRAINING OF SELECTED/ELECTED SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES:

(INSERT DATES)





National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, National HR Division

Appendix 2

References

- Health and Safety Authority (2016) Safety Representative and Safety Consultation Guidelines, Dublin, Health and Safety Authority.

Legislation

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005: S.I. No. 10 of 2005