



Australian Government

**Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Authority**

Health and safety representative training course requirements for the Seacare jurisdiction

Approved by the Seacare Authority

March 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Goal of HSR training	3
The role of the HSR	3
Approach to training	4
Learner-centred approach	4
Adult learning	4
Contextual learning	4
Inclusivity	5
Activity-based learning	5
Accommodating different in learning styles	5
Commitment to safety	5
Delivery mode	5
Course duration	6
Full courses (35 hours)	6
Bridging courses (14 hours)	6
Recognition of prior learning	6
Course structure	7
Mandatory practical skill development activities	8
Training objectives and learning outcomes	8
Training objective 1	9
Training objective 2	10
Training objective 3 (full course)	11
Training objective 4 (full course)	12
Training objective 3 (bridging course)	13
Training objective 4 (bridging course)	14

Introduction

Health and safety representative (HSR) training should provide guidance on the powers and functions of HSRs as provided in the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS(MI) Act).

Goal of HSR training

The Seacare Authority's goal for the training HSRs is that each participant experiences a safe and inclusive learning environment where they will be provided with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and experience to exercise their powers effectively and responsibly when representing members of their designated working group (DWG).

The role of the HSR

HSRs are valuable partners working between operators and employees in addressing important health and safety issues affecting their DWG. HSRs have a key role in the prevention of risks to their members' health and safety and promoting good occupational health and safety (OHS) practice. HSRs must be adequately trained, supported and encouraged if they are to be effective in their role.

Under Part 3 of the OHS(MI) Act, HSRs are entitled to undertake a number of functions and exercise certain powers. In summary these powers include:

- > representing members of their DWG
- > inspecting the workplace
- > requesting an investigation
- > accompanying an investigator during an investigation
- > examining records of the health and safety committee (HSC)
- > investigating complaints by members of the DWG
- > accompanying members of the DWG at certain interviews
- > accessing OHS information relating to members of the DWG
- > issuing provisional improvement notices
- > consulting, communicating, promoting and monitoring OHS activities
- > initiating emergency staff work procedures in certain circumstances.

To enable HSRs to exercise their powers competently, the HSR course of training, at a minimum, must provide HSRs with:

- > an understanding of the objectives of the OHS(MI) Act and their role under the Act
- > knowledge of their powers under the OHS(MI) Act and how to exercise them effectively
- > skills in representing the members of their DWG including consulting and negotiating on OHS matters with their employer
- > skills in investigating complaints made by members of the DWG
- > skills in inspecting, identifying and reporting common workplace hazards, including psychosocial hazards, and knowledge of the mechanisms for working with an employer to control and rectify hazards
- > practical examples of health and safety issues relevant to their DWG
- > knowledge of where and how to obtain information and assistance in dealing with hazards, including psychosocial hazards, and risk to health and safety
- > an understanding of the role of the HSR in the prevention of workplace accidents, injury and disease.

Approach to training

The Seacare Authority has chosen to adopt the following approach to training, which is based on that identified and adopted by all harmonised WHS regulators as ensuring an effective and consistent approach to development and delivery of HSR training. Providers should develop courses using this approach.

Learner-centred approach

The requirements in this document are based on a learner-centred approach.

A learner-centred approach to training focuses on the achievements of the participant rather than the intentions of the trainer. Participants should be encouraged to engage with other HSRs and share their perspectives and experiences. They should also be provided with opportunities for self-reflection.

Adult learning

Adults learn in different ways and bring a range of experiences and backgrounds to the learning environment. The HSR training course content and activities should integrate this experience and diversity. It should give HSRs the skills and knowledge to represent their work groups effectively. Training delivery should provide participants with opportunities to contribute and reflect upon their own workplace experience.

Contextual learning

Most adults like to see the relevance of what they are learning to their work and life. Course content should enable participants to understand the link with their workplace experience or situation. Activities should allow time for each participant to relate their skills and knowledge to industry specific OHS(MI) issues.

Inclusivity

When developing and delivering HSR training courses training providers should consider:

- > age
- > gender
- > culture
- > disability
- > language
- > literacy
- > numeracy.

Training materials and delivery should use plain English and gender-neutral language to ensure participants feel comfortable, confident and safe to interact with one another and participate fully.

Activity-based learning

Most adults are more likely to learn when they are actively involved rather than passively sitting and listening to a trainer presenting information. A range of interactive activities (e.g. group work, case studies and workplace inspections) should be used so participants can further develop and practise the required knowledge and skills. Participants should be encouraged to actively engage with each other to develop consultation skills and the ability to cooperate and coordinate with other people in their role.

Accommodating different in learning styles

The course content should cater for differences in learning styles and varying learner needs. Using a variety of media (e.g. print, digital, audio) and activities (e.g. trivia quizzes, games, role plays) should ensure all learning styles are accommodated.

Commitment to safety

The safety and welfare of participants must be considered when training content and activities are developed and delivered. Training providers must ensure that they meet all work health and safety legislative requirements and commit to providing a safe and positive learning environment. Participants should be encouraged to interact, question and challenge in a non-judgemental environment.

Delivery mode

Training should be delivered in a way which maximises participation and engagement. This may be face-to-face or online. When deciding on the delivery mode, appropriate adjustments must be made to the course content and activities to allow for participation and engagement, particularly for an online course.

Course duration

Full courses (35 hours)

Full courses should comprise a minimum of 35 hours training over a minimum of 5 days.

Training providers should include some flexible options to accommodate the HSR's needs, provided these options offer the minimum of 35 hours of training and include the mandatory practical skills development activities. For example, flexible options could include:

- > one block of 5 consecutive days
- > 2 days plus 3 days over 5 weeks
- > one day per week over 5 weeks.

Once commenced, the training must be completed within 6 weeks

Bridging courses (14 hours)

Bridging courses should comprise a minimum of 14 hours training over a minimum of 2 days and include the mandatory practical skills development activities.

Recognition of prior learning

Considering the safety training generally required of seafarers, the Seacare Authority is keen to avoid unnecessary duplication when training HSRs. These course requirements allow for recognition of prior learning in certain circumstances.

Recognition of prior learning will only be available for components of Training Objective 1. HSRs may ask the training provider for an exemption from attending Training Objective 1 components if they:

- > have completed a training course on the OHS(MI) Act within 2 years before the HSR training course, and
- > have a minimum of 5 years work experience in the Australian maritime industry.

Before granting an exemption, a training provider must ensure that the HSR satisfies the above requirements.

Training providers must keep records of exemptions applied for, exemptions granted and any related documentary evidence (i.e. statements of attainment, employer training and employment records). These records must be kept for 5 years and made available to the Authority or its agent on request.

Where attendees have been granted exemptions from components of Training Objective 1, the length of HSR training courses may be reduced by the time usually devoted to covering those components. For example, Table 1 provides an indicative minimum of 3–4 hours to cover all Training Objective 1 components, so recognition of prior learning would not be expected reduce the full course length by more than half a day.

Course structure

This document does not prescribe how each course will be structured. Training providers are best placed to make that decision. All components of each training objective must be adequately addressed, and the course must contain evidence of its capacity to deliver the expected learning outcomes.

Tables 1 and 2 below give indicative minimum expected times to cover some key topics properly, allowing adequate time for discussion and practical skill development.

The tables are only guides. Other training objective topics must also be adequately covered in addition to these.

Table 1: Full course indicative minimum times to cover key topics

Topic	Time
Legislation, legislative instruments, guidance – objectives, broad framework	3–4 hours
HSR powers and roles	3–4 hours
Risk management	2–3 hours
Workplace hazard and identification and control	2–3 hours
Workplace visit and inspection	3 hours
Inspection report writing and action plans	3 hours
Negotiation/consultation	4 hours
Issuing a provisional improvement notice (PIN) – theory and practice	3 hours

Table 2: Bridging course indicative minimum times to cover key topics

Topic	Time
Legislation, legislative instruments, guidance – objectives, broad framework	3–4 hours
HSR powers and roles	3–4 hours
Issuing a PIN – theory and practice	3 hours

Mandatory practical skill development activities

Both courses should contain a number of practical skills development activities to reinforce how the learning can be applied. The mandatory activities are listed in Table 3.

Training objectives and learning outcomes

The Seacare Authority has approved training objectives for both courses. Courses submitted for accreditation must demonstrate they meet all training objective components, have the capacity to deliver the expected learning outcomes and include the practical and mandatory skill development activities.

The components to be covered in each of these training objectives are detailed below. Expected learning outcomes for each training objective are also included.

For objectives 3 and 4, bridging course components and learning outcomes are different to those of full courses.

Table 3: Mandatory skills development activities

Mandatory requirements to be met	Full course	Bridging course
Training objective 1	Required	Required
Training objective 2	Required	Required
Training objective 3	Required	Required – Bridging
Training objective 4	Required	Required – Bridging
Mandatory Skill Activity: Issuing a PIN	Required	Required
Mandatory Skill Activity: Workplace inspection	Required	N/A
Mandatory Skill Activity: Consulting/negotiating with management	Required	N/A

Training objective 1

Understand the structure, purpose and key provisions of the OHS(MI) Act and related legislative instruments

On completion of an accredited training course, HSRs should understand:

- a) the objectives of the OHS(MI) Act and their importance to the health and safety of employees
- b) the duty of care and related provisions as they apply to operators and employees
- c) workplace arrangements including designated work groups, HSRs and HSCs
- d) the distinction between legislation, codes of practice, relevant industry standards and agency policy and their relationship to each other
- e) the duties of manufacturers, repairers, installers and suppliers in the context of the OHS(MI) Act
- f) the links between OHS, workers compensation and rehabilitation of injured workers
- g) the role of trade unions, employee representatives and consultants in dealing with health and safety issues in the context of the OHS(MI) Act
- h) the role of management in relation to the objectives of the OHS(MI) Act.

Learning outcomes

It is expected on completion of this component of the training the HSR will be able to actively and confidently participate in a discussion on the structure, purpose and key provisions of the Act by:

- > describing how the role of the HSR fits into the overall objectives of the OHS(MI) Act
- > discussing how the objectives of the OHS(MI) Act create opportunities for a cooperative consultative relationship between operators and employees, a relationship that values and seeks a preventive approach to health and safety
- > demonstrating a basic understanding of the concept of reasonable practicability in the context of the general duty provisions in Part 2 of the OHS(MI) Act
- > outlining ways the HSR can assist members of the DWG to understand the benefits and limitations of the OHS(MI) Act
- > articulating the larger role that trade unions play in pursuing the rights of all workers in safe and healthy working environments and work practices
- > distinguishing between an employer's accountability and a supervisor's responsibilities under the OHS(MI) Act
- > summarising the difference between codes of practice and legislative instruments, and the relationship they may have with an agency's health and safety policy
- > distinguishing between OHS, workers compensation and rehabilitation and how these differences may relate to their role as a HSR.

Training objective 2

Understand the role, function and powers of a HSR

On completion of an accredited training course, HSRs should:

- a) know the legislative powers given to a HSR
- b) understand the purpose of workplace inspections and investigations
- c) understand the purpose and use of PINs and requirements for consultation
- d) know the procedures for ordering a cessation of work, including the process for consultation with the workplace supervisor
- e) know the provisions and procedures for requesting an investigation, working with an AMSA investigator and for appealing against an investigator's decision
- f) understand the role of consultants and how they can be used.

Learning outcomes

It is expected that on completion of this training component the HSR will be able to actively and confidently participate in a discussion on the role, function and powers of HSRs under the OHS(MI) Act by:

- > summarising the powers, including the limitations of those powers, given to HSRs under various sections of the OHS(MI) Act
- > discussing the difference between an inspection and an investigation, the HSR's powers in relation to each and the purposes each serves in ensuring safety and preventing injury, illness and disease
- > explaining the role of PINs as a means of improving health and safety performance and addressing immediate risks to health and safety
- > outlining the extent of a HSR's powers for ordering a cessation of work, including the consultation requirements included in those powers
- > explaining the various provisions in the OHS(MI) Act for working with an Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) investigator and for appealing against their decisions
- > summarising the entitlements of HSRs to be assisted by consultants and the limitations of this entitlement.

Training objective 3 (full course)

Develop the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the role of a HSR within their DWG

On completion of an accredited training course, HSRs should:

- a) understand the structure and function of HSCs and how they should operate
- b) have developed basic consultation and negotiation skills
- c) understand the basics of OHS risk management within the workplace
- d) be familiar with their own agency's OHS policy
- e) be able to determine which codes of practice apply to their DWG
- f) understand specific health and safety issues and the nature of the common hazards, including psychosocial hazards which may affect their DWG and the process by which the hazards should be eliminated or controlled
- g) know the types of information which must be gathered about accidents and dangerous occurrences
- h) know the types of information under the employer's control that relate to the risks to the health and safety of employees in their DWG and how to access and use this information.

Learning outcomes

It is expected that on completing this training component HSRs will be able to actively and confidently participate in a discussion on the role of the HSR in a DWG by:

- > describing the different roles of the HSR and HSC (micro v. macro – different but complementary), confirming a HSR's entitlement to examine a HSC's records and perform some of the duties of the HSC
- > summarising the importance of basic HSR negotiation and consultation skills and making links to the objectives of the OHS(MI) Act which emphasise resolution through consultation
- > presenting a general understanding of the risk management process and its importance in preventing injuries, illness and disease, and describing their role in that process
- > clarifying the importance of agency policy containing practical procedures which outline how the HSR may most effectively use their powers day to day
- > summarising the work activities undertaken by members of their DWG, the associated hazards (including psychosocial hazards), and the role a risk management process and codes of practice play in controlling those hazards
- > distinguishing between an accident and a dangerous occurrence and the information a HSR should gather about them (what, how, when and why) and how they could obtain this information
- > outlining the types of information the employer might have that could be useful to the HSR's work in representing the OHS interests of their DWG, how a HSR may obtain that information and the limitations in using/disclosing that information, including the employer's rights to limit access to the information.

Training objective 4 (full course)

Gain practical skills for implementing the HSR role in the workplace

On completion of an accredited training course, HSRs should be able to:

- a) represent the health and safety concerns of members of the DWG to supervisors and in consultative forums
- b) investigate complaints made by members of the DWG
- c) inspect a workplace, identify hazards, including psychosocial hazards, and prepare a report of the inspection
- d) consult widely within their DWG on OHS issues
- e) research and prepare a case for consultation and/or negotiation with the operator or management
- f) consult and negotiate with the operator or management on resolving OHS issues
- g) issue a PIN.

Learning outcomes

It is expected that on completing the training the HSR will have participated in discussions on the theory underpinning a number of practical skills. To determine the HSR's ability to put theory into practice trainers should satisfy themselves before training is complete that the HSR can confidently and completely:

- > apply communication and negotiation skills to effectively represent the safety concerns of DWG members at a meeting with supervisors and in larger consultative forums such as HSC meetings. These skills should include, but are not limited to, interacting with other members of the group, leading discussions, collaborating with others to achieve an outcome, questioning, summarising and formalising the next step to a resolution of an issue relating to their DWG.
- > articulate their powers to investigate complaints made by members of the DWG and use communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of the process. These skills should include but are not limited to listening and examining issues related to a complaint.
- > clarify their powers to inspect a workplace, demonstrate their ability to participate in a practical workplace inspection to identify hazards, communicate and consult with employees to obtain supporting information, assess the risks associated with the identified hazards and produce a report that includes proposed solutions based on the hierarchy of controls
- > demonstrate their ability to plan, organise, prepare and present a case for consultation and negotiation with management on an issue relating to a DWG member's concern
- > describe their powers to issue PINs and the limitations of those powers, clarify the consultative requirements of that process and demonstrate their ability to complete a blank PIN to the standard outlined in the HSR handbook.

Training objective 3 (bridging course)

Develop the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the role of a HSR within their DWG

On completion of an accredited training course, HSRs should:

- a) understand the structure and function of HSCs and how they should operate
- b) know the types of information which must be gathered about accidents and dangerous occurrences
- c) know the types of information under the employer's control that relates to the risks to the health and safety of employees in their DWG and how to access and use this information.

Learning outcomes

It is expected that on completing of this training component the HSR will be able to actively and confidently participate in a discussion on the role of the HSR within a DWG by:

- > discussing the different roles of the HSR and HSC (micro v. macro – different but complementary), confirming a HSR's entitlement to examine a HSC's records and perform some of the duties of the HSC
- > summarising basic HSR negotiation, consultation and communication skills linking to the objectives of the OHS(MI) Act which emphasise resolution through consultation
- > presenting a general understanding of the risk management process and its importance in preventing injuries, illness and disease, and describing their role in that process
- > clarifying the importance of agency policy containing practical procedures which outline how the HSR may most effectively use their powers day to day
- > summarising the work activities undertaken by members of their DWG, the hazards associated with those activities and the role a risk management process and codes of practice play in controlling those hazards
- > distinguishing between an accident and a dangerous occurrence and identifying the types of information a HSR should gather about them. i.e. the what, how, when, why and the different ways a HSR could gather this information
- > outlining the different types of information that the employer might have that could be useful to the HSR's work representing the OHS interests of members of the DWG, how a HSR may obtain that information and their limitations in using or disclosing that information including the employer's rights to limit access to the information.

Training objective 4 (bridging course)

Gain practical skills for implementing the HSR role in the workplace

On completion of an accredited training course, HSRs should be able to issue a valid PIN that satisfies the requirements of section 52 of the OHS(MI) Act.

Learning outcome

On completion of the training, it is expected that the HSR will have participated in discussions on the theory underpinning the practical skills HSRs need to effectively represent members of their DWG. To determine the HSR's ability to put theory into practice, trainers should satisfy themselves before the training is complete that the HSR is able to confidently and completely:

- > describe their powers to issue PINs and the limitations of those powers
- > clarify the consultative requirements the HSR must undertake as part of that process
- > demonstrate their ability to complete a blank PIN to the standard outlined in the HSR handbook.

End of document

Health and safety representative training course requirements for the Seacare jurisdiction

2025

