



Health & Safety Reps' Handbook

Guidance for Usdaw H&S Reps

Introduction



Usdaw produced its first edition of the Health and Safety Reps' Handbook in 1989. This 10th edition is being published 34 years later.

Health and safety remains a major issue for Usdaw members and the Union needs active Health and Safety Reps now more than ever.

As a Health and Safety Rep you have legal rights to investigate accidents and potential hazards; to inspect the workplace; to consult with members; and to take up issues on their behalf with management. You are also a vital part of the Usdaw team in your workplace. The things you do as a Health and Safety Rep help to promote the Union and to build union organisation where you work.

However, you do not have to do it all on your own. Usdaw recognises the importance of its Health and Safety Reps and provides support to help you develop the skills you need for the job and to keep you well informed. This Handbook is one of the ways in which the Union is trying to provide the back-up you need. I hope that you find it useful as you go about your task as a Health and Safety Rep.

The Union also provides training for Health and Safety Reps through the Education Department. Information, advice and assistance are available from the Health and Safety Section at Head Office and from Area Organisers and experienced lay officials. Make the most of the facilities the Union provides and together we can make things safer and healthier for all Usdaw members. I wish you well in your task and, on behalf of the Union's Executive Council and myself, extend our thanks and appreciation for the work you do on behalf of the Union and its membership.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paddy Lillis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Paddy Lillis
General Secretary

Contents

Introduction	1
Contents	2
How to Use This Handbook	3
Personal Contact List	5
Trade Unions, Health and Safety and the Law	7
Trade Unions and Health and Safety	7
Health and Safety Law	10
Your Role as a Health and Safety Rep	13
Your Role as a Health and Safety Rep	15
How to Get Started	15
How to Get Some Training	17
How to Get Yourself Organised	18
How to Check Your Employer's Risk Assessments	20
How to Raise Complaints	22
How to Do Inspections	24
How to Deal With Accidents and Near Misses	27
How to Make the Most of the Union	32
How to Use Health and Safety Committees	34
How to Use Health and Safety Inspectors	36
How to Get Results	38
Useful Addresses	41
Further Reading	44



How to Use This Handbook

This Handbook is a basic guide to the Health and Safety Rep's role. It has been written for use by all Health and Safety Reps in Usdaw and in Sata, the specialised section of the Union for white-collar workers.

It does not give detailed information on particular hazards or workplaces because the variety of places where Usdaw members work and the range of hazards they face are too large.

More details on hazards are available on the Usdaw website (www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety) and in *Network* — the bi-monthly activists' magazine — and the H&S monthly newsletters which are sent to your personal email account.

If you have any specific enquiries, contact your Area Organiser or the Health and Safety Section in the Legal Department at Head Office on **0161 413 0927** or email: H&S@usdaw.org.uk

There are four main parts to this Handbook:

Personal Contact List (see Pages 5-6)

Use these pages to build up a list of the people you need to keep in touch with as a Health and Safety Rep.

Trade Unions, Health and Safety and the Law (see Pages 7-14)

This is a short introduction to the trade union approach to health and safety, the law and your rights as a Health and Safety Rep. New reps, in particular, should read it through when they take the job on.

Your Role as a Health and Safety Rep (see Pages 15-40)

The main part of this Handbook is a series of short guides which give practical advice about the job. Don't try to plough your way through them all at once. Refer to each section as and when you need it. New reps should read the first two sections ('How to get started' and 'How to get some training') when they start the job.



Additional Information (see Pages 41-44)

A list of useful addresses and recommended further reading is included at the back of this Handbook.

Data Protection

As a rep you will regularly come across personal data and information about your members. Data Protection is therefore an important aspect of the rep's role and you will need to deal with personal data fairly, securely and confidentially. The Union has produced a booklet and an online short course that provides guidance for you to follow. For more details go to www.usdaw.org.uk/gdprguide

Personal Contact List

Your Name:

Work Address:

One of the first things you should do is fill in as much of this list as you can. Put in telephone numbers where possible so that you can contact people quickly in an emergency. Add any other useful names and addresses as you go along – for example, names and addresses of other Union reps you find helpful.

Usdaw Health and Safety Section:

Tony Whelan

Usdaw Health and Safety Officer

Charlie Dodd

Usdaw Health and Safety Advisor

The Legal Department

Usdaw Head Office

Voyager Building

2 Furness Quay

Salford Quays

Manchester M50 3XZ

Tel: **0161 413 0927**

email: H&S@usdaw.org.uk

web: www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

Convenor

Name:

Address:

Tel:

email:

Supervisor/Manager

Name:

Address:

Tel:

email:

Branch Secretary

Name:

Address:

Tel:

email:

Area Organiser

Name:

Address:

Tel:

email:

Usdaw Training Officer

Name:

Address:

Tel:

email:

Company Health and Safety Manager

Name:

Address:

Tel:

email:

Other Useful Contacts

Name:

Position

Address:

Tel:

Name:

Position

Address:

Tel:

Name:

Position

Address:

Tel:

Trade Unions, Health and Safety and the Law

This part of the Handbook provides brief details of:

- The basic principles that are important to the trade union approach to health and safety.
- Health and safety law.
- Your legal rights as a Health and Safety Rep.

Trade Unions and Health and Safety

Usdaw Health and Safety Reps face a wide range of health and safety problems:

- Work-related upper limb disorders in food processing, packaging, at supermarket checkouts and computer keyboards.
- Toxic substances which cause dermatitis, bronchitis and long-term illness such as cancer.
- Dangerous dusts such as flour in bakeries or asbestos.
- Accidents caused by dangerous machinery or badly run workplaces.
- Deafness caused by high noise levels in places like factories and warehouses.

Plus many, many more.

The problems are many and varied, but the history of trade union struggles to improve working conditions has taught us that there are some basic principles which are central to the trade union approach to all health and safety problems.

Good Trade Union Organisation Is Essential

As a Health and Safety Rep you will have to negotiate to improve conditions in your workplace. To do this successfully you need the backing of strong trade union organisation. You need to play your part to help build that organisation.

Keep in touch with the members you represent. Pass on to them information you collect about the hazards they face. Find out from them which issues concern them most.

Get to know how Usdaw is organised and work within the Union's structure. Close links with other workplace reps, with Branch Officers and with your Area Organiser are very important.

Health and Safety Is a Central Issue

Health and safety is not a separate issue for specialists to dabble in on their own. It is closely linked to a whole range of other trade union issues in the workplace — for example, shift work, bonus schemes, staffing levels, low wages, new machinery, work organisation and discipline.

Health and safety must be an issue for everyone in the Union, not just the Health and Safety Reps. This is another reason for Health and Safety Reps to work closely with other Union members.

Health and safety is one of the main reasons for people to join and stay in the Union. You should work with the other reps and officials to ensure that all potential members join the Union. Make sure that members and non-members know what Usdaw does for their health and safety.



Health and Safety Is Not Just a Workplace Issue

Many of the problems you will have to deal with will be too big to be sorted out in your workplace alone. Usdaw and all other trade unions need to have a political voice so that they can campaign for changes in the law to improve health and safety at work.

Political campaigns in the past have resulted in the Health and Safety at Work Act, the Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations, etc.

Careless Workers Are Not the Problem, Hazardous Workplaces Are

Many accidents and illnesses caused at work are blamed on the workers' own carelessness. Workers are only human and we can all make mistakes. But that is all the more reason to try to prevent accidents by improving the job, the system of work, the machine or the workplace.

To give a couple of examples:

- If a machine has a moving part which can trap and injure someone, no amount of warning signs will stop that happening but a properly fitted guard will.
- If someone trips over a pile of boxes in a corridor, it may well be that they 'weren't watching where they were going' but the accident would not have happened if the boxes had been removed and the corridor kept clear.

It's not only trade unions which argue this point. The Government's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has investigated thousands of accidents and found that carelessness is very rarely the main cause. The HSE says the most common problem is management's failure to provide a safe system of work.

Hazards Should Be Controlled At Source

It is far better to control a hazard by reducing or removing it before it gets to the worker.

Often management will see protective equipment as a cheap and easy solution to a hazard. But there are lots of problems with protective equipment. Awkward or uncomfortable protective equipment makes it difficult to get on with your work; it may not provide protection to some workers because they can't get it to fit properly; it needs to be replaced regularly as it becomes worn or dirty; and there can be supervision or disciplinary problems because people can't or won't wear it.

Our aim must be to adapt the workplace to the worker — not the other way around.

Health and Safety Is Not Just About Accidents

Accidents are often the most obvious problem because of their shock value. But, in fact, there are many more illnesses and deaths caused by health problems at work than by accidents. The problem is that the link between the job and the illness is not obvious.

- Some illnesses take a long time to develop — for example, cancer, bronchitis, noise-induced deafness.

- Those who are most affected often leave their job because of their poor health. It is often difficult to keep track of such early leavers, yet workplace studies of health will fail to spot any problem unless they can also be included.

Many Usdaw and Sata members working in offices and shops will not have serious safety problems but will still face a number of important health problems. Unions must be concerned with all aspects of health, safety and welfare at work — whether it's obvious safety problems like dangerous machinery, long-term health hazards like noise or stress, or welfare issues like the provision of toilets or washrooms.

These principles are central to the trade union approach to health and safety. The Union's attitude is often very different from the employer's. Because of this, it is important that Usdaw Health and Safety Reps are trained in health and safety from the trade union viewpoint. The section on page 18 of this Handbook explains your rights to attend trade union approved courses.

Remember...

Our aim must be to adapt the workplace to the worker — not the other way around.

Health and Safety Law

The Health and Safety At Work Act

The most important law is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. It applies to all workplaces in the country and imposes general duties for health and safety.

Employers have the main responsibilities.

They must:

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their employees.
- Produce a written policy statement explaining how they intend to do this.
- Consult with Union Health and Safety Reps.

They also have responsibilities towards any other people who may use their premises or may be affected by their business.

Employees have duties to:

- Take care not to put themselves and others at risk.
- Co-operate with the employer's arrangements for ensuring health and safety.

The employees' duties are only a very small part of the Act, the main burden of responsibility clearly lies with the employer.

If you are a Sata member with supervisory duties, you may be given some responsibility for the health and safety of people working under your control. If so, you should make sure that your employer provides you with the necessary training and resources to fulfil that responsibility. If you have any difficulties use your Union organisation to bargain for better support.

Other Health and Safety Laws

Since the 1974 Act several Regulations have been passed which spell out in more detail the legal duties in particular situations. Examples include:

- The Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations.
- The Noise at Work Regulations.
- The Pressure Systems Regulations.
- The Electricity at Work Regulations.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations.
- The Display Screen Equipment Regulations.
- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations.

Many of these Regulations have been introduced to meet the requirements of European Community Directives on health and safety.

Health and Safety Reps don't have to be legal experts and you don't need to know all the fine details of these Regulations. It is your employer's responsibility to know which laws apply and to make sure that they are in compliance.

If you ever need more advice on any health and safety law contact your Area Organiser or the Health and Safety Section in the Union's Legal Department at Head Office.

Effective Health and Safety Management

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations are particularly important. They spell out in detail what employers should do to ensure effective control of health and safety.

They apply to all workplaces and all risks whatever the type of work being done.

They state that employers must:

- Identify all significant risks.
- Work out ways of preventing or controlling the risks.
- Arrange for effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of health and safety measures.

- Plan procedures to cope with emergency situations.
- Appoint people to make sure that these plans are carried out.
- Liaise with any other employers who share the same premises or whose workers come into contact with their staff to make sure all risks are covered.
- Inform and train all workers about health and safety.

The purpose of these Regulations is to make sure that employers have a systematic and thorough approach to health and safety. If your employer is complying fully with them, your job as Health and Safety Rep should be a lot more straightforward.

Union Health and Safety Reps

The most useful thing the Health and Safety at Work Act did was to give unions the power to elect Health and Safety Reps. Where Usdaw is recognised by an employer, the employer must consult with the Health and Safety Reps our members elect. The powers of trade union Health and Safety Reps are set out in more detail in the Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations 1977. These Regulations contain the most extensive set of legal rights ever given to union representatives in this country.

Health and Safety Inspectors

The task of enforcing health and safety law is done by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and by local authority Environmental Health Departments. The HSE is a national organisation which includes Factory Inspectors who are responsible for enforcement in manufacturing areas such as the food and chemical industries. In local authorities, Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are responsible for enforcement in shops, offices, warehouses, etc. Most Usdaw members work in sectors for which the EHOs are the enforcing authorities. The authorities have a range of legal powers and can prosecute companies or individual managers or workers who break the law. However:

- Local authority Environmental Health Departments have many other responsibilities apart from health and safety enforcement.
- The number of EHOs has been reduced as a result of local authority funding restraints.
- The HSE also lacks resources.
- Judges have interpreted health and safety law in the courts in ways which do not help the trade union approach.

For all these reasons, legal powers given to EHOs and Factory Inspectors have not been as useful as they should have been. When there is a serious problem they may be able to help, but we can't rely on them. It's better to try to sort things out for yourself.

As Far As Is Reasonably Practicable

Duties on employers under the Health and Safety at Work Act and many of the Regulations are qualified by the phrase 'as far as is reasonably practicable'. In court cases, judges have taken this to mean that the trouble, time and expense of introducing a health and safety improvement have to be considered against any benefits they may bring. If the employer can show that the cost and effort is out of all proportion to the risk involved, they can argue that it is not 'reasonably practicable' to make the improvement. Your opinion of the balance between the cost and the risk may be different from your employer's.

If your employer tries to argue that it is not 'reasonably practicable' to do something about a health and safety problem, discuss it with your members and make up your own minds. Stand your ground on matters you think are important.

We Can't Rely on the Law

This section shows that health and safety law can be important to you as a Health and Safety Rep. However, the law cannot be very specific about the practical steps your employer must take in your particular workplace because it has to cover all workplaces. As a result, it is often vague and needs to be properly interpreted. It may also not be strictly enforced. Even a responsible employer may not do everything you believe they should.

Good trade union organisation is essential to achieve improvements even where the law cannot help.

Your Role As a Health and Safety Rep

Health and Safety Reps have clearly defined legal functions that enable them to act on behalf of members and raise issues with management. These are listed in the Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations 1977 (SRSC). Copies of the Regulations are given to reps on Usdaw training courses or are available from the Health and Safety Section at Head Office.

Appointment of Health and Safety Reps

It is up to the Union to appoint Health and Safety Reps. In Usdaw, they are elected by the members. There is nothing to stop one person being both Shop Steward and Health and Safety Rep if that is what the members want. Where possible the person elected should have at least two years' experience of work with that employer or in a similar workplace.

Employers have no say in who is chosen to be a Health and Safety Rep but the number of Health and Safety Reps may be open to negotiation.

Health and Safety Reps' Functions

- To represent the members in consultation with the employer.
- To investigate potential hazards, complaints by members, dangerous occurrences and accidents.
- To do formal inspections at least once every three months.
- To receive information from Factory Inspectors/EHOs.
- To represent the members in consultation with Factory Inspectors/EHOs.
- To attend meetings of the Safety Committee, if there is one.

So that you can carry out these functions your employer has a legal duty to:

- Consult with Health and Safety Reps, in good time, on any matters affecting the health and safety of members.
- Provide Health and Safety Reps with reasonable facilities and assistance.
- Form a Safety Committee if the Health and Safety Reps request one.
- Give Health and Safety Reps paid time during working hours to carry out their functions in the workplace and to attend trade union training.

Health and Safety Committees

Health and Safety Reps have the right to ask management to set up a joint union-management Health and Safety Committee. The job of the committee is to monitor health and safety in the workplace — not to discuss every individual problem but to make sure that the system for dealing with problems is working properly. All the unions in the workplace must be consulted when the committee is being formed. The committee must be established within three months of the initial request from the Health and Safety Reps.

Demand Your Rights

It's easy enough to find out what your rights are on paper, but you often have to push hard to put them into practice, for example, to get time-off to do your Health and Safety Rep role during working hours. Good trade union organisation and the support of other reps and Union officials are essential.

The next section of this Handbook gives you some guidelines on how you can build trade union organisation on health and safety where you work.

Remember...

If you ever need more advice on any health and safety law contact your Area Organiser or the Health and Safety Section in the Union's Legal Department at Head Office.

Your Role as a Health and Safety Rep

The Health and Safety Rep's role is a very important one for Usdaw. Action by Health and Safety Reps can improve working conditions for all our members.

This part of the Handbook contains a set of guides to help you deal with the Health and Safety Rep's role. There are sections on:

- How to get started.
- How to get some training.
- How to get yourself organised.
- How to check your employer's risk assessments.
- How to raise complaints.
- How to do inspections.
- How to deal with accidents and near misses.
- How to make the most of the Union.
- How to use the Health and Safety Committees.
- How to use Health and Safety Inspectors.
- How to get results.

You don't have to work your way through them one by one but should refer to them as you need them.

How to Get Started

Union Organisation for Health and Safety

Where there is no Union rep, the first step is to get the members to discuss the matter to see if there are any volunteers. In some workplaces, members have elected separate Shop Stewards and Health and Safety Reps. This can help to spread the load, as long as the Health and Safety Reps are actively involved in the Union and are given the backing they need. In other places, either by choice or because there aren't enough volunteers, Shop Stewards act as Health and Safety Reps as well.

If you are taking over from a previous Health and Safety Rep, arrange to talk to them about the job:

- Get them to talk through a couple of examples of things they have dealt with.
- Ask them to hand over copies of documents — for example, records of what they had done, union health and safety publications, Health and Safety Committee minutes, etc.
- Ask them for a list of useful names and addresses.
- Go over the grievance procedure and the employer's health and safety policy with them.

If you are completely on your own and there are no other more experienced reps you can turn to, contact your Area Organiser for advice.

Who Needs to Be Told

Once you become a Health and Safety Rep, a number of people need to be informed:

- Your employer.
- All the members you represent.
- Your Branch Secretary.
- Your Area Organiser.

Usdaw has a standard *Health and Safety Rep Appointment Form (Form HS1)*. Make sure your Branch Secretary/ Area Organiser has filled one in and returned it to the regional office.

All the members you represent need to know who you are and how to get hold of you. Use any facilities you can:

- Posters on Union noticeboards with your name and work department.
- If you have access to copying or duplicating facilities, produce occasional leaflets or newsletters on health and safety.
- Make sure all new starters, including all part-time workers and trainees, are informed who their Health and Safety Reps are.
- Use any intranet or other electronic media provided by your employer.

Start Now

If you are a new Health and Safety Rep you may feel a bit confused. The sections in this Handbook will help you make a start. Go ahead and tackle a couple of minor problems first.

It'll help your confidence and give you an idea of how the system operates where you work.

The Union produces a Health and Safety Rep Resource Pack. The pack consists of:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● TUC Inspection Checklist | ● Stress Questionnaire |
| ● Slips and Trips | ● TUC Hazards Workbook |
| ● HS2 and HS3 (hard copy only) | ● Order Form |
| ● Reps Handbook | ● Hi Viz |
| ● Body Mapping | ● PI Factsheet and FirstCall Card |

Please contact the Health and Safety section if you do not receive your pack.

Go to www.usdaw.org.uk and add/ update your email address to receive email updates from the Union.

Remember...

You don't have to muddle along on your own. If you need help you can contact more experienced reps, the Branch Secretary or Area Organiser. You should also use the health and safety services at Head Office for information and advice.

How to Get Some Training

The Need for Training

Trade union training is important because it gives you the chance to develop the skills you need and to gather valuable information.

It covers areas like:

- The job of the Health and Safety Rep.
- Information on your rights.
- How to do inspections, interview members, write reports, etc.
- Usdaw's policies and organisation.
- Your employer's practices and policies on health and safety.

You are entitled to time off with pay for training. This is one of your rights in the Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations.

Union Approved Training Courses

As you are a trade union rep, your training must deal with issues from the trade union viewpoint. That is why you are entitled to time-off to attend courses run by Usdaw or by the TUC. The first course you should go on, as soon as you can after being elected, is Usdaw's own introductory course. Once you complete it, there are other courses provided by Usdaw or by the TUC Education Service which will help complete your initial training and also keep you up-to-date.

How to Apply

You can apply for the Usdaw course by contacting your Area Organiser or by writing to Usdaw's Education Department at Head Office. It's usually best to apply for a course well in advance so that there is time to arrange your release. If you do have difficulty in getting time-off, get your senior Shop Steward/Branch Secretary/Area Organiser to take up your case.

Training by Your Employer

Your employer has a legal duty to train all employees to make sure that they know how to do their job safely and that they are familiar with the employer's arrangements for health and safety.

As part of this general training programme, the employer may wish to put on a course for Health and Safety Reps to explain the procedures and systems in their workplace.

Any training of this kind provided by the employer is welcome, but is additional to training on Usdaw or TUC courses. It must not be treated as a substitute for trade union training.



How to Get Yourself Organised

Facilities for the Job

If you are taking over the job in a well organised workplace you may have many of the facilities you need. If you don't, you'll need to build up your resources as you go along. The Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations entitle you to 'facilities' from the employer, but what that means in practice depends on what is available where you work and what you and the other Union reps can persuade the employer to make available. Facilities may include:

- Somewhere secure to keep your papers.
- A place for consulting members in private.
- Access to a telephone.
- Access to noticeboards, internal mail, other communications systems and copying facilities in your workplace.
- Access to a PC for doing reports, using your employer's intranet system, etc.
- Use of a quiet area to write letters, read reports, etc, particularly if your workplace is noisy or crowded.

The more of these your employer provides, the more effectively you will be able to do the Health and Safety Rep's role. If your employer has a genuine commitment to health and safety they should give you all the help they can.

Organising Your Own Filing System

One of the problems with being a Union rep is that you soon start to collect all sorts of bits of paper, some of which will be very important and need to be kept where you can find them in the future.

A lockable filing cabinet is the easiest storage space to use. But even if a cabinet is not available, it is important to keep your files in order from the start. Draw up a list of the sorts of information you will be collecting:

- Communication between yourself and your employer (letters, emails, notes of phone calls etc).
- Communication between yourself and other Union members.
- Hazard information sheets on materials and equipment you use.
- Safety Committee minutes.
- Checklists and inspection reports.
- Your employer's written safety policy and safety instructions.
- Union health and safety publications.

Get enough folders to keep them in. When you get a new piece of information, ask yourself whether it belongs in an existing file or whether you need to start a new file for it.

Apart from the fact that it is easier to monitor your own progress with a neat filing system, it also means all the details are available if you ever need to involve the senior Shop Steward/Branch Secretary/Area Organiser on any particular issue, or if you have to pass on the Health and Safety Rep's role to someone else.

Organising Your Time

The Safety Representatives' and Safety Committees' Regulations say you are entitled to time-off during working hours to carry out your role as a Health and Safety Rep. In practice many reps say they have problems persuading the employer to give them enough time:

- It may be that they don't make any allowance in your ordinary job for the extra demands of the Health and Safety Rep's role.
- If you work somewhere like a checkout till or a production line, it may be difficult to leave your post when something urgent has to be attended to.
- If you are having difficulties with time-off take it up with your senior Shop Steward/Branch Secretary/Area Organiser.

You should also keep a diary for important future dates, such as:

- Dates for formal inspections.
- Dates for a Safety Committee meeting if there is one.
- Dates for important Union meetings such as joint Shop Stewards' Committees, branch meetings, etc.
- Reminder dates to check that particular problems have been sorted out within the agreed time limit.

How to Check Your Employer's Risk Assessments

Why Are Risk Assessments Important?

Risk assessments are an essential step in dealing with health and safety problems. Most of the recent Regulations have as a starting point a duty on employers to carry out risk assessments.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require them to assess any important risks arising from their business which may affect employees or other people. Other Regulations, such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations; the Manual Handling Operations Regulations and the Display Screen Equipment Regulations, require them to do particular assessments for particular hazards.

What Is Risk Assessment?

Risk assessment is the systematic examination of the jobs employees do in order to find out what the health and safety risks are and to identify the hazards which cause those risks.

To be systematic, the assessment must cover all staff and all jobs (including part-time workers, temporary staff, cleaning staff, and occasional or unusual jobs such as maintenance or repair work). It must look at what people actually do, rather than what the employer thinks they do.

If the work changes rapidly, or there are workers such as drivers who move around a lot, the assessment should take account of the situations which the workers are likely to encounter.

The employer has a legal duty to consult with the Health and Safety Reps both on the planning of the risk assessment procedure and on the detail of the individual assessments.

Large, multi-site employers often rely on 'generic' risk assessments for common tasks, eg manual handling at checkouts. There may not be a copy of the actual risk assessment at your own workplace but there should still be a written record of the main health and safety points arising from the risk assessment in any manual that is produced for work in that area. The Health and Safety Rep can still demand a copy of the original risk assessment if they need it.

Keeping Records

Employers with five or more employees are required to keep a record of the main points of the assessment. This should include information on:

- The hazards involved.
- The control measures in place.
- The people who are affected.

Health and Safety Reps are entitled to have access to the assessment records.

Why do Risk Assessment?

The Regulations which require risk assessments all make it clear that collecting the information is not enough. As well as identifying hazards, the assessment should be used to develop control measures. When working out what to do employers should:

- Eliminate the risk entirely where possible by altering the way in which the work is done.
- Where this is not possible, find ways to control the risk at source, giving priority to measures which provide the widest protection to the workplace and the majority of the workers.
- Only as a last resort, where no other method of control is possible, provide personal protective equipment for the people exposed to the risk.

Once the assessment has been done, the employer still needs to monitor to make sure that the control measures are introduced and that they are effective. If they do not work, or if other changes in the workplace mean that they are no longer suitable, then the assessment will need to be reviewed.

Risk assessment is not a single one-off exercise. It is part of an ongoing process to manage health and safety effectively by making sure that hazards are being detected and controlled.

Checking Risk Assessments

Remember, as a Health and Safety Rep you are entitled to have copies of records of assessments your employer has done. If you are concerned about a particular health and safety issue where you work:

- Ask your manager for a copy of the relevant risk assessment.
- If there is no assessment raise the fact that there should be one through the appropriate procedures.
- Check the assessment using your experience and knowledge of what actually happens in the workplace.
- Look at what the assessment says about procedures to prevent or control the risks. Are these procedures followed in practice? If not, talk to the members to find out why. Take the matter up with

management to get the assessment reviewed and to develop a more practical procedure.

- Use the information from the assessment record to help you when you are doing your formal health and safety inspections (see page 31).

By law, employers must do risk assessments as part of their responsibility to manage health and safety properly. The information they record should be a very good starting point if you are concerned about a particular health and safety issue where you work.

If you think there is a health and safety problem, use your employer's risk assessment to help you deal with it.

How to Raise Complaints

Spotting the Problem

There are four ways you are likely to spot problems:

- Your own inspections of the workplace.
- Complaints from individual members or groups of members.
- Accidents and near misses.
- Recognising areas where procedures in your employer's risk assessments are not being followed.

Remember...

You have legal rights to investigate any potential hazard, to talk to members and to investigate accidents.

Putting It in Writing

It is a good idea to get details down in writing at an early stage. You need a record for your own purposes — for example, if you need to ask someone else in the Union for help or advice. Also, putting the complaint in writing to your employer means it is less likely to be ignored or forgotten about, particularly where there is a good agreed procedure (see 'How to get results' page 38).

The sort of information to keep includes:

- The date or dates the problem occurred.
- The location.
- Brief description of the problem.
- Date and to whom the complaint was reported.

Usdaw has a *Health and Safety Rep Report Form (Form HS2)*. Copies are available through your Branch Secretary/Area Organiser. Alternatively, your employer may have their own reporting system.

copy of the complaint and date. You should make it clear that you expect the second copy to be returned to you by management once they have filled in the 'reply' section. They should indicate what action they propose to take and when, or why they think no action is necessary.

Use the information on the form to chase up the problem and make sure it is resolved.

23 Your Role as a Health and Safety Rep

How to do Inspections

Always on the Alert

Health and Safety Reps have a legal right to investigate:

- Any potential hazard.
- Complaints from members.
- Accidents, dangerous occurrences, cases of industrial disease.

You also have the right formally to inspect the workplace at least once every three months. If your workplace is particularly hazardous, you may need to do more frequent inspections.

The Formal Health and Safety Inspection

The point of a formal inspection is to give you an opportunity to do a thorough check on the workplace either on your own or jointly with management. It is important to arrange a schedule for inspections.

For example, Health and Safety Reps in a large workplace might arrange to do monthly inspections of particular areas, making sure that all parts of the workplace are done at least four times a year rather than doing one mammoth inspection every three months.

Making the Most of Inspections

To do an inspection properly, you must prepare for it thoroughly in advance and follow up any problems you spot. When you work in a place for some

time it is easy to get used to it and to take some hazards for granted. If possible, it helps to bring 'a fresh pair of eyes' by getting a Health and Safety Rep who does not normally work in that area to do the inspection.

Here are two basic points:

1. Checklists

A checklist is just a list of the points you want to look for on your inspection. You'll get advice on designing checklists on your Usdaw training course. Preparing a checklist beforehand is useful because it makes you sit down and think about all the things you want to look out for. Once you have written your checklist down, file it safely so the next time you do that particular inspection you will have less work to do.

A couple of examples of the sorts of checklist you might use are included on the following two pages. You can use the information recorded in your employer's risk assessments as a starting point for basic checklists.

2. Follow up

When you do find problems during an inspection, follow them up with a written report. You can use the Usdaw *Health and Safety Rep Report Form (Form HS2)* (see 'How to raise complaints' page 22). You will identify small things that can be put right pretty quickly. There will be others that will require further investigation and negotiations with management, so file your copy of the inspection report safely.

Example 1

Fire Safety Checklist	Yes or No	Comments
<i>Before the Tour of Inspection</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the workplace have a fire risk assessment? If so, is there a copy available for inspection? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has there been any major change in the work done, machinery used, etc, since the assessment was done? Keep a note of main fire exits and sites of firefighting appliances indicated in the assessment. 		
<i>During the Tour of Inspection</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all fire exits well marked? Are all escape routes well marked? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all fire exits/escape routes free from obstruction? Do the fire exit doors work properly? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If swing doors are fitted to prevent fire and smoke spreading, are they kept shut? Is the seal around such smoke doors effective? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the fire alarm tested at least once every three months? Are all the fire fighting appliances in the right place? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the members aware of the fire evacuation procedure? When did they last have a practice drill? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there individuals with clear responsibility for taking charge when the alarm goes? Has anyone been trained in proper use of the fire fighting appliances? 		

Example 2

Safety Checklist	Yes or No	Comments
<p><i>Before the Tour of Inspection</i></p> <p>Check through the accident reports to see what type of accident is occurring where and keep a note of the most important ones.</p>		
<p><i>During the Tour of Inspection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the workplace kept clean and tidy? Who is responsible for ensuring good housekeeping? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are walkways, gangways, passages and paths clearly marked and free from obstruction? Who is responsible for cleaning hazards up, for example, spillages likely to cause slips, trips or falls? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a safe means of access provided to all workplaces? If not, what hazards are involved? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are stairs all in good condition? Are materials stacked and stored safely? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any are toxic, flammable or corrosive materials, what extra precautions are taken? Are these precautions adequate? Look at the danger areas identified from the accident reports. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any obvious cause for the accidents? If special regulations do apply, are the legal standards being met? 		

How to Deal With Accidents and Near Misses

Getting Involved

If there is an accident the Health and Safety Rep must be involved. The law gives the Health and Safety Rep a right to be involved for two good reasons:

Prevention

Even if the victim can claim against the employer, no amount of compensation can pay for a death or serious injury.

By identifying the cause of an accident or near miss, you can negotiate improvements to prevent it happening again.

Compensation

If a member is injured they should consider making a claim against the employer's insurance. To start a claim for an injury or an industrial disease, the member needs to phone the FirstCall Usdaw number – **0800 055 6333**. The Union will provide them with a solicitor who can advise on the prospects of a claim and can pursue the claim on their behalf. This free legal service is very important. To find out more about how you can help an injured member please read the Usdaw Legal Plus Reps Handbook.

The information you can provide on the accident and on health and safety procedures in your workplace may be vital evidence which the Usdaw solicitor can use to get the member the compensation they deserve.

All Accidents and Near Misses Are Important

Accidents and near misses are the most obvious sign that something is wrong with health and safety in the workplace. You need to investigate all accidents and near misses even if no-one is seriously injured.

Investigating Near Misses

Your employer must report certain dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority – for example, an explosion or a scaffolding collapse. They should inform you about any reportable incident. Most near misses are not reportable but still need to be investigated. Encourage members to tell you about any near misses and use your investigation powers to find out what happened. If a serious problem is revealed, take the matter up with management using the appropriate procedures.

It's far better to spot a danger and sort it out before someone is injured. Today's near miss could be tomorrow's serious accident.



The Accident Book

Members must understand that all accidents and injuries at work should be reported and recorded. Even a minor injury can develop into something more serious. Failure to report it at the time may make it harder to win compensation. Make sure the members you represent know this.

Members should always check the accuracy of the accident report and keep a copy of it themselves.

- Is the time and date correct?
- Is the brief description of what happened correct?
- Is their injury described correctly?

If the member disagrees with the record, they should ask for it to be changed. If your employer refuses to change it, write a letter to the employer with the member's version of events and keep a copy of the letter.

Sometimes managers may try to refuse to put an entry in the accident book because they do not agree that there has been an accident. They should not do this. If the manager does not agree with the member's version of events, they should still record it in the accident book and then add their own comments at the end.

If the manager refuses to let a member make an entry in the accident book, write a letter to the employer objecting to the refusal and including the details the member wanted to put in the report. Keep a copy of the letter.

As a Health and Safety Rep you have the right to information about accidents. If the member involved in the accident consents, you are entitled to have a copy of their accident book entry. There should be space on the accident book form for them to indicate their consent. If the person involved does not consent to full disclosure, you are still entitled to have anonymised information about the accident. Collect and keep copies of accident reports. By looking back through them you can spot common causes of accidents that might need attention.

Even where accident reports are made online or stored electronically the Health and Safety Rep must be given access to them.

Investigating an Accident

Getting to the Scene

You need to get to the scene as soon as possible after an accident. As the Union official on the spot, the Health and Safety Rep is the vital link between the workplace and the Union for collecting information for both compensation and prevention.


- Members must know how to get hold of you and call you in.
- Get management to agree to call you in as a matter of routine.

On the Scene

Your first priority is to ensure that anyone injured is being cared for and that no-one else is at immediate risk.

Unless it is necessary for rescue or to prevent further danger nothing should be moved until you have made your investigation.

Health and Safety Rep Accident Report Form HS3



Read notes on the back before completing this form.
This report does not imply that the conditions are safe and healthy or that the arrangements for welfare at work are satisfactory in all other respects.

Employer's name and address	Health and Safety Rep's name and address	Name and address of member involved in accident	Time of accident	
			Date of accident	
			Place of accident	
Name and address of any witness to the accident (attach copies of their statements to your report)	Witness name and address 1.	Witness name and address 2.	Witness name and address 3.	Witness name and address 4.
Brief description of what happened (attach a sketch map or photographs of the scene if possible).		The checklists on the back of this form will help you with the following questions: a) What caused the accident? b) What could have been done to prevent the accident? c) Should management have known the accident was likely to happen?		
		Has an Inspector visited? Have you got a copy of the Inspector's report?		

Form HS3 1023



Have a copy of the *Usdaw Accident Investigation Form (Form HS3)* with you. The questions on the back of the form will help you get the basic information you need:

- A brief description of what happened.
- Details of any witnesses.
- Details of the cause of the accident.
- If possible, take photographs of the scene or make a sketch of it to add to your form.
- Interview witnesses as soon as possible after the event and keep their statements safely with your report.

Faulty equipment should not be thrown away but kept in case it needs to be inspected again later.

The *Usdaw Accident Investigation Form (Form HS3)* will help you get down most of the details but you should add to it to meet your needs. Copies are available from your Branch Secretary/Area Organiser. Make sure you get a supply.

After the Accident

The Member

An injured member should apply to the Union for legal help in claiming compensation.

It's easy to start a claim. All they have to do is phone the FirstCall Usdaw number – **0800 055 6333**. The service is a freephone number that operates 24 hours a day. When a member calls they are allocated an Usdaw solicitor who will investigate and will pursue their claim if it is possible to do so. The Usdaw solicitor will need evidence to back any claim up. Your accident investigation report will be very useful to the Union solicitor. Make sure you keep a copy safely as there may be some time between the accident and the solicitor contacting you.

The Union solicitor will also need any other evidence you can give them to show that it was predictable that the accident might happen or to prove that your employer had failed to take proper health and safety precautions.

Accident Book

Look through the information you have on accident reports for details of similar incidents in the past.

Records of Complaints

If any Health and Safety Rep had raised a complaint about the problem which caused the accident, get the written details of their complaint, the date it was made, and details of any response from the management.

Safety Committee Minutes

If the problem had been raised at a previous Health and Safety Committee meeting, get a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

If you have a well-organised filing system and have put complaints in writing, much of this information should be readily available.

Remember...

Good trade union organisation on health and safety not only makes it easier to get things done to improve the workplace but also makes it easier to win compensation claims for individual members if there is an accident.

The Workplace

Look at your report and decide how the accident happened and what can be done to prevent another incident. Too often accidents are blamed on the carelessness of the individual. The main cause is more likely to be the employer's failure to provide a safe system of work, proper supervision or adequate training. Poor maintenance of equipment and machinery, bad housekeeping and hazards like noise, bad light, fumes or dust can also be important.

Concentrate on these issues and keep the accusation of individual carelessness in perspective. If you get these problems sorted out, any human carelessness by a worker will have less serious results.

Spotting unsafe systems of work can be hard, especially if they have been going on for a long time. It helps to discuss your report with other members, particularly other Health and Safety Reps and Shop Stewards.

When you have decided what needs to be done, report it to management and follow it up to get results.

How to Make the Most of the Union

Health and Safety Is Not a Separate Issue

It is impossible to do the job of Health and Safety Rep on your own. You need the support of other members of the Union and you need to make use of the services the Union provides.

The Members

You need the backing of the members you represent to get management to make improvements.

- Make sure all the members know who you are and how to contact you by using posters on noticeboards and any other way you can.
- Talk to members to find out what issues concern them and to get their agreement on what can be done to put things right.
- You need to get the message across to the members and to get them involved.
- Keep them informed of any successes so that they can see that things can be improved with their support.

Other Health and Safety Reps, Shop Stewards, Branch Officers and Area Organisers

Often they can help with information from their own experience. You need them to negotiate the more difficult problems that you can't sort out yourself.

Remember...

It is impossible to do the job of Health and Safety Rep on your own. You need the support of other members of the Union and you need to make use of the services the Union provides.

- Make sure that health and safety issues are being discussed at Shop Stewards' Committees and branch meetings.
- Keep in touch with the other reps and officials to let them know what issues concern your members and what is going on in your workplace.

The Usdaw Education Service

Through its network of Training Officers, Usdaw will give you the training you need to get on with the job – either through Usdaw's own courses or through courses provided by the TUC.



The Usdaw Health and Safety Service

The Health and Safety Section, comprising of Health and Safety Officer and Health and Safety Advisor, is part of the Legal Department at Head Office. The Health and Safety section provides:

- Information and advice on your problems.
- Regular updates on health and safety news in Network, the Union's activists' magazine. If you do not get your own copy of Network contact your Branch Secretary or Area Organiser.

Other Health and Safety Publications.

Regular health and safety news, advice on hazards and a discussion forum for reps on the health and safety section of the Usdaw website www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety

If you are dealing with an issue that Usdaw members in other workplaces should know about, you should contact the Health and Safety Officer. The

information will be passed on through the articles in *Arena/Network* or other publications.

Ushaw Nationally

Ushaw uses its political power to push for changes in the law or to campaign about issues that are important to the members. The main policy-making body of the Union is the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM). Your branch can put propositions on health and safety to the ADM.

You can also alert the Union to issues it should take up at national political level through your contact with Branch Secretaries, Area Organisers and the Health and Safety Officer, or through the other conferences the Union organises for different sections of Usdaw.

When the Union is running a major national campaign on a health and safety issue, make sure you use the campaign materials to get the message across within your workplace.

How to Use Health and Safety Committees

Do You Need a Health and Safety Committee?

If there is already a joint union-management Health and Safety Committee where you work, talk to the other Health and Safety Reps to see whether you all agree it is working properly.

If there isn't a committee, get together with the other reps to decide whether you want to approach management to have one set up.

A well-run committee can provide a useful channel to consult with the employer on general health and safety policies, but it is no substitute for good trade union organisation and effective action by the Health and Safety Reps.

In some workplaces, Health and Safety Committee Meetings may be held as part of a wider forum or consultative council. This is alright provided:

- The Health and Safety Committee has its own clear identity:
 - With its own separate agenda.
 - With enough time to discuss issues properly.

What Should a Health and Safety Committee do?

A Health and Safety Committee's job is to discuss general policy and to keep an eye on the success or failure of health and safety systems in the workplace. It must not become a substitute for Health and Safety Reps getting on with the job themselves. The sort of things it should deal with include:

- Studying accident statistics compiled from the employer's records to spot problem areas.
- Studying health statistics and sickness records to spot possible hazards.
- Keeping an eye on formal inspection reports to monitor progress.
- Reviewing information from Health and Safety Inspectors.
- Reviewing information from other sources such as Government publications, Usdaw publications, newspapers, etc.
- Considering the health and safety aspects of proposed changes in the workplace.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of safety systems and procedures for settling problems.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the employer's health and safety policy.



Making the Health and Safety Committee Work

- Don't let it turn into a 'talking shop' where nothing gets done. Go through previous minutes to find out whether problems are resolved or whether the same issues keep coming up.
- Insist that someone from senior management sits on the committee so that its decisions carry some weight.
- Think about ways in which the Health and Safety Reps on the committee can organise themselves to use it more effectively.
- Set the agenda for the committee. Obviously management has the right to put items on the agenda as well, but make sure that the agenda includes the issues which the Union considers important and that those items get discussed.

- Don't let the agenda get cluttered with minor issues that could be sorted out more quickly by direct negotiation between individual Health and Safety Reps and management.
- Get the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda circulated in advance. If possible get together with the other Health and Safety Reps on the committee beforehand to plan a joint approach.
- Publicise the minutes to the members you represent, particularly items which are of direct interest to them.

Remember...

The legal rights are in the hands of the Health and Safety Reps. A committee is just one of the ways to exercise those rights.

If you don't think the committee is working properly, get together with the other Health and Safety Reps and negotiate to improve it. You don't have to put up with an inefficient committee.

How to Use Health and Safety Inspectors

We Can't Rely on Others to Sort Out Our Problems

It is always best to get on and sort out problems by direct negotiation between Health and Safety Reps and management. Calling in 'experts' from other sources usually delays things and can produce results which you may find are unhelpful.

However, one group of experts that you will probably have to deal with at some time are the Inspectors appointed by the Government to enforce the law. You need to know how you can use them to help you.

Who Are the Health and Safety Inspectors?

The Inspectors that Usdaw members are likely to meet are:

- Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) who work for the local council and have responsibility for shops, restaurants and hotels.
- Factory Inspectors who are employed directly by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and have responsibility for the manufacturing industry.

What Can They do?

Both Factory Inspectors and EHOs have a range of powers they can use to ensure that health and safety laws are obeyed, including taking a company or an individual to court for serious breaches of the law. But, in practice, Health and Safety Reps often find that Inspectors are not able to do much to help. There are a number of reasons for this:

- **Too few Inspectors.** There are simply not enough Factory Inspectors to cover all workplaces. The pressure of work this creates means that they cannot spend much time on any particular problem. Environmental Health Departments are also suffering because of cuts in local authority funding. EHOs also have other responsibilities in addition to health and safety enforcement.
- **The law is inadequate.** The law is often vague or complicated. Because of the way it is worded, Inspectors can find it hard to make a case against an employer stick.



Dealing With Inspectors

Inspectors' Visits

An Inspector might visit to do an inspection or call to investigate a serious accident. You have the legal right to consult with them on the member's behalf. Get management to agree to inform the Health and Safety Reps when an Inspector visits and to provide an opportunity for private discussion between the reps and the Inspector.

You need to know what the Inspector found on their visit and what improvements, if any, are recommended. The law says that the Inspector has a duty to make sure you get this information! If you don't get a copy of the Inspector's report, either from the Inspector or the employer, write to the Inspector and ask for it.

Calling in an Inspector

Legally, you have the right to contact an Inspector and ask them to visit if you are very concerned about a problem.

However, this is something you should only do in extreme circumstances.

Remember:

- It's always better to sort out problems with management yourself and not to involve outside organisations.
- The Inspector might not be able to help.
- Calling in the Inspector without management's agreement may damage relations between the Union and management where you work.

If it is at all possible, Health and Safety Reps should contact their senior Shop Steward/Branch Secretary/Area Organiser before calling in an Inspector. If it is decided that the Inspector should be involved, it's usually best to persuade management to call them rather than for the Union to go ahead on its own.

If you do need to raise a concern with the HSE, there is a 'Concerns and Advice Form for Safety Representatives' on their website: www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/hsrepresentatives.htm

For workplaces where the local authority is the regulator for Health and Safety, eg shops, call centres or warehouses, look up the contact details for the Environmental Health Department and contact them directly.



How to Get Results

Be Methodical

Most of the sections in this Handbook stress the importance of working methodically as a Health and Safety Rep. It really will make the job easier in the long run.

- Put things in writing as early as possible.
- Put requests to management in writing.
- Keep your own copies of important documents, letters, emails, etc.
- File your reports and other paperwork as neatly as the facilities allow.

Decide on Priorities

Tackling health and safety can be an enormous task. You will have to make priorities to achieve what you want. There are two important questions to ask yourself when deciding which things to prioritise.

- **How easily can the problem be resolved?** If the problem is a straightforward one that can be sorted out quickly then go ahead and get it out of the way.
- **How urgent is the problem?** You may have a problem which is so serious that it can't wait until you have got more detailed information or gone into lengthy negotiations.

Remember...

Urgent serious problems must be a priority. If you think you have one, contact the Branch Secretary/Area Organiser straight away. You may also need to contact the Union's Health and Safety Section at Head Office for information.

Develop Contacts

You will need to build contacts to do the job well.

The Union Senior Shop Steward/ Branch Secretary/Area Organiser

These are all key officials in the Union who play an important part in the running of the branch. They will have links with other parts of the Union, have access to senior management and represent the members in industrial relations issues.

It is important that you work closely with them to:

- Get information and advice.
- Get them involved in situations you can't resolve on your own.
- Make health and safety issues an active part of branch business.

Remember that they are often dealing with a great number of problems from a wide range of members and reps. If you think your problem is important it's up to you to make your case and explain it to them properly.

Management

Once you begin to sort out a few problems, you soon find out who the managers with real power are. If there is a Safety Officer where you work, for example, you may find that they have little power to get things done but can be useful for information and advice.

In many organisations the managers with power are the ones who are involved in the grievance procedure. This is because the procedure is intended to settle any disputes as quickly as possible before they cause too much disruption. For many problems, the grievance procedure is the best way to sort things out.

Using Procedures

The Grievance Procedure

Find out about the grievance procedure where you work. Get your own copy of the procedure and ask a more experienced Health and Safety Rep or Shop Steward to explain it to you and discuss how you could best use it for health and safety purposes.

The advantage of a grievance procedure is that it usually sets time limits so that a problem which has not been resolved with one level of management automatically goes up to the next. It also identifies when it is appropriate to involve a senior Union rep or Area Organiser.

Some grievance procedures don't mention Health and Safety Reps so, if you are not also a Shop Steward, you'll have to work closely with your Shop Steward when you put the problem into procedure.

Health and Safety Procedure

In some places there is a separate agreed health and safety procedure.

If your workplace has one, get a copy and ask a more experienced Health and Safety Rep to explain it to you.

A good health and safety procedure should have time limits and stages like a grievance procedure to ensure that problems are not left hanging about without being resolved. If the procedure where you work is not effective, the Union reps can get together and negotiate to improve it.

If the normal grievance procedure is more effective then use it instead where you can.

Immediate Action

There will be problems which are urgent and need to be sorted out quickly. Members cannot be expected to continue to work in very hazardous conditions while the various stages of procedure are exhausted.

In such a case, you will need to be able to bypass the early stages and get the Branch Secretary/Area Organiser and senior management involved at once.



Learning from Experience

This Handbook can only give general advice. The system you develop to deal with your own health and safety problems depends on your workplace, your members, your management and the sorts of hazards you face. As long as you keep in touch with more experienced reps, the Branch Secretary and the Area Organiser, and you make use of the services the Union, provides you won't go far wrong.

Remember...

A good health and safety procedure should have time limits and stages like a grievance procedure to ensure that problems are not left hanging about without being resolved. If the procedure where you work is not effective, the Union reps can get together and negotiate to improve it.

Useful Addresses

Head Office

The Union's Head Office is in Manchester. This is where the Union's General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, National Officers and service departments (including the Health and Safety Section in the Legal Department) are based.

Usdaw Head Office
Voyager Building
2 Furness Quay
Salford Quays
Manchester M50 3XZ

Tel: **0161 224 2804/0161 249 2400**
email: enquiries@usdaw.org.uk
web: www.usdaw.org.uk

Regional Offices

Your Area Organiser is based at an office in a nearby city/town. You can contact an Usdaw Training Officer at the offices marked * or contact the Education Department at Head Office:

South Wales & Western Region

Bristol

Usdaw House, Unit D
Abbey Wood Business Park
Emma Chris Way, Filton
Bristol BS34 7JU

Tel: **0117 931 9730**
email: bristol@usdaw.org.uk

Cardiff*

Unit 10, Oak Tree Court, Mulberry Drive
Cardiff Gate Business Park
Pontprennau
Cardiff CF23 8RS

Tel: **029 2073 1131**
email: cardiff@usdaw.org.uk

Plymouth

First Floor, Rhin House
24 William Prance Road
Plymouth PL6 5WR

Tel: **01752 765930**
email: plymouth@usdaw.org.uk

Eastern Region

Bury St Edmunds

The Anderson Centre
6 Olding Road
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 3TA

Tel: **01284 775700**
email: burystedmunds@usdaw.org.uk

Waltham Cross*

Unit 12/13 Regent Gate
83 High Street
Waltham Cross
Hertfordshire EN8 7AF

Tel: **01992 709280**
email: walthamx@usdaw.org.uk

Midlands Region

Kegworth

3c Market Place
Kegworth
Derby DE74 2EE

Tel: **01509 686900**

email: **kegworth@usdaw.org.uk**

Redditch*

1 Oak Tree Park
Burnt Meadow Road
Moons Moat North
Redditch
Worcestershire B98 9NW

Tel: **01527 406290**

email: **redditch@usdaw.org.uk**

North Eastern Region

Leeds*

Unit 2, Temple Point Business Park
Bullerthorpe Lane
Leeds LS15 9JL

Tel: **0113 232 1320**

email: **leeds@usdaw.org.uk**

Newcastle

2 Hedley Court
Orion Business Park
North Shields
Tyne and Wear NE29 7ST

Tel: **0191 296 5333**

email: **newcastle@usdaw.org.uk**

North West Region

Belfast

First Floor, Unit 2
41 Stockmans Way
Belfast BT9 7ET

Tel: **028 9066 3773**

email: **belfast@usdaw.org.uk**

Warrington*

5 Ibis Court
Centre Park
Warrington WA1 1RL

Tel: **01925 578050**

email: **warrington@usdaw.org.uk**





Southern Region

Andover

The Priory
6a Newbury Street
Andover
Hampshire SP10 1DN

Tel: **01264 321460**
email: **andover@usdaw.org.uk**

Faversham

11 Jubilee Way
Faversham
Kent ME13 8DG

Tel: **01795 532637**
email: **faversham@usdaw.org.uk**

Morden*

Meldrum House
89-91 Middleton Road
Morden
Surrey SM4 6RF

Tel: **020 8687 5950**
email: **morden@usdaw.org.uk**

Scottish Region

Aberdeen

1 Queens Lane North
Aberdeen AB15 4DF

Tel: **01224 652820**
email: **aberdeen@usdaw.org.uk**

Edinburgh

39 York Place
Edinburgh EH1 3HP

Tel: **0131 556 5242/557 9109**
email: **edinburgh@usdaw.org.uk**

Glasgow*

Muirfield
342 Albert Drive
Glasgow G41 5PG

Tel: **0141 427 6561**
email: **glasgow@usdaw.org.uk**

Further Reading

Usdaw

The Union produces health and safety publications on a wide variety of hazards. Contact your Area Organiser or the Health and Safety Section at Head Office for details.

TUC

The TUC produces 'Risks', which is emailed direct to your computer. To sign up go to the TUC website www.tuc.org.uk and register for email alerts.

Labour Research Department (LRD)

LRD publishes two regular magazines – Labour Research and Bargaining Reports. Both contain articles on health and safety.

They also publish pamphlets on various aspects of health and safety. Details from:

LRD, 78 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8HF

Tel: **020 7928 3649**

Hazards Magazine

Hazards is an independent quarterly magazine for trade union Health and Safety Reps.

For subscription details contact:

Hazards, PO Box 4042
Sheffield S8 2DG

Tel: **0114 201 4265**
email: sub@hazards.org
website: www.hazards.org

Public Libraries

Most public libraries in towns and cities will have health and safety publications in their reference section. Visit your local library and ask the librarian for advice.

Websites

- www.usdaw.org.uk/healthandsafety
- www.tuc.org.uk
- www.hse.gov.uk
- www.hazards.org

Notes

Notes



www.usdaw.org.uk

UshawUnion



H&S Reps HB Aug 2023 (Revised Mar 2020)
Stock photography, posed by models

