

THE DEPARTMENTAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ROLE IN HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK

1. Departmental Safety Representatives
 - 1.1 In accordance with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977. Employee Safety Representatives are appointed by recognised trade unions. Within Merton, all shop stewards also act as Health & Safety representatives.
 - 1.2 The functions of the Safety Representatives are as follows:-
 - (a) To investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace.
 - (b) To examine the causes of accidents at the workplace.
 - (c) To investigate complaints by any employee (s)he represents, relating to that employee's health, safety and welfare at work.
 - (d) To make representations to management on items (a) to (c) and general matters effecting the health, safety and welfare at work of employees.
 - (f) To make inspections as indicated below.
 - (g) To represent the employees (s)he was appointed to represent in consultation at the workplace with inspectors of the Enforcing Authority (HSE).
 - (h) To receive information from inspectors, and
 - (i) To attend meetings of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and Departmental Joint Consultation meetings in connection with any of his/her functions.
 - 1.3. The inspections of the workplace, or part of the workplace that Safety Representatives are entitled to make, are as follows:-
 - (a) Every three months, provided that appropriate arrangements have been made.
 - (b) Following consultation with the manager (or his/her representative) of the workplace concerned where, since the last inspection:-
 - (i) there has been a substantial change in the condition of work; or
 - (ii) new information, relevant to the hazards of the workplace concerned, have been published by either the Health and Safety Commission or the Health and Safety Executive.
 - (c) Where there has been a notifiable accident or dangerous occurrence in the workplace or a notifiable disease has been contracted there, provided:
 - (i) it is safe for an inspection to be carried out; and
 - (ii) the interests of one of more of the employees (s)he represents might be involved.
 - 1.4 The appropriate Head of Department, Division or Section (or his/her nominated representative), will therefore provide whatever facilities and assistance the Safety Representative may reasonably require for the purpose of carrying out an inspection and will normally be present during the inspection. The arrangements must, however, include facilities for independent investigation by the Safety Representative and private discussion with the employee (s)he represents, if (s)he so wishes.
 - 1.5 Details of the staffside Safety Representatives appointed by recognised trade unions, can be obtained from the Corporate Personnel & Equalities Division.
 - 1.6 To facilitate arrangements with regard to the functions of Safety Representatives, a specific officer may be designated in respect of each division or section to act as 'the employers representative' referred to in the Regulations. The officer designated will normally be the Head of the Division or Section concerned.
2. Safety Committees

2.1 To ensure adequate consultation on health and safety matters between employee's representatives and members of management, consultation will initially take place at Departmental Consultative Committees. Matters that cannot be adequately resolved in this forum or which have wider implications will be referred to the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Committee which will meet quarterly and be chaired by the Head of Personnel & Equalities. All departments will be represented at this meeting by both officer and trade union representation.

The objectives and terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committees are :

2.2 Objectives

- To keep under review the measures taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of employees.
- To promote co-operation between employers and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.

2.3 Functions

The Departmental Consultative Committee shall have the following functions:-

- a) The study of accident and notifiable diseases, statistics, trends and other relevant information within the department, so that reports can be considered on questions of health and safety of working conditions and practices, together with recommendations for any corrective action that may appear necessary.
- b) Examination of safety audit reports.
- c) Consideration of departmental reports and factual information provided by enforcing inspectors, safety officers or safety representatives.
- d) Assisting in the development of safety rules and safe systems of work in the department.
- e) Review of the effectiveness of arrangements for safety departmental training.
- f) Review of the adequacy of safety and health communications and publicity at workplaces within the department.
- g) Generally promote and investigate health, safety and welfare matters throughout the department.

2.4 The Corporate Health & Safety Committee will deal with matters relating to a - g above that have a corporate impact and strategic and policy matters relating to the whole Council.

2.5 The corporate committee will meet quarterly and will also consider matters referred to it by departmental consultative committees