

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTATION IN BT Q&A's

Why does BT give paid time-off to USR's?

As well as being a legal requirement the company recognises that the people best placed to spot safety hazards in the workplace come from those actually out there doing the job. They are also ideally placed to look at the safety implications of new equipment and ways of working before they are introduced.

I am a manager with a USR in my team. How do I know how much time off to give him/her?

This will always depend to a large extent on the type of environment your people work in so we can't be too prescriptive. The new arrangements set out the functions and the responsibilities of the USR so it should be possible to break it down into separate activities and assess how much time you think will be needed for each. If your USR has already been doing the job for some time he/she will have a good idea of what is required, it is not therefore possible to provide hard and fast guidance, and the level of paid time off allowed will be the result of discussion at local line management level.

If the USR is also the Branch Safety Co-ordinator then you should recognise the need for co-ordination of Health and Safety and the activities of the branch USRs, in such circumstances there will be a requirement for the provision of additional time off to undertake the co-ordinators role as defined in the Health And Safety Consultation in BT Document*. It can be expected that the minimum requirement for this role will be 1 day per week above the normal USR time, although this may be increased subject to the co-ordinators workload and number of safety representatives within the branch.

What meetings are my USR's able to attend ?

There are various types of meetings that a USR is entitled to attend and these are covered in Health And Safety Consultation in BT Document. Where meetings have been scheduled and the USR has given a minimum of 10 working days notice permission to attend will normally be given.

Are there any exceptions to this?

Yes, there may be meetings called that a USR may not be able to control, for example, Site meetings with contractors (pre start meetings), urgent meetings called by the Company. In these circumstances it will be for the local line manager and the USR to work together to minimise any disruption to pre planned work. (for example: in certain cases the

USR may be able to send a substitute – although this may be dependent upon the nature of the meeting).

What if a meeting is held on a four day week?

Under normal circumstances if a meeting is called by the BT Unions, the Unions will be expected to schedule the meetings in due time in order that due notice can be given and arrangements made to release the USR, and wherever possible the scheduling of meetings will take into account bank holiday periods.

What about my productivity ?

Accidents are expensive. If USR's help you eliminate them they can very soon more than pay for themselves. The work a USR does is of direct benefit to the company and to their colleagues and the time they are given to do it is an investment rather than a cost.

How can a USR help me to raise safety awareness in my team?

You should talk to the USR on a regular basis. One good idea may be to invite the USR to your team meetings to give updates on what they are doing and any current topics of interest.

Do I need to undertake workplace inspections with my USR ?

We'd recommend that you accompany the USR on a workplace inspection so you can get a first hand idea of what's involved. If your USR has already been doing the job for some time he/she will have a good idea of what is required. Other people you could talk to would be managers in similar work functions, your Business Unit Safety and HR Managers, and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator in your local union branch.

How do I know who the local USR is?

Your Business Unit Safety Manager will have access to a national USR database. Alternatively your local CWU/Connect branch will be able to tell you.

I am a process owner at national or business unit level. Do I have to consult a USR if I want to change anything?

Yes. It makes good sense to do this because the new process or piece of equipment can be looked at by a representative of the people who will be operating it in the workplace.

How do I know which USR to involve?

Your Business Unit Safety Manager talk to CWU/Connect at the appropriate level and find a USR from the database in the right location and with the right expertise.

As a USR I find a problem. Who do I raise it with?

A USR as any other employee should raise the matter with their line manager excepting those issues found under the work place inspection procedure which should be reported to Monterey. Together, you and the line manager may decide a way forward or you may seek advice from your Branch or from the appropriate Business Unit Safety Manager.

Can a Health and Safety Committee be set up to cover a single site?

Yes, if it is agreed by the LoB and the BT Unions at LoB or national level.

*Heath And Safety Consultation in BT Document.

This can be found on HR intranet, under Safety , <http://btintra/> *****