

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS IN BT**

### **Statement of Intent :**

BT and the employee representative organisations intend to work as partners in promoting the highest standards of health and safety and will seek to secure the commitment of all our people to this aim.

### **Guiding Principles :**

- The company and the BT Unions recognise the important role played by Union Safety Representatives (USRs) in the workplace. They will be entitled to express their views to the Company through the formal mechanisms set out in this agreement and will also be encouraged to participate in planning and review processes where the health and safety of BT People and others may be affected by the company's activities.
- USRs will be given suitable and sufficient training, facilities and support enabling them to fulfil their role in a competent and effective manner.
- Appropriate structures will be established to ensure timely and effective consultation on issues with health and safety implications.
- Both the company and the BT Unions are committed to resolving any disputes before any recourse to outside agencies using the protocols set out in this agreement.

### **Output Measures :**

The register of safety representatives will be established and maintained.

Managers of all newly appointed USRs will receive an information pack.

All newly appointed USRs will attend Course T15138 within 6 months of appointment.

No disputes on health and safety issues will normally need to be escalated to external tribunals or enforcement authorities until all internal processes have been exhausted.

### **Reference Documents :**

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977. HSC guidance, third edition 1996.

Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1992

### **Feedback :**

Comments on this policy and associated procedures and guidelines should be directed to the BT Group Safety Advisor ([groupsafety@bt.com](mailto:groupsafety@bt.com)).

This document will be jointly reviewed by BT and the BT Unions after 12 months.

**Scope :**

This agreement applies to all UK-based employees of BT plc.

## **Roles and Responsibilities :**

CWU and Connect at the appropriate level will be responsible for the appointment of representatives to Health and Safety Committees and Working Groups.

CWU and Connect Branches will be responsible for the appointment and accreditation of USR's and Health and Safety Co-ordinators.

Line Managers will be responsible for :

- Agreeing the appropriate allocation of facilities, including paid time off for USR's
- Arranging for newly-appointed USR's to receive the necessary formal training
- Management of USR's, including authorisation of ad hoc time off
- Career development of USR's using established people management and development policies and processes
- Nominating the USR to attend BT training course T15138

Line HR Managers will be responsible for advising line managers on all aspects of the accreditation and facilities allocation process in accordance with the guidelines laid down in this document and attached appendices

Business Unit Safety Managers will be responsible for advising Line HR and line managers on the technical/safety aspects of this agreement.

## **Procedure and Guidance**

This section deals with :

- i) The USR Central Database**
- ii) Appointment and Accreditation of USRs**
- iii) Facilities Allocation Process and Guidelines**
- iv) Training for USRs**
- v) Consultative Process**
- vi) Disputes Resolution Process**
- vii) Health and Safety Committee Structure**

### **i) The USR Central Database**

A database will be established to enable union branches and local managers to facilitate identification of the nominated representative for a particular area.

The database will initially hold the following information :

- Name
- OUC

- EIN
- Male / Female
- E-Mail Address
- Telephone Number
- Union Branch [and name of safety co-ordinator]
- Training details
- Work / Specialist areas covered
- Buildings covered
- Managers OUC

The database will also allow CWU and Connect to quickly identify USRs who hold particular skills or experience when for example a project, or a proposed change of working practice requires USR input.

This list is not exhaustive and it may well become necessary to include additional information once the data base comes into general use.

The database will be maintained on easily accessible software and will be available to management and the unions at every level.

Management and upkeep of the database will be via a single central point.

## **ii) Appointment and Accreditation of USRs**

Union Branches are responsible for the appointment of USRs.

The completed Accreditation Form together with a courtesy letter is then sent by the branch to the line manager of the USR. An example courtesey letter is included at Appendix 1. The Accreditation Form is included at Appendix 2 together with a worked example at Appendix 2A. It is important that the correct form is used as it includes all the information necessary for the central database. The courtesey letter includes the branch's initial estimate of the time required for the USR's scheduled activities.

The Line Manager authorises the form for inclusion on the database and forwards it to the central database manager

Upon receipt the database manager will enter all details onto the database and send an information pack to the line manager of the USR. The pack would include :

- The completed Accreditation Form
- A joint letter from BT Senior management and the CWU/Connect stating the positive benefits of having a USR on the workgroup
- An explanation of this policy and the role of the USR

The line manager following consultation with the HR Manager would then arrange a meeting with the USR to discuss the appropriate facilities allocation. Once these discussions are concluded and the allocation is agreed the line manager sends a

confirmation to the USR with a copy to the Branch Secretary/Co-Ordinator (example at Appendix 3).

In order to update any changes an annual accreditation meeting will take place between the USR and his/her line manager.

### **iii) Paid Time Off and Facilities Allocation Process and Guidelines**

The appropriate amount of paid time off (as defined in the SRSC Regulations) for a USR to discharge his/her functions will vary depending on the size of the area covered, environment, number of employees and nature of the work involved. 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.

Travelling arrangements and costs, subject to normal BT policy, including the use of Company vehicles will be met.

All USR's will be expected to keep a diary of their activities which should be made available to their manager on request.

The credential form will detail the areas covered by the USR in question. **When discussing the allocation of paid time off managers must take account of and allow a reasonable amount of paid time off for the following :**

#### ***Workplace and Site Inspections***

The USR will provide a draft schedule of inspections together with an estimate of the time required. Every effort must be made to allow inspections to take place on the agreed dates but where it is necessary to vary them for example for urgent operational reasons this should be done following discussion with the USR involved and should be re-scheduled as soon as reasonably practicable after the original date. Wherever possible inspections should be jointly undertaken with the appropriate manager.

#### ***Follow-up and Administration***

Managers must allow a reasonable amount of time for USRs to take any necessary action following an inspection, e.g. writing up reports and following-up actions.

#### ***Study Time***

USRs will need to keep abreast of current developments, changes in legislation/company working practices etc., and should be allowed a reasonable level of time for reading and study.

Managers should also be prepared to allow additional ad hoc time off for the following USR functions :

### ***Accident/Incident Investigation***

USRs must be allowed reasonable paid time off to investigate accidents and incidents in the workplace. Investigations should take place ideally as soon as possible after the accident or incident has taken place, and time off will not be unreasonably refused particularly where the incident is serious or there is a possibility of recurrence. Reportable incidents should be the subject of a joint investigation with the USR and the manager concerned.

### ***Trials and Projects***

USRs may from time to time be called on to participate in trials of new equipment and/or working practices. Requests will normally come from BT Group or the appropriate LoB Safety or senior operational management. When requests are received a reasonable allocation of paid time off should be agreed with the originator and with the USR concerned.

### ***USR Forums and Networking***

USRs must be allowed appropriate time off to network and discuss common problems etc. at Branch, Regional, where appropriate, and LoB/Business Unit level. Individual LoB's/Business Units will agree the detailed arrangements with the BT Unions and advise operational managers accordingly.

### **Health and Safety Co-ordinators**

It is recognised that there is a need for co-ordination of Health and Safety and the activities of USRs. It is agreed that one USR per Branch be allowed an additional allocation of time off for the following activities :

- *Acting as a single point of contact for local management on Health and Safety issues*
- *Co-ordination of accident investigations and providing a single point of contact for the ARG*
- *Allocation of USR responsibilities within the Branch*
- *Managing change and the succession planning of USRs*
- *Ad hoc projects e.g. European Health and Safety Week*

The appropriate level of additional paid time off will vary according to local factors such as size, environment and types of work covered.

Additional facilities for above Branch co-ordination will be given where appropriate.

### **Facilities Other Than Paid Time Off**

#### ***Administrative Facilities***

Where a USR does not already have access to administrative facilities, the USRs line manager should arrange for the access to a PC, desk, filing cabinet or a lockable drawer and a telephone. As the BT intranet is now the preferred medium for communicating Health and Safety information within the company managers should ensure that all USRs have access subject to BT policy on internet, intranet and e-mail usage at the place where they would normally carry out their USR role.

### ***Access to Records and Information***

USR's will be allowed access to all relevant Health and Safety, and building information e.g. Asbestos Register. Where there is any doubt about the eligibility of a particular USR to receive any requested information the matter should be referred to BT Group Employee Relations or to the relevant LoB Safety Professional.

## **iv) Training for USRs**

### **Training For Newly-Appointed USRs**

Managers of newly-appointed USR's should arrange for them to attend the 5 day training course, number T15138 which is jointly run by BT and CWU tutors. This should take place as soon as possible and must be completed within 6 months of initial appointment. USRs should also complete the three CWU/TUC courses, Health and Safety parts 1, 2 and 3, or recognised alternative courses, ideally within 2 years of their initial appointment.

USR's should attend further specialist courses as necessary. Individual USRs should discuss their ongoing training requirements, including refresher training with their manager as part of their 1:1 reviews.

### **Health and Safety co-ordinators and Experienced USRs**

Health and Safety co-ordinators should attend the Occupational Health and Safety Course (IOSH) which is run by CWU / TUC. This course may also be attended by experienced USR's for development purposes.

### **Higher Qualifications**

Very experienced USRs wishing to develop their skills further may also be given paid time off to attend higher education courses such as the NEBOSH or equivalent NVQ courses where agreed with their line manager as part of their Personal Development Plan.

Paid leave and Travelling and Subsistence subject to the normal BT policy will be allowed for all approved Health and Safety Courses.

## **v) Consultative Process**

The BT Unions must be invited to comment on any proposed revision of health and safety related policies or procedures. The company will have due regard to any comments and recommendations made. The disputes resolution process will be used in cases of disagreement.

Technical Specialists and Process Owners are obliged to consult with the BT Unions in sufficient time to allow the Unions to comment where changes proposed have an impact on the health and safety of their members.

Accident Investigations will be undertaken on notification of an accident and any recommendations will be made to the Company in writing. The accident investigation will wherever possible be conducted jointly between the Line Manager and the USR.

Any trends identified by health and safety co-ordinators as a result of accident investigations or inspections will be notified in writing to an appropriate BT Manager or the LoB Safety Professional.

When reviewing technical standards or safety policy, BT Unions will endeavour to allocate the work to USRs with relevant experience of the issues under consideration.

The views of the nominated USRs in BT buildings should be sought and taken account of before work likely to affect health and safety commences. Local managers will have due regard to views expressed and will continue to consult with the USRs throughout the duration of the work.

A record should be kept of the name(s) of USRs consulted.

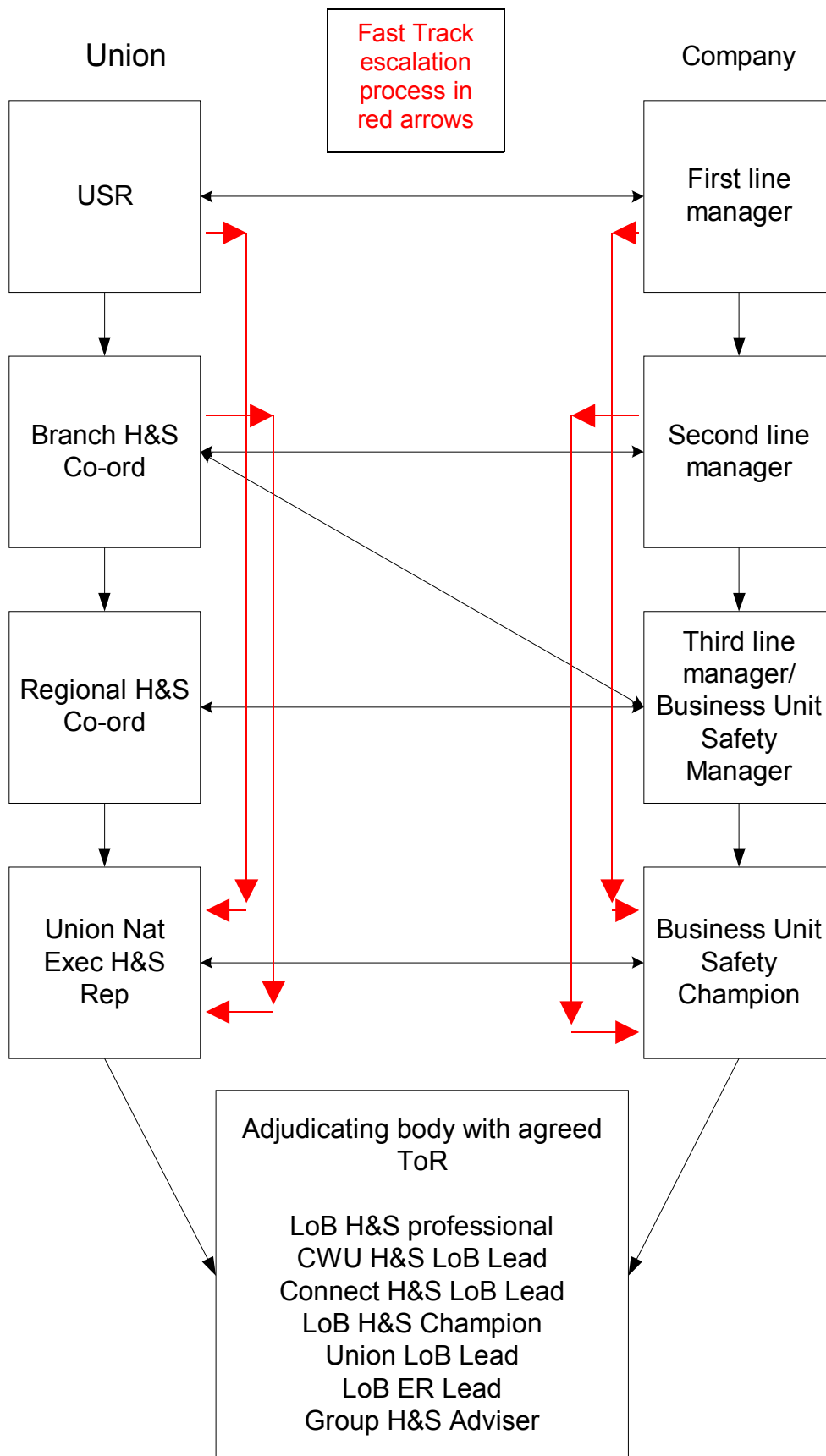
Whenever BT or the Unions propose to issue any notices or general communications regarding health and safety they will whenever possible and practical supply the other with an advance draft copy.

#### **vi) Disputes Resolution Process**

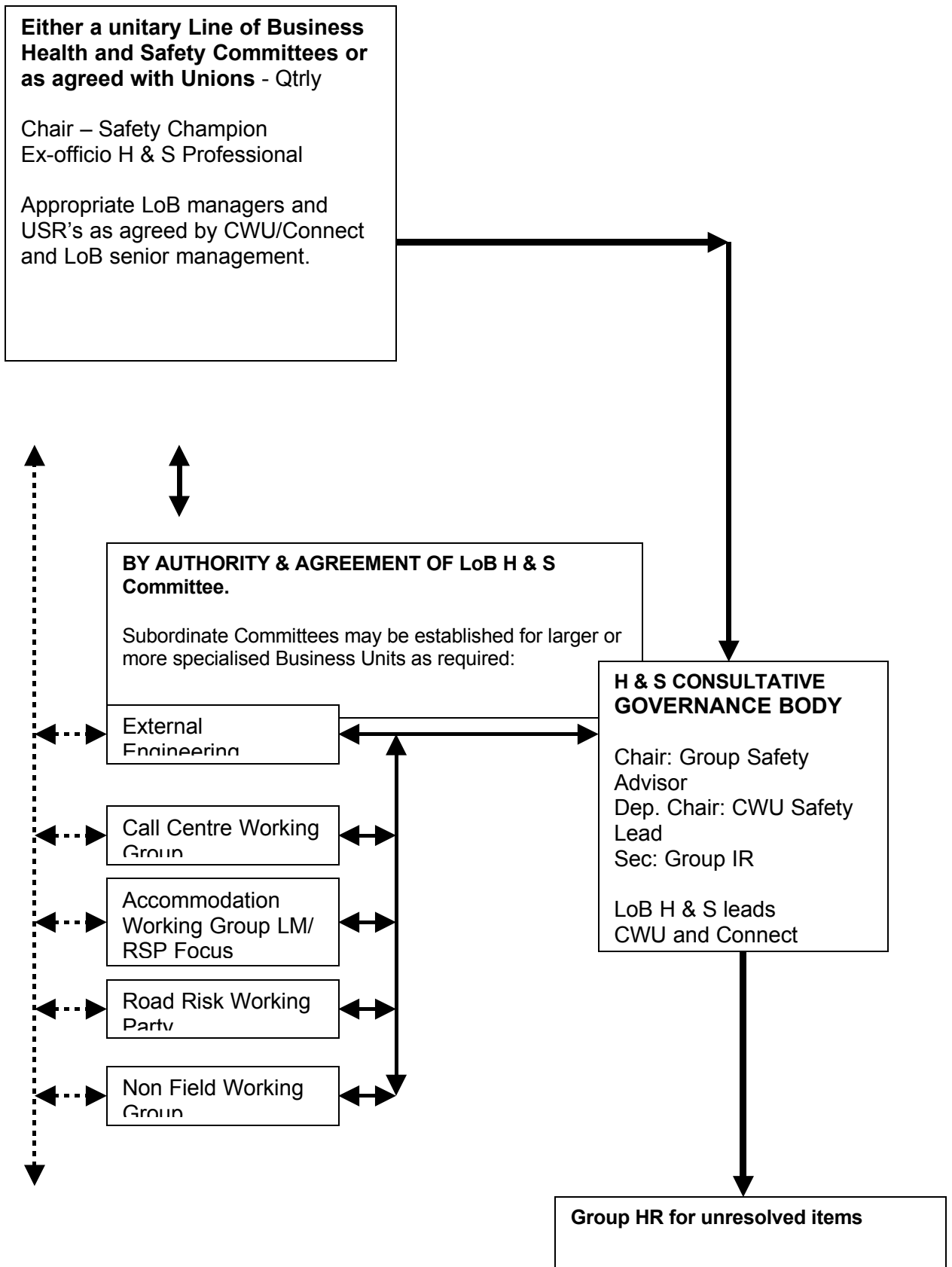
(see process chart below)

1. BT and the Unions are committed to a joint approach to health and safety and thus recognise that a dispute is in neither party's interest. Where a difference of opinion occurs then it is incumbent on those in the early stages of the process to resolve the situation without the need to fully use this process.
2. An escalation in the process will occur at a maximum of 10 days after a dispute is recognised by either party and is triggered when either party requests assistance.
3. At any stage by mutual agreement, the clock can be stopped in order to try and facilitate a resolution before escalation.
4. A record of disputes and escalation will be kept.
5. In matters of particular urgency or seriousness (for example if there is a significant and imminent risk of serious injury or fatality) the escalation process should be Fast Tracked. The issue should be referred immediately, from any level, to the Union Nat Exec H&S Rep and the Business Unit Safety Champion.





**vii) Health and Safety Committee Structure**



**APPENDIX 1**

**LETTER OF ACCREDITATION FOR UNION SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES**

Dear (Line manager of appointed USR)

This is to certify that .....(include name and OUC)

was nominated by .....Branch as a Union Safety Representative.

He/she will cover the following work areas

The anticipated scheduled time required to undertake these activities is  
.....

I would be grateful for confirmation once his/her facilities are finalised.

Date .....

Signed .....  
Branch Secretary

**APPENDIX 2**

**Union Safety Representatives Accreditation Form**

<b>Union Safety Representative</b>	<b>Safety Co Ordinator</b>
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**Name .....**

**OUC..... EIN..... Male/Female (*delete as applicable*)**

**e-Mail Address.....**

**Contact Number .....**

**Work Area..... (*BT job title and LoB*)**

**Specialist Safety Areas.....**

**Building(s) / Workplace(s) inspections**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Training Record**

<b>Joint Basic Safety</b>		<b>Stage 1 Health &amp; Safety</b>		<b>Stage 2 Health &amp; Safety</b>	
<b>Stage 3 Health &amp; Safety</b>		<b>Occupational Health &amp; Safety</b>		<b>Refresher Course</b>	

**Additional Courses (Please state)**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Union Branch :** .....



APPENDIX 2A

**Union Safety Representatives Accreditation Form**

Union Safety Representative <b>YES</b>	Safety Co Ordinator <b>no</b>
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Name .....**A.N.OTHER**.....

OUC.....**ABC 321**..... EIN...**12345678**..... Male/Female...**FEMALE**...

e-Mail Address.....**a.other@bt.com**.....

Contact Number .....**07802 123 4567**.....

Work Area.....**Customer Service Coach**.....(Retail) .....

Specialist Safety Areas.....**ASBESTOS** .....**FIRE PRECAUTIONS**.....

**Building(s) / Workplace(s) inspections**

London ATE .....**London Telephone House (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Floors)**

**Various External Customer Service Work Areas**.....

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Training Record**

Joint Basic	<b>Completed</b> <b>12/04/99</b>	Stage 1	<b>Completed</b> <b>21/06/00</b>	Stage 2	
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Safety		Health & Safety		Health & Safety	
Stage 3 Health & Safety		Occupational Health & Safety		Refresher Course	

**Additional Courses (Please state)**

.....Platform Elevator No 4 course.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Union Branch :** .....London Central CWU .....

**Noted by Line Manager and authorised for inclusion on the USR Central Database**

.....J Smith.....  
 signed date

**Managers Name**.....J Smith.....OUC ...ABC 1.2.....



**APPENDIX 3**

**CONFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION AS A UNION SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE**

Dear (USR)

Following our recent meeting this is to confirm that that you have been allocated the following facilities in order to discharge your role as a Union Safety Representative / Safety Co-ordinator :

Paid time off for scheduled inspections in accordance with the information supplied.....

I look forward to working with you over the coming year. Please remember that you should talk to me first before leaving your normal place of work to carry out your USR duties. You should also keep a record of your time spent on USR activities which I may occasionally want to see.

Please sign and return one copy of this letter to indicate acceptance.

Line Manager.....

Signed.....  
USR

**APPENDIX 4**

**FACILITIES DIARY FORM FOR USR/SAFETY CO-ORDINATOR**

**Name.....USR/Co-Ordinator OUC.....**

**CWU/Connect\* Branch..... (\*delete as appropriate)**

*Period Covered*

**From.....to.....**

		Scheduled Activity				Unscheduled Activity			
		Time		Time		Time		Time	
Day	Date	From	To	Activity	Total	From	To	Activity	Total

<b>Total time in the period</b>					<b>Total time in the period</b>				

**Signed.....USR/Co-Ordinator**

**Notes :** Enter total time spent, including travelling where appropriate rounded to the nearest 0.5 hours in the **Total** columns

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AIRG = Accident and Incident Reporting Group (0800 671345)

CWU = Communication Workers Union

IOSH = Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

LoB = Lines of Business

NEBOSH = National Examining Board for Occupational Safety and Health

NVQ = National Vocational Qualification

USR = Union Safety Representative