

Three Orientations to Worker OHS Representation

Dimensions of Representation	Technical Representation	Political Activism	Knowledge Activism
Relations with Management On/Off Committee	Cooperation and Trust Accept Management Rationale	Adversarial, Limited Trust, Frequent Challenges to management claims, independent requests	Strategic Targeted Cooperation, Limited Trust, Will Challenge with Evidence and Alternatives
Role and Objectives of Worker Representative	Monitoring and Inspection, Assure Minimal Compliance, Small scale/low cost intervention, Manage worker behaviour	Advocate, Organize, Focus on reacting to workers' concerns, finding hidden hazards, defending workers; willingness to take on large issues	Advocate, Inspect, Negotiate, Organize, Educate, Research ; long and short term goals, large scale issues.
Relations with Workers	Interact during inspections, workers as problems, often exercise authority over workers	Strong ties, frequent interaction, organize collective action	Strong ties, frequent interaction, organize collective action, educate workers.
Level, Intensity, Type and Breadth of knowledge	Shallow understanding of hazards limited to personal/occupational experience and management provided information; limited political knowledge	Deeper knowledge of hazards and underlying sources grounded in personal experience and interaction with workers; basic political insights; knowledge of limits of OHS law.	Practical and Science based knowledge of hazards and effects; Ability to do research (literature searches, hazard mapping, etc.) and capacity to understand and organized findings; good knowledge of law; political insights.
Source and Strategic Use of Knowledge	Knowledge is not used strategically or tactically; no attempt to access independent information	Use personal experience and worker accounts. common sense and logic are key.	Use Research to challenge management claims, develop arguments and costed solutions, to build worker support for action.