5. ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

The following action sequence is proposed whereby health and safety issues can be resolved in a cooperative manner.

These procedures should be read and understood to comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and in no way override the rights and obligations of elected Health and Safety Representatives under the relevant legislation. Using the steps outlined, the majority of safety issues should be capable of immediate and preferably local resolution using line management and stopping at Step 3.

**Step 1.** The elected Health and Safety Representative/Employee identifies a safety issue or problem in his/her designated work group. Note that the matter may have been referred initially to the representative by another staff member or Health and Safety Representative from another work group.

**Step 2.** The Health and Safety Representative/Employee brings the matter to the attention of the supervisor of the work area involved by the use of an 'Incident Report Form (S3)'. The representative may also seek advice from, and request the involvement of either local or EHS Unit Environment, Health and Safety Officers. The supervisor of the work area may also seek advice from the EHS Unit upon receipt of the Incident Report Form (S3).

**Step 3.** If, within 5 working days or less, agreement can be reached between the parties on the means to deal with the concerns raised, the matter is then regarded as satisfactorily resolved at the local level. Satisfactory resolution would include immediate settlement of this and any related concerns as well as an agreed plan and timetable for future action if immediate action is not possible.

**Step 4.** If the issue cannot satisfactorily resolved at the local level the representative should refer the issue involved to the head of department. At this stage, the Health and Safety Representative should formally advise the EHS Unit.

**Step 5.** The head of department, representative and a member of EHS Unit then engage in an attempt to reach agreement in a satisfactory resolution of the issue within 5 working days. If the head of department is not able to take part, for some reason, (and this would be seen as an exceptional instance) an appropriate nominee with the delegated authority to commit the department to any consequential undertaking may be nominated. Again, satisfactory resolution includes immediate settlement or an agreed plan of future action.

**Step 6.** If no satisfactory resolution can be reached at Step 5 that resolves the issue, then the Health and Safety Representative should further investigate the issuance of a formal Provisional Improvement Notice as defined in OHS Act section 33.

**Step 7.** The employee(s) are to be informed of the agreed corrective action and timeframe.
Immediate Safety Hazards

However, there may be circumstances where a definite and immediate safety hazard is perceived, and the issue is considered urgent and serious. In this case, the Health and Safety Representatives will inform the supervisor of the area who should call an immediate halt to the work whilst the issue is investigated.

In the event the supervisor fails to agree about the degree of risk present or the supervisor is not available, the Health and Safety Representative will direct affected employees to withdraw from the alleged hazard having regard to the health and safety of others and will then inform the appropriate manager of the actions that have been taken pending a full investigation. The Health and Safety Representative will immediately inform the EHS Unit of the action taken and the sequence of events listed above will start at Step 4.

Work will not resume until it has been agreed that the hazard has been controlled and no longer presents an unacceptable risk to the safety and health of employees. Alternative duties may be found for those members of staff affected, but no pay will be lost in the event of a demonstrated safety hazard having been detected.

A written report of the situation and the actions taken should be prepared by the Area Supervisor, and where appropriate the Health and Safety Representative, for the Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the Environment Health and Safety Unit.

Melbourne University’s OHS Issue Resolution Procedure website: