5. ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

The following action sequence is proposed whereby health and safety issues can be resolved:

The elected Health and Safety Representative (Lisa Mifsud ext. 47887) identifies a safety issue or problem in his/her designated work group. Note that another staff member may have referred the matter initially to the representative.

The Health and Safety Representative brings the matter to the attention of the supervisor of the work area involved by the use of a "Notice of Safety Incident form" (General Office). Advice may be sought from the Risk Management Office (RMO) in doing this.

If, within 5 working days or less, an agreement can be reached on the means to deal with the concerns raised, the matter is then regarded as satisfactorily resolved at the local level. An agreed plan and timetable for future action can be arranged if immediate action is not possible.

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 RMO. The head of department, representative and a member of RMO then engage in an attempt to reach agreement in a satisfactory resolution of the issue within 5 working days. 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.

These procedures should be read and understood to comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act and in no way override the rights and obligations of elected Health and Safety Representatives under the relevant legislation.

Immediate Safety Hazards

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.

If the supervisor disagrees 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 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 RMO of the action taken and the sequence of events listed above will start at stage 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. 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 & Safety Committee and the Risk Management Office.

Melbourne University’s OHS Issue Resolution Procedure website: