

Worker engagement, participation and representation: Key principles

The **Health and Safety at Work Act 2015** (HSWA) says all businesses – known as **PCBUs**, or **Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking** – must give workers opportunities to engage and participate in workplace health and safety (H&S).

The benefits: When all levels of a forestry operation share information, concerns and ideas we make better H&S decisions that keep us all safe – and more productive.

Engagement – Information is shared, workers are involved in H&S issues and decisions, given time to think and talk about concerns, their views considered, and businesses (PCBUs) feed back on outcomes.

Workers must be engaged when PCBUs are:

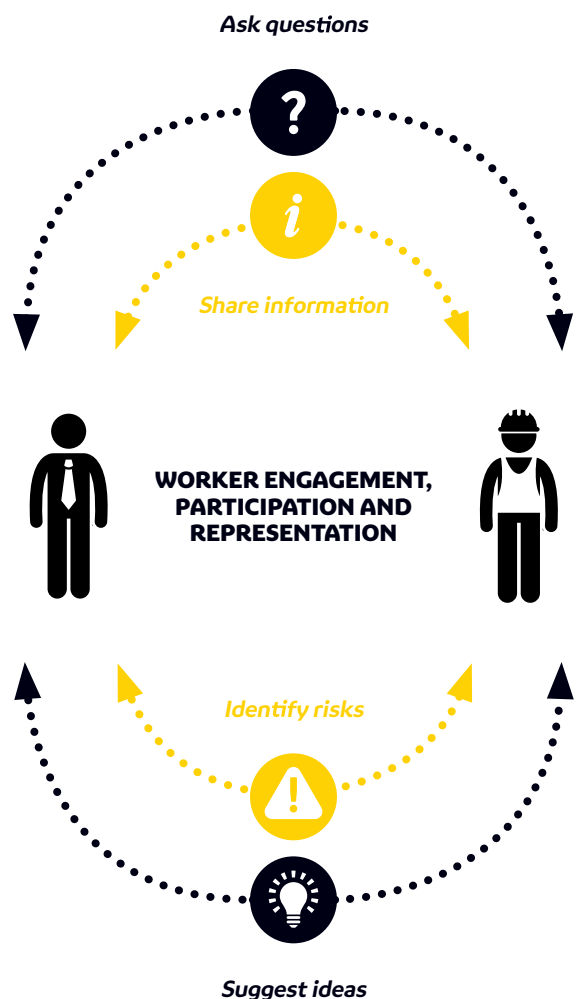
- ▶ identifying hazards, assessing safety risks and how to eliminate or minimise them
- ▶ deciding what things workers need to stay safe and healthy
- ▶ considering changes that may affect H&S
- ▶ making decisions about:
 - ▷ worker engagement
 - ▷ monitoring worker health and workplace conditions
 - ▷ giving workers information and training
 - ▷ resolving any workplace H&S issues
- ▶ organising how workers participate, including deciding on work groups.

Participation – All businesses must give workers reasonable opportunities to participate in improving health and safety.

What are considered **reasonable opportunities** in a workplace takes into account:

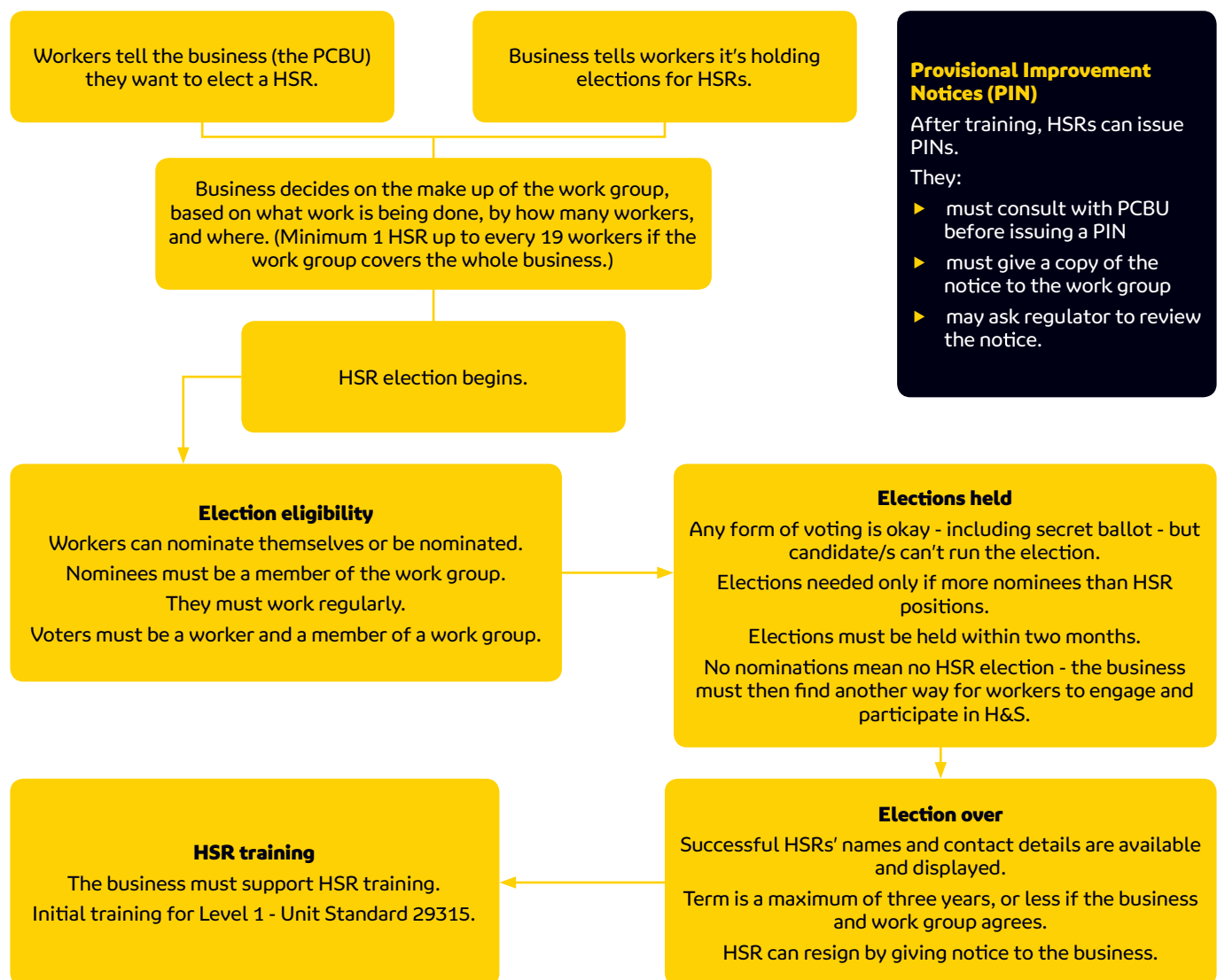
- ▶ number of employees
- ▶ number of workplaces, and how far apart
- ▶ number of H&S risks, and the risk level
- ▶ the work that's done, and how it's arranged and managed
- ▶ how workers are employed or contracted (regular or temporary workers)
- ▶ how willing workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) are to help develop ways workers can participate
- ▶ the duty to act in good faith – under Section 4, Employment Relations Act 2000.

How workers are engaged and participate is up to each business – the important thing is that it's effective. Electing HSRs and setting up Health and Safety Committees (HSCs) are two ways – see the next page for more detail.



Representation – How to elect Health and Safety Representatives and set up a Health and Safety Committee. This flowchart shows the process of setting up each under the new law. The Act does not make H&S Reps or committees mandatory for businesses. Businesses will only be required to initiate an election for representatives or establish a committee where workers request them.

Worker Representation



Health and Safety Committee

