

Your first workplace inspection – 10 points

You do **not** have to have any experience, nor have attended any course to conduct your first workplace inspection. It can be done as soon as you are appointed by UCU as a health & safety representative.

1. Make sure that your employer has been informed in writing that you have been appointed as a UCU health and safety representative, and that the group or groups of employees you represent (your constituency) has been given to the employer in the notification. The branch or LA secretary should have done this.
2. Give your employer reasonable notice in writing that you intend to conduct a workplace inspection of those areas of the workplace where the people you represent work or pass during their working day. Your authority to do this is under Regulation 4(1)(e) and Regulation 5 of the Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977.
3. Your employer (or their representative) does not:
 - have to agree that you can do the inspection
 - have any control over what you inspect
 - have any control over how you conduct the inspection
 - have a right to accompany you, although you may wish to invite them to.
4. Your employer does have to:
 - permit you to take the time-off during working hours to do the inspection
 - pay you as if you were doing your normal job
 - give you any assistance or facilities you reasonably require to carry out the inspection.
5. Your first inspection is a fact-finding mission. You will go around the workplace and ask members four questions:
 - i. what are the main health, safety and welfare problems they experience
 - ii. who do they think is responsible for the problems they identify
 - iii. which are the priorities for the union to take up
 - iv. what else do they think the UCU health and safety representative should be doing.
6. Make a plan of how you will go around the workplace, which members you will see, and how you will talk to them. (For instance, will you aim to have a short meeting, or approach people individually, or a mix)

7. Produce a notice (see attached) to let members and staff know the inspection is going to take place and circulate it to everyone who is in your constituency. You can put paper notices out, or develop a constituency e-mail list. Mark e-mails as High Priority, and make the subject line 'UCU safety reps inspection coming up'. Let them know what the questions are so they can think about their answers before you meet.
8. Take a notebook and at least two pens. When you talk to people, remind them that all information they give you will be treated in confidence.
9. Take copies of the attached factsheet that tells your members exactly what UCU health & safety representatives do, and give them to members and staff.
10. Write-up a report for the branch/LA committee on your findings, and what you think the priorities for action are. Your report should only record problems and issues that require attention. Make sure this is a main agenda item for the committee. Identify your priorities for further investigation. Get the branch to agree a plan to develop health & safety reps activities over the next year.

