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TEXTILES INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Issue

1. At the 22nd Meeting of TEXIAC it was agreed that the office of Chair need not be filled by a member of HSE and that a formula should be drawn up for rotating the office between the employers and trades unions represented on the Committee.

Timing

2. With effect from the 24th Meeting of TEXIAC on 14 October 2003.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that TEXIAC agree to the following proposal:
 - a. The office of chair should be held by a member of the Committee nominated from the groupings of members representing the employers' bodies and trades unions, in rotation.
 - b. The nominated person should hold office for a maximum of 3 successive meetings.
 - c. The nomination should be made at the meeting prior to the new chair taking up post.
 - d. If the chair is unable to attend a meeting or resigns during their term in office, their place should be taken by a reserve nominee from the same membership grouping.

Background

4. The Textiles Sector Group currently belongs to the Polymers and Fibres Sector based in HSE's Leeds Office.
5. When Andrew Porter, the outgoing Head of Sector and Chair of TEXIAC, retired in October 2002 his post was filled on a temporary basis, pending the outcome of a Sector Review being conducted by HSE.

6. The Review is on-going but it is anticipated that Polymers and Fibres will form part of an enlarged Sector. One possible outcome of this would be that the new Head of Sector would be unable to chair all of the industry advisory committees (IACs) within the new Sector Group.

Discussion

7. One of the criticisms levelled at IACs is that, for various reasons, they have not fulfilled their role of leading the health and safety agenda for their industries. Part of the problem has been that IACs have traditionally been focussed on producing guidance rather than actively challenging and engaging with their industries to improve their health and safety performance.

TEXIAC has embraced this change of direction and an 'external' chair of TEXIAC could assist the process by transferring ownership of the work of the committee to the industries themselves.

8. Having an external chair could also promote the sense of partnership with industry which forms a significant part of HSE's new ways of working.
9. It is not intended that the constitution of TEXIAC should otherwise change as a result of this amendment. The Committee should still operate by consensus and the practice of not taking votes should continue.
10. It is suggested that facilities be made available prior to relevant meetings for the industry groupings to meet to select their nominations.
11. The length of the term of office is open to discussion. However, 3 meetings was considered to be sufficient time for the chair to make their leadership mark on proceedings. It would also ensure that the annual open meeting would be chaired by the employers and trades unions in rotation.