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Deceptive Use Of Safety Laws Condemned

Master Builders Australia has called out new ACTU Secretary McManus for claims that it is unjust for union officials to have to provide 24 hours' notice to enter building sites when lives are at risk.

"State and territory WHS laws provide union officials the right to enter worksites to inquire into safety contraventions," Shaun Schmitke, National Director Industrial Relations said.

"The claim from ACTU Secretary Sally McManus that union officials have to provide 24 hours' notice is misleading and seeks to deceive the public into believing building unions are prevented from protecting their members," he said.

Union officials are required to show their entry permits and produce simple documentation to gain entry to a worksite to look into safety issues. If union officials are concerned about lives being at risk State and Territory WHS regulators can be called. The CFMEU are not safety regulators. Government agencies exist in every state and territory with trained specialists whose job it is to respond and investigate safety concerns. These agencies are run by Government and paid for by taxpayers. They have 24 hour contact lines for emergency safety concerns. Rather than breaking the law, the first step is to tell a specialist agency with trained professionals, emergency response capacity and authority to prevent and shut down dangerous work practices.

"Rules about safety on building sites should not be used in a deceptive way," Shaun Schmitke said.

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