

- Critical role of PPE in prevention programmes
- Preventing the collapse of buildings and structures: Industry, organisation and project-related interventions
- Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work Regulations under COIDA
- When nature strikes: Are South African OHS systems ready for the forces of nature?
- Occupational noise: An underestimated workplace hazard
- Trends of cognitive dissonance in workplace safety
- What defines a truly high-quality disposable respirator: and why fit testing reveals the truth
- World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2026: A call to action on mental health in Africa
- Managing safety, but ignoring emerging workplace risks?
- Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
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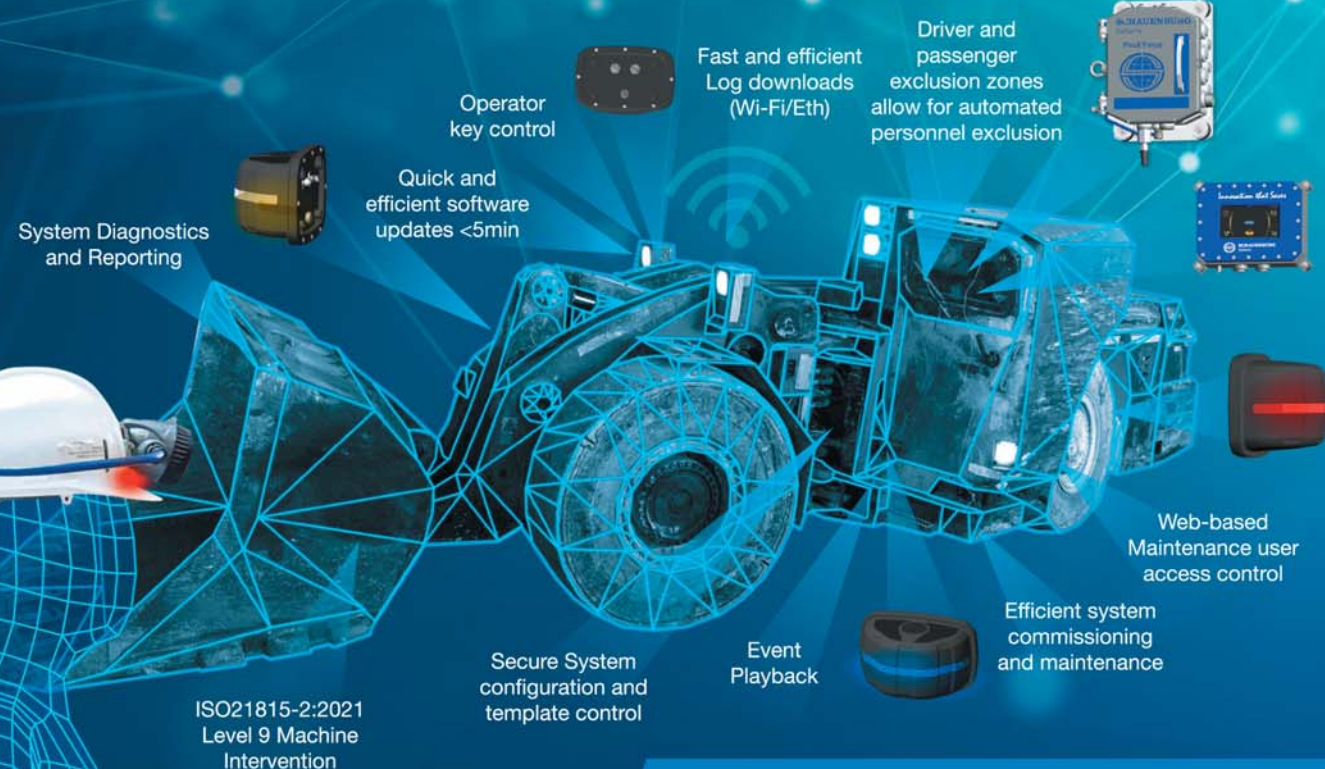
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Editor's Comment

WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

Each year on 28 April, South Africa joins the global community in observing the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, an initiative led by the International Labour Organization. The day serves as both a call to action and a moment of reflection on the conditions under which millions of workers earn their livelihoods.

In a country where sectors such as mining, construction, and agriculture remain central to the economy, workplace safety is not an abstract concept—it is a daily concern. Despite progress in legislation and enforcement, incidents of injury, illness, and preventable fatalities continue to highlight gaps in implementation and accountability.

This day reminds employers, employees, and policymakers alike that safety is a shared responsibility. It demands more than compliance; it requires a culture where every worker feels empowered to speak up, and every employer prioritises human life over profit.

It is commemorated alongside Workers' Memorial Day which honours those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Their memory should strengthen our resolve to build safer workplaces.

Ultimately, protecting workers is not just good policy—it is a moral imperative. South Africa must continue striving toward environments where every worker returns home safely, every day.

In keeping with this year's theme "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment", Dr Ehi Iden looks beyond physical hazards such as machineries and chemicals, to addressing invisible factors that affect mental health and wellbeing of employees.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RR2W REGULATIONS

The Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work Regulations (RRR2W Regulations) came into effect on 6 March 2026. The article written by representatives of Bowmans addresses some of the key features of the RRR2W Regulations.

HEARING PROTECTION

Dr Shaun Ramroop explores occupational noise—one of the most common and often underestimated hazards in the workplace. Excessive sound generated by work activities, machinery, equipment, or processes can negatively affect workers' health, safety, and performance. Managing occupational noise effectively is not only a legal obligation, but it is essential for protecting workers' hearing, safety, and long-term health.

MANAGING RISKS

In his thought-provoking article, Providence Akpa tells us that most organisations confidently say they take safety seriously. They have HSE policies, conduct toolbox talks, track incidents, and pass audits. On paper, everything looks right. But from practical field experience, there is a growing disconnect between what organisations think they are managing and the risks that are actually shaping their outcome.

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Jakes Jacobs explains how important it is to identify true respirator quality. To the untrained eye, one white mask appears much like another. Yet professionals working in contamination control, health-care, cleanrooms, emergency response, and industrial hygiene understand a fundamental reality: not all disposable respirators perform equally in real-world protection. Workers may think they have been issued with the world's best respirator, but do they know whether it is actually filtering out the contaminants they are exposed to? The only way to truly answer this is through fit testing.



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Protecting the workforce:

Critical role of PPE in prevention programmes



Elize Lourens
Specialist Occupational
Health and Hygiene
Department of Employment
and Labour

Keynote presentation given at South Africa's inaugural PPE Conference, held at Emperors Convention Centre, Johannesburg, 10-11 March 2026

When closely regarding some of the items we disregard, throw away or lose, I'm always amazed to see how many items of personal protective equipment can be seen. A hardhat or reflector vest can be found next to the high-way or a dust mask on a sidewalk ...

What does this say about our relationship with equipment meant to, and capable of protecting our lives and health?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is utilised in a work-environment as part of a larger prevention plan.

An effective occupational disease prevention plan requires a written, actionable strategy that identifies workplace health hazards, evaluates exposure, and implements controls to protect employee health.

As part of such a plan, PPE's aim is to prevent diseases and protect lives.

Elements contained in an occupational disease prevention plan include the following:

- **Hazard identification and assessment:**
Proactively identifying physical, chemical, biological, and ergonomic hazards that can cause diseases.
- **Hierarchy of controls:**
Implementing measures in order of effectiveness: elimination of the hazard, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls and PPE.
- **Health surveillance:**
Conducting medical screening and surveillance to detect early signs of occupational illnesses.
- **Information, instruction and training:**
Ensuring all employees are informed of health and safety risks, safe working procedures, controls implemented and proper use and maintenance of PPE.
- **Exposure monitoring:**
Quantitative monitoring of hazards identified in the work environment. Biological monitoring of employees to assess effectiveness of controls.
- **Record keeping:**
Maintaining records of exposures monitoring, medical surveillance, training programmes, and incident investigations, maintenance of controls and PPE distribution.

PPE features in the element of hierarchy of controls. It should be noted that PPE are considered to be the least effective of the options available. Additionally, the hierarchy of control should be

implemented in conjunction with one another. For example, local extraction ventilation along with PPE, training and access control.

WHY IS PPE PLACED LAST ON THIS LIST OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL MEASURES?

PPE doesn't remove the hazard itself and it relies on human behaviour, e.g. wearing the PPE even when no one is around to see.

Also, PPE can fail if worn incorrectly. For example, if there is just a small gap and the respirator doesn't seal properly, the contaminant will be inhaled, voiding the protection that could be offered.

Wearing PPE may be uncomfortable as well, especially if different items of equipment need to be worn when temperatures are high.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, act 85 of 1993 as amended, several regulations aim to eliminate risk to health.

Some of these are:

- The Regulations for Hazardous Chemical Agents, 2021.
- The Lead Regulations, 2001.
- The Regulations on Hazardous Biological Agents, 2022.
- The Asbestos Abatement Regulations, 2020.
- The Ergonomics Regulations, 2019.
- The new Noise Exposure Regulations and the new Physical Agents Regulations.

Hearing protection

In the Noise Exposure Regulations, a hearing protection device is defined as a device with proven capability of reducing actual noise exposure to either below the noise-rating limit, or the noise action level where there is concomitant exposure to ototoxic chemicals, or whole-body vibration.

Hearing protection devices (HPD) must be selected correctly, be fitted, properly used, kept in good condition, and readily available to anyone entering a noise zone.

An employer that has identified noise as a hazard in the workplace, and has demarcated a noise zone, must consider the following aspects when selecting hearing protection for employees and visitors:

- The nature and characteristics of the noise;



- The type of work to be done;
- Physical effort required to do the work;
- Length of time HPD will be worn;
- Visibility, comfort and communication requirements;
- Compatibility with other equipment and PPE;
- Recommendations by the occupational health practitioner.

Asbestos

When exposure to airborne asbestos fibres are of concern, PPE is a most critical method of controlling exposure.

Anyone entering a restricted asbestos area where asbestos work is performed must wear PPE and respiratory protective equipment (RPE). Specifically, RPE that provides effective protection to prevent the inhalation of asbestos fibres is vital!

Asbestos fibres hold serious health risks and may cause asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma.

Due to the fact that asbestos work is temporary in nature—with the aim of removing any asbestos containing material—PPE is the control measure that is mostly relied on.

Physical hazard protection

PPE also plays an important role in protecting workers from physical hazards such as a heat, cold, non-ionizing radiation and vibration.

Where exposure can't be eliminated, other controls along with PPE should be capable of reducing exposure.

- The selection of PPE must consider:
- Nature of the physical agent;
- Type of work to be done;
- Physical effort required to do the work;
- Length of time PPE will have to be worn;
- Visibility;
- Comfort;
- Communication requirements;
- Compatibility with other equipment; and
- Any other recommendations by the occupational medicine practitioner.

TRAINING, INFORMATION AND SUPERVISION

Training, instruction and information provided to employees is vital to ensure the correct use of PPE, as well as their understanding of the health risks associated with work.

Information provided to employees includes aspects such as induction and toolbox talks.

Instruction requires checking and supervision of the correct use of PPE.

Training can include but is not limited to formal training programmes and inhouse training sessions.

Records must be kept by the employer of the training, such as to whom it was provided, when it was provided, and the contents thereof.

With regards to PPE, employees must receive information, instruction and training on:

- Hazards in the workplace
- Risk of exposure
- Controls in place
- Employee duties
- PPE use:
 - What equipment to provide
 - How to use the equipment
 - When to use the provided equipment
 - Maintenance and care as well as reporting defects of the equipment.

Employees must also receive refresher training at least annually. This will:

- Combat knowledge decay;
- Ensure regulatory compliance;
- Ensure adaption to changes;
- Mitigate risk and accidents;
- Boost confidence and productivity.

Failure to wear issued PPE, or using it incorrectly, should result in penalties ranging from verbal warnings to dismissal—particularly if it constitutes gross misconduct or reckless behaviour.

PPE is often the last line of defence: It serves as a crucial final barrier when other hazard controls are insufficient in keeping employees safe and healthy.

Separating the wheat from the chaff:

What defines a truly high-quality disposable respirator —

and why fit testing reveals the truth



Peter-John Jacobs, MPH, ROH, FSAIOH is currently employed as the Managing Director of Sedulitas as an occupational health consultancy, based in Potchefstroom and Richards Bay, South Africa

Disposable respirators are often treated as interchangeable commodities. To the untrained eye, one white mask appears much like another. Yet professionals working in contamination control, healthcare, cleanrooms, emergency response, and industrial hygiene understand a fundamental reality: not all disposable respirators perform equally in real-world protection.

The difference between an average respirator and a high-quality one becomes unmistakable when examined through the lens of fit science, particularly quantitative fit testing, the gold standard for evaluating respiratory protection performance.

Thoughtful engineering separates superior respirators from commodity masks. Understanding why requires first examining how protection actually works.

THE MISUNDERSTOOD TRUTH ABOUT PROTECTION

A FFP1/2/3 or N90/95/99 (dependent on which respirator conformance test standard you use) rating does not mean a mask blocks X% of particles in practice. It means the filter media alone removes at least 95% of airborne particles (in the case of N95 protection rating) under controlled laboratory testing defined by NIOSH standards (42 CFR Part 84).

Protection in the field depends on three interacting systems:

1. Filtration efficiency
2. Face seal integrity
3. User compatibility during movement

Filtration receives the most marketing attention, yet paradoxically it is the *least common point of failure*.

Most modern melt-blown polypropylene filters already exceed minimum requirements, with some respirators testing above 98% particle filtration efficiency.

The true differentiator is fit.

FILTRATION MEDIA: NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

Quality respirators begin with electrostatically charged polypropylene filtration layers capable of capturing particles through multiple mechanisms:

- Inertial impaction
- Diffusion

- Interception
- Electrostatic attraction

High-quality disposable respirators optimise surface area to reduce breathing resistance while maintaining capture efficiency.

The flat-fold, three-panel architecture used in some disposable respirators increases usable filtration area, improving airflow and reducing pressure drop compared to rigid cup designs.

Lower breathing resistance matters because excessive resistance encourages leakage. Air follows the path of least resistance; if breathing becomes difficult, airflow bypasses the filter through seal gaps. Thus, breathability directly affects safety.

DESIGN ENGINEERING: WHERE QUALITY EMERGES

A premium disposable respirator must maintain seal integrity during real human motion—talking, bending, sweating, and facial expression changes.

Several structural elements determine this capability:

1. Adaptive geometry

The flexible 3-panel structure design of certain disposable respirators allows the mask to move with facial musculature rather than against it, maintaining seal continuity across diverse face shapes.

2. Nose interface engineering

Leakage most commonly occurs at the nasal bridge.

Closed-cell medical-grade nose foam combined with a dual-core adjustable nose clip improves conformity and minimises upward airflow responsible for eyewear fogging.

3. Strap attachment integrity

Stapled headbands—common in lower-cost respirators—create stress concentration points that degrade during wear.

Patented welded strap attachment systems increase durability and maintain consistent tension throughout use cycles.

Additionally, vibration welded strap attachments means that in the unlikely event a strap should break there are no staples to pop off that can contaminate processes or pose a risk to patients in medical settings for example.

4. Ergonomic visibility

Respirators that obstruct downward vision force

compensatory head movement, subtly disturbing seal position.

ClearView bars fitted to some disposable respirators improve lower peripheral field of vision by up to 15%, reducing unconscious adjustments that compromise protection.

Adding up to 60lbs (over 27kg) of strain on the neck and shoulders when compensating for poor lower peripheral vision, the ClearView bar promotes a user's normal range of motion and natural kinematics when looking down on processes, phones and clipboards, instrument fields, and patients in the case of hospital settings.

Lastly, the ClearView bar's increased field of vision makes for a safer mask by reducing tripping hazards that lead to slip and fall injuries.

These features may appear ergonomic, but ergonomics directly influence respiratory safety.

QUALITATIVE FIT TESTING: THE TRADITIONAL METHOD

Qualitative fit testing (QLFT) relies on human sensory detection.

Common methods include:

- Saccharin (sweet taste)
- Bitrex (bitter taste)
- Isoamyl acetate (banana odour).

If the wearer detects the test agent, leakage is present.

While useful for compliance screening, qualitative testing has inherent limitations:

- Subjective perception
- Dependence on user sensitivity
- Pass/fail outcome only
- No measurement of protection margin.

Two respirators that both “pass” qualitative testing may perform dramatically differently in actual exposure conditions.

This is where quantitative testing becomes decisive.

QUANTITATIVE FIT TESTING: THE TRUE MEASURE OF MASK QUALITY

Quantitative Fit Testing (QNFT) uses particle-counting instruments such as Accufit and Quantifit systems to measure airborne particle concentration:

$$\text{Fit Factor} = \frac{\text{Outside Particle Count}}{\text{Inside Particle Count}}$$

Unlike qualitative testing, QNFT produces numerical protection data.

Typical benchmarks:

- Minimum OSHA pass level: Fit Factor = 100
- Higher numbers indicate superior sealing performance.

Here, respirator design quality becomes

measurable reality. Some disposable respirator types tested demonstrates approximately 92% fit test pass rates across diverse facial geometries, an unusually high success rate for disposable respirators whilst others achieve a less than 20% overall pass rate. This matters because workforce populations have enormous facial variability.

A respirator that consistently achieves passing quantitative scores across users represents genuine engineering advancement rather than nominal certification compliance.

WHY QUANTITATIVE TESTING EXPOSES INFERIOR MASKS

Commodities often fail quantitative testing due to:

- Insufficient nose sealing
- Rigid cup deformation
- Strap relaxation
- Limited facial adaptability
- High breathing resistance inducing leakage.

Even masks with identical filtration ratings diverge dramatically under QNFT evaluation.

In practical terms:

A poorly fitting N95 filter may provide less protection than a well-fitting lower-rated respirator.

Protection equals filtration × fit, not filtration alone.

BREATHABILITY, FATIGUE, AND REAL-WORLD COMPLIANCE

Respiratory protection fails when users remove or adjust masks.

Comfort therefore becomes a safety parameter. A superior comfort respirator reported 15% improvement in breathability over leading competitors because it reduces physiological strain and helps maintain continuous wear compliance during extended operations.

Reduced fogging further discourages adjustment behaviours that break seal integrity.

In contamination-controlled environments, fewer adjustments translate directly into reduced exposure events.

DURABILITY AND LIFECYCLE INTEGRITY

Disposable does not mean fragile.

A quality respirator must maintain:

- Strap elasticity
- Structural shape
- Seal compression

through its entire duty cycle. Failure modes such as strap breakage or material collapse instantly negate protection regardless of filtration rating.

Engineered weld patterns and resilient polyisoprene headbands contribute to consistent sealing force throughout use.

THE CLEANROOM PERSPECTIVE: CONSISTENCY MATTERS

Organisations rooted in airborne contamination science approach respirator design differently than commodity PPE manufacturers.

Rather than merely meeting certification thresholds, emphasis shifts toward:

- population-wide fit success
- airflow optimisation
- ergonomic stability
- measurable quantitative performance.

This systems-level approach explains why some respirators achieve reputations among fit-testing professionals as consistent high performers.

CONCLUSION: IDENTIFYING TRUE RESPIRATOR QUALITY

Separating the wheat from the chaff in disposable respirators requires abandoning superficial metrics.

A quality respirator demonstrates:

- Verified NIOSH/EU filtration performance
- Low breathing resistance
- Adaptive multi-panel geometry
- Durable strap architecture
- Effective nasal sealing
- High quantitative fit test success rates.

Most importantly, it performs not only in laboratory filtration tests but in quantitative fit testing, where real protection is measured numerically rather than assumed.

In this arena, respirators engineered around fit science highlight the future direction of disposable respiratory protection: masks that accommodate the wearer, maintain seal during motion, and deliver reproducible protection across diverse users.

Because in respiratory protection, certification is the starting line.

Fit is the finish line.

FIT TESTING METHODS



Above: Quantitative fit testing in action (QNFT) – Subjective



Right: Qualitative fit testing in action (QLFT) – Objective

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Occupational noise: *An underestimated workplace hazard*



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This series of articles highlights the common occupational hazards found in the workplace and promotes awareness as a key component of effective health and safety risk management.

UNDERSTANDING OCCUPATIONAL NOISE

Noise is one of the most common and often underestimated hazards in the workplace.

Occupational noise refers to unwanted or excessive sound generated by work activities, machinery, equipment, or processes that can negatively affect workers' health, safety, and performance.

It is widely encountered in sectors such as manufacturing, mining, construction, transport, and agriculture.

When workers are exposed to high noise levels over time, typically measured in decibels using the A-weighted scale dBA, the consequences can be serious. Apart from damaging hearing, excessive workplace noise can interfere with communication, mask warning signals, and increase the likelihood of accidents.

Effective noise management is therefore a critical element of occupational health and safety practice.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO OCCUPATIONAL NOISE

The effects of occupational noise extend well beyond hearing damage.

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is one of the most common occupational diseases and develops gradually, often without early warning signs. Once established, it is permanent.

Many workers also experience tinnitus, described as ringing, buzzing, or hissing in the ears.

Continuous exposure to loud noise can place strain on the body, contributing to stress, fatigue, headaches, and increased blood pressure.

In noisy environments, workers may struggle to concentrate, miss verbal instructions or alarms, and become more vulnerable to accidents.

Over time, constant noise exposure can also reduce overall well-being and job satisfaction, making occupational noise a serious health concern rather than just an annoyance.

FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF NOISE

Several factors can increase the severity of noise-related health effects. These include high noise levels, long exposure durations, and repeated daily exposure, all of which increase the total noise dose received by a worker.

Continuous, impulsive, or high-frequency noise presents an even greater risk. Inadequate or incorrect use of hearing protection, poorly maintained equipment, and ineffective noise control

measures further compound the problem. Individual factors such as age, pre-existing hearing loss, certain medical conditions, and exposure to ototoxic substances (some chemicals and medications) can increase susceptibility.

When noise exposure occurs alongside other workplace stressors such as vibration, heat, fatigue, or high mental workload, the combined effect can significantly worsen health outcomes.

ELIMINATING AND MINIMISING OCCUPATIONAL NOISE

The most effective way to manage occupational noise is by applying the hierarchy of controls, starting as close to the source as possible.

Elimination may involve removing noisy processes or equipment entirely, while minimisation focuses on engineering controls such as replacing equipment with quieter alternatives, isolating or enclosing noise sources, installing sound-absorbing materials, and maintaining machinery properly.

Where noise cannot be adequately controlled at source, administrative measures, including limiting exposure time, rotating employees, or scheduling noisy tasks strategically, can reduce risk.

Hearing protection remains important but should be viewed as a last line of defence, not the primary control. Ongoing noise assessments, training, and monitoring are essential to ensure long-term effectiveness.

DO YOU NEED TO MEASURE OCCUPATIONAL NOISE?

Yes. In South Africa, measuring occupational noise is a legal requirement. Employers are required to identify, assess, and monitor noise exposure where there is a risk to workers.

When workplace noise is suspected to reach or exceed the noise action level, a formal noise risk assessment must be conducted. If the assessment indicates potential over-exposure, detailed noise measurements must be carried out by an Approved Noise Inspection Authority (ANIA) using appropriate instruments.

Noise measurement is therefore a fundamental part of legal compliance and effective prevention.

ARE THERE MANDATORY OCCUPATIONAL NOISE EXPOSURE LEVELS?

Yes. South African legislation sets mandatory exposure limits for occupational noise:

Noise Action Level

- 82 dBA for continuous noise over an 8-hour day

- 135 dBC for impulsive or impact noise
- At this level, employers must assess risks and take preventive action.

Maximum Permissible Exposure Limit

- 85 dBA for continuous noise over an 8-hour day
 - 137 dBC for impulsive or impact noise
- Employees must not be exposed above these limits.

CONCLUSION

Managing occupational noise effectively is not only a legal obligation, but it is essential for protecting workers' hearing, safety, and long-term health.

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Avenues for exploratory research:

Trends of cognitive dissonance in workplace safety and health management



Han Wenqi is an experienced workplace safety and health professional from Singapore, and an advocate with 15 years of industrial safety experience. He is a lecturer for the Bachelor of Science in SHEM and MSc in OHSW. He is currently a guest speaker / associate lecturer with the Leeds Beckett University, Cardiff Metropolitan University. His experience is highly sought after in Singapore mega projects.

In the past trends of accident investigations root cause analysis, there is a rare conclusion on root causes identified, which is correlated to decision-making processes (planning stage); latency impact of wrong business strategy (doing or execution stage); psychological safe environment to speak up (checking / measuring and monitoring stage); and the unseen limitations of unvisited parameters or borders or areas of an incident investigation process.

Traits on the sequence of events that leads to an accident already indicates that the most critical avenues for analysing contributory and root causes are not done thoroughly. Traceability is obvious, but the majority do not move beyond management style, safety leadership, allocation of resources and negligence of duty by key personnel. This is the outcome of a negative, repetitive facade of a surviving organisation which can continuously sustain, survive and remain competitive in tender bidding.

But sometimes luck is not on the decision-maker side. Coupled with the latency impact of cost saving strategy and production deadline, pressures lead to field execution risk-taking behaviours. This can lead to an accident occurring.

The severity of injuries and level of damages involved in the accident are detrimental, because this could be an embedded mechanism of

achievement through business risk management of the top decision maker.

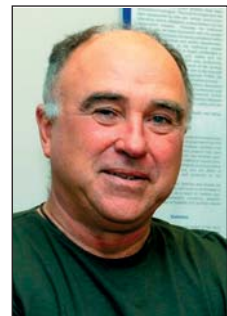
Prolonged condoning of risk-taking behaviour occurs everyday. But why does the daily walk-through report of HSE personnel not encompass it and raise early red flags?

Data trend analysis is a good tool, but only if the input data are sufficient and if the analysis gives fair and just recommendations. Good analysis outcomes can only be achieved without human manipulation or altering of data.

Decision-making is an integral part of every step taken by an individual or a group involving agreed actions driven by business needs to establish a strategy or determine a clear direction. Decision-making in a construction project involves evaluating, forecasting, and managing a complex array of costs to ensure project viability, profitability, and adherence to budget. These costs are categorised into direct, indirect, soft, contingency, and opportunity costs, which together determine the financial strategy for a project. Decision-making involves identifying or dictating costs incurred which is a common way cost engineers or quantity surveyors do with a base quantity rate derived from past experiences, market competitors previous bidding price breakdowns and in-depth implementations of safety programmes and plans.

Preventing the collapse of buildings and structures:

Industry, organisation and project-related interventions



Professor John Smallwood
PhD (Construction Management)
Emeritus Professor of Construction Management,
Department of Construction Management,
Nelson Mandela University

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of buildings and other structures during construction in the South African construction industry continues unabated and has been a consistent feature over three decades.

Fatalities continue, various stakeholders proffer opinions, which are not based upon research, Section 32 Inquiry reports are not produced, and engineers are de-registered, which does not resurrect the fatally injured.

This article is the culmination of three and a half decades of research, resulting in, among others, the *Report on an Exploratory Study 'Preventing the Collapse of Reinforced Concrete (RC) Structures, Support Work and Formwork During Construction'* published on 31 January 2016 (Smallwood, 2016) and highlighted in, among others, an online SA Builder article on 21 February 2016 (SA Builder, 2016).

This article provides a synopsis of the primary required interventions at industry, organisation, and project levels.

THE DEFAULT CAUSES OF COLLAPSES

All collapses are a function of one, more, or all of the following:

- Inadequate construction project management / principal agency;
- Inadequate project-wide risk management;
- Inadequate project-wide quality management;
- Adequate project-wide health and safety (H&S) management;
- Inadequate construction management;
- Incompetence;
- Lack of consciousness and mindfulness, and
- Inadequate education and / or training (root cause, which contributes to incompetence), preceded by inadequate accreditation criteria and inadequate accreditation panels.

INDUSTRY-WIDE INTERVENTIONS

- Acknowledgement and response in terms of the reality that businesses and practices undertake projects and not 'registered persons' i.e., businesses and practices influence projects;
- Developer contracting and owner building must be outlawed;
- Barriers to participate in construction, especially contractors and workers;
- Revision of the Construction Regulations to ensure:
 - Overall single point responsibility for the

integration of quality and H&S into projects, as currently, responsibility is fragmented;

- Understanding of the intention of the H&S specification;
- Understanding of design hazard identification and risk assessment (HIRA), and
- Understanding of the designer report;
- Publication of comprehensive guidelines for the Construction Regulations;
- Development of a pervasive quality culture and H&S culture;
- Addressing the disconnect between quality and H&S;
- A paradigm shift from reaction to assurance in terms of quality and H&S;
- Inclusion of quality and H&S as criteria relative to all association membership and registration, including by the Construction Industry Development Board (cidb), and the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC);
- Inclusion of structures, quality, and H&S in all built environment tertiary education and training – 'embedded', not 'included' or included in a final year project;
- Independent management of projects to avoid conflict of interest, as in the case of a structural designer undertaking the structural design while acting as principal agent;
- Integrated multi-stakeholder project-wide management plans for each of the environment, H&S, quality, and risk, which clearly indicate the required contributions for each stakeholder for all six stages of projects;
- Statutory built environment councils must:
 - Include extensive reference to quality and H&S in their respective scope of services;
 - Require quality and H&S to be addressed in applications to register;
 - Require quality and H&S to be addressed in candidate reports, and
- Address quality and H&S during continuing professional development (CPD) training;
- Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) OH&S Inspectors must:
 - Understand and appreciate the relationship between quality and H&S;
 - Interrogate the fulfilment of clients' and designers' duties in terms of the Construction Regulations, and
 - Interrogate structural-related processes and interventions, including design HIRA;



- Development of quality competencies among H&S practitioners, and
- Mandatory formal skills training of workers, including quality and H&S.

ORGANISATION-WIDE INTERVENTIONS

- Development of a pervasive quality culture and H&S culture;
- A paradigm shift from reaction to assurance in terms of quality and H&S;
- All stakeholders must have a documented management system for each of the environment, H&S, quality, and risk;
- Implementation of quality and H&S improvement processes;
- Conducting a gap analysis with respect to organisation quality and H&S competencies, including a quality and H&S development plan for all levels of employees, and
- Construction project managers (CPMs), and construction managers (CMs) must be competent to interrogate structural designs, and construction structure-related processes.

PROJECT-WIDE INTERVENTIONS

- Clients must prequalify CPMs, construction H&S Agents (CHSAs), designers, quantity surveyors (QSs), and contractors in terms of quality and H&S – systems, processes, competencies, and resources;
- Scientific determining of project durations;
- Designers must undertake design HIRA;
- Design outcomes must be interrogated in terms of, among others, designing for construction quality, constructability, and H&S;
- Building Control Officers (BCOs) must interrogate:
 - The documented quality management process followed by structural designers in terms of: peer / third-party review; 'designing for quality'; 'designing for construction H&S', and 'designing for maintenance H&S';
 - The geotechnical report, and
 - The H&S specification to ensure that it includes raw and residual risk;
- Structural designers must:
 - Prepare 'design and construction' method statements where specific construction-related interventions are required to assure the integrity of the permanent works, and
 - Ensure that construction is in accordance with design;
- Facilitation of financial provision for quality and H&S in project documentation;
- Construction managers must manage quality and H&S – construction H&S Officers fulfil a staff not a line function;



- Scientific design of temporary works, including support work and scaffolding, and ensuring that the erected conforms to the design, and that disassembly follows a procedure;
- Focus on HIRA as opposed to 'paperwork' throughout all stages of projects, and
- Measurement of the cost of accidents and rework.

CONCLUSIONS

Achieving quality and H&S, as with other project parameters, requires industry, organisation, and project level interventions.

Project quality and H&S are multi-stakeholder, multi-stage issues, which requires an integrated effort managed by a single-point responsible 'conductor' who must be well versed in terms of, among others, quality management, and H&S management.

Digitalisation of construction has the potential to contribute to improving, among others, quality and H&S performance on projects, however, it is not the panacea, for failure to 'get the basics right'.

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Hazard and operability study (HAZOP):

Safety professionals need to understand



Dr Bill Pomfret has over 50 years of experience as a safety consultant working for leading companies around the world. Dr Bill is a passionate advocate for safety training.

HAZOP studies are ideal for complex processes in high hazard facilities, such as chemical plants, nuclear facilities, and oil and gas operations.

A Hazard and Operability Study (HAZOP) is a systematic investigation of a present or planned process or operation. It was originally designed to assess the procedure and processes of chemical plants, but is now applied more widely.

The goal is to identify and evaluate any problems within a plant or work environment that could pose a risk to the employees or equipment. It also looks at processes that might prevent the facility from running as efficiently as it should.

HOW DOES HAZOP WORK?

HAZOP studies are carried out by a multi-disciplinary team which holds a series of meetings during which they conduct a qualitative assessment of the plant's design.

The team's focuses are on specific points of the design, which are explored one by one. They look for deviations in the process parameters.

Once the team has identified several deviates, each is considered as a potential cause or effect of operational problems or hazards.

HAZOP effectiveness is largely determined by:

- The parameters and exact description of the study
- The skills and experience of the team members
- The team's ability to work well together
- Meaningful questions posed by the HAZOP team
- Completeness and accuracy of the study
- The team's ability to use the outlined approach
- The team's ability to identify and concentrate on serious hazards and not get sidetracked by sheer breadth of the study.

WHY IS HAZOP IMPORTANT FOR SAFETY PROFESSIONALS?

In addition to helping the plant run smoothly, hazard and operability studies also allow safety professionals to identify and then either control or eliminate hazards.

HAZOP is ideal for large and complex systems. Breaking these down into their component parts and assessing each in turn gives safety professionals a more fine-grained look at potential hazards that may otherwise be overlooked.

PROS OF CONDUCTING A HAZOP STUDY

- An efficient, knowledgeable HAZOP team can save the company considerably more money than the expense of the conducting the study

- HAZOP studies identify hazards and can thus save lives and decrease employee injuries
- HAZOP teams provide a multi-disciplinary look at various processes.

CONS OF CONDUCTING A HAZOP STUDY

- HAZOP studies are very time consuming
- HAZOP teams take a very focused approach to each element of a process and may miss some of the hazards that are more evident from taking a bigger picture perspective.
- A team that is not led by a competent facilitator and composed of knowledgeable, experienced members may not investigate the processes thoroughly enough or may fail to identify some of the potential hazards.

HAZARD AND OPERABILITY STUDY TIPS

HAZOP studies can be very long and tedious. If you're conducting one, the following tips may make it more efficient and effective.

Select a HAZOP team that has the necessary skills.

1. Do they all understand the design, operation or procedure that is being studied?
1. Clarify the study's focus. Are you reviewing a concept, procedure, operation, or design?
2. What are the parameters of the study and is the entire team clear on this?
3. Prepare an information package well before the study begins.
4. Establish (in consultation with the entire HAZOP team) what software may be needed to assist the study.
5. The facilitator should ensure that each team member makes contributions related to their area of expertise.
6. Since HAZOP studies can be mentally taxing on those involved, the team should schedule regular breaks to refocus.
7. The HAZOP team's meetings should be meticulously recorded, and meeting minutes should be kept for future reference.

CONCLUSION

- A hazard and operability study is a great way to break down complex processes and consider all the ways they could go wrong.
- It can allow you to plan for the worst and prepare for the unexpected, but it's only the first step.
- Once your HAZOP study has identified potential risks, those risks need to be addressed and managed.

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TECHNICAL APPAREL

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TECH GEAR
THERMOSHELL JACKET
Premium styling with practical functionality.

The REBEL Tech Gear Thermoshell Jacket is made for workers who face the elements head-on. Engineered for demanding environments, this jacket delivers the perfect combination of warmth, durability, and functionality. The jacket features a splash-resistant nylon outer shell, polyester down padding (180gsm body, 160gsm sleeves), and a soft polyester lining for superior insulation. Practical elements include Hi-Viz reflective piping, a removable three-panel hood, a chunky front zipper with storm flap, and a longer curved back for extra coverage. Comfort meets innovation with a storm cuff and soft tricot material along the zipper to prevent irritation.

BUILT TO WORK
www.rebelsafetygear.com

What it takes to launch a first-of-its-kind conference, and make it successful

The recent PPE Conference, the first of its kind to be hosted in South Africa, was born out of an insatiable need for knowledge about the PPE industry.

Our goal was clear: to deliver a conference that would not only introduce a platform for knowledge-sharing in the PPE space, but also to set a benchmark for future annual events.

What began as a bold idea, suffered delays and early setbacks. Yet, knowing the need for such an event, sharpened our resolve to make it a success. And a success it was, after months of meticulous planning—from the structure of the programme to the careful selection of presenters, to the choice of venue.

When preparing the programme, careful consideration was given to the rapidly evolving nature of PPE—an industry that increasingly demands innovative and creative solutions. Attention was paid to the wide range of challenges faced across the value chain—from suppliers and manufacturers to end-users operating across different sectors. We aimed to highlight the importance of improving safety and accountability across the PPE landscape.

We wanted our attendees to gain insight into the on-going research involving respirator design and fitment. We wanted them to learn how PPE can offer protection against exposure to diesel exhaust, welding fumes and chemicals. Equally important was our aim to raise awareness around critical issues such as the widespread problem of counterfeit PPE. In addition, the programme needed to address key areas such as legal frameworks, compliance requirements, industry standards, employer responsibilities and workplace risk.

Our journey was not without its challenges. Behind the scenes were long hours, sleepless nights, and moments of real tension. Presenter withdrawals due to unforeseen circumstances required swift adjustments and last-minute replacements.

AND THEN, THE EVENT ARRIVED

The conference unfolded over two days, achieving exactly what we wanted. The presentations were engaging, insightful, and impactful.

Feedback from the post-event evaluation was overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of participants characterising the presentations as “really interesting”, “informative”, “helpful in my day to day activities on-the-job”. And the conference they described as “well-organised”, a “great conference”, “one of the best conferences I’ve attended”.

Among the highlights were the case studies by David Selepe and Partington Mtatabikwa who kept the attendees mesmerised by testimonies of their accidents on-the-job, their roads to recovery and the lessons they learned from misusing and down-playing PPE’s vital role in staying safe and healthy. All other sessions were received with equal enthusiasm.

QUO VADIS?

This first PPE Conference has proven that there is both a need and an appetite for such a high-calibre platform in the PPE space.

But, we now face an interesting dilemma: When your inaugural event is already described as “the best,” how do you improve on it?

The challenge going forward is to evolve on what we have achieved, to deepen conversations, expand perspectives, introduce new voices, and continue refining the experience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We believe our goal was achieved, and for that we are grateful to all participants, from the presenters who generously gave of their time, to the sponsors and exhibitors who helped make it financially possible, and to all the delegates, some who travelled from Namibia, Eswatini and Botswana.

We are also grateful to SAIOSH who awarded delegates 5 CPD points on the strength of the programme, as well as SACPCMP for their CPD points and for setting up a “helpdesk”, and SAIOH for assisting with speakers.

COMMENT FROM GUNTHER VERREYNE CHAIRMAN, SAPEMA



It was a privilege as chair of SAPEMA to co-host the first PPE Conference, which proved to be a powerful and timely gathering for our industry.

Over the two days, we engaged in meaningful discussions around the evolving risks facing South African workers, and reinforced a message that underpins everything we do: *PPE isn't optional. It's essential.*

The quality of the speakers, the innovation showcased by our exhibitors, and the commitment shown by delegates made this conference both impactful and inspiring.

I believe everyone who participated left better informed, more connected, and more determined to raise the standard of worker protection across all sectors.

PPE Conference 2026

PRESENTERS



Keynote: Elize Lourens
Specialist: Occupational Health and Hygiene. Department of Employment and Labour
Protecting the workforce: Critical role of PPE in prevention programmes

PPE is part of an occupational disease prevention plan. Although PPE is often the last line of defence, it serves as a crucial final barrier when other hazard controls are insufficient in keeping employees safe and healthy. Failure to wear issued PPE, or failure to use it incorrectly, should result in penalties.



Adv Raynard Looch
Managing Member Klass Looch Associates
PE and the law
There is no shortage of legislation covering employee safety in SA - but the enforcement is poor.



Christo Nel
Managing Director RBU MAI, Uvex Safety South Africa
Understanding local and international PPE standards: Clarity in a complex landscape

There is confusion between the European Commission and the Chinese export “CE” mark on PPE and products. Both appear to be the same. The EU’s CE mark (Conformité Européenne) is a mandatory conformity mark indicating that a so-marked product meets European Union (EU) health and safety and environmental protection standards. The Chinese CE mark relates to export approvals and not OHS approvals. The “China Export” mark is a misleading logo often found on non-compliant, unsafe Chinese products, deliberately designed with higher character spacing to mimic the official CE mark.



Partington Mtatabikwa
Motivational speaker and safety advocate.

Case study: The accident on-the-job changed my life: My journey of recovery and reflection

During 2010 Partington was involved in a workplace accident. He was hospitalised for 12 months and lost his limbs. Since then he has made a conviction to turn negative into positive by going around the world spreading the safety gospel and ensuring that employees take personal responsibility and ownership of safety.



Dr Deon Swanepoel
Exposure specialist D'Sayensi Occupational Hygiene
Statistical shape modelling for population-specific respirator design: Addressing fit failure in SA populations

Even if respirators are the last line of defence, they need to fit the people who wear them properly. Early work is being explored towards developing respirator designs better suited to the South African population. Statistical shape modelling (SSM) can be used to represent facial variation in the SA population and generate realistic synthetic faces. In this way, potential leak points can be identified and mask performance evaluated before manufacturing or procurement decisions are made.

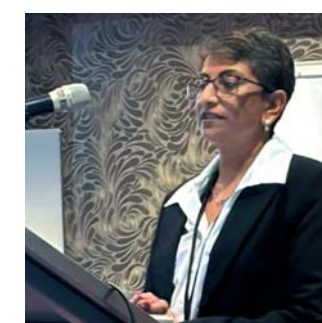


Tibor Szana
Chief Inspector: Occupational Health and Safety (Retired.)
Why bother with PPE ... on the Road to Zero Harm
“Zero harm” “vision zero” “Road to zero”—all catchy phrases that sound morally attractive ... but operationally and intellectually ... they're shaky. Where do they meet with PPE?



Jakes (PJ) Jacobs
Managing Director Sedulitas
Hearing Protection: Why is there still too much noise-induced hearing loss

Workplace noise-induced hearing loss is not declining. In actual fact it is on the rise! Fitting workers with the best hearing protection available is no guarantee that they are actually wearing it during periods of high-noise exposure. Having a solution that can quantify correct use of hearing protection and resultant protection and then report the results daily is the key to a lasting solution in preventing NIHL in the workplace.

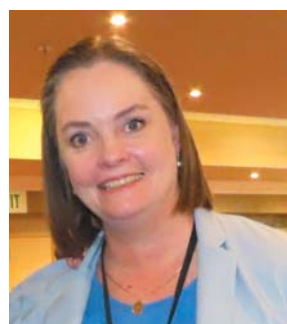


Rani Naidoo
Respiratory Specialist Dromex
Fake protection: The hidden dangers of counterfeits proliferating the market

South African regulatory requirements, including the differences between EN, SANS and NIOSH standards must be understood. N95/KN95 products cannot legally be used in South Africa. Fake and non-compliant respiratory protection pose dangerous risks in the workplace. Correct certification, fit and fit-testing are necessary to ensure proper respiratory protection.



Mziwakhe Nhlapo
CEO of MMAT SHEC & ESG
Training & Consulting Service.
Past team leader NUM
Cutting corners costs lives: The true cost of cheap PPE
Cutting corners may save thousands today, but it risks costing millions tomorrow. And most importantly, it risks lives. The question is: how much is a life worth? Millions of worth of related deaths and non-fatal injuries could be avoided. Post incident reports have reported findings of: incorrect PPE selection, non-certified equipment; expired/degraded PPE; procurement driven by price alone.



Karen du Preez
SAIOH Registered Occupational Hygienist
Improper PPE use: Occupational Hygiene Risks
PPE should never be the only method used to reduce exposure, except under very specific circumstances. In the hierarchy of control it is always listed last because it should never be the only method used to reduce exposure. PPE may fail (stop protecting the worker) with little or no warning - eg break-through can occur with clothes, gloves, respirator cartridges.



Dr Jeanneth Manganyi
Head: Occupational Hygiene Section, Honorary Lecturer: Wits School of Public Health National Institute for Occupational Health Division of the National Health Laboratory
A bivariate respirator fit test panel representing black SA users in Gauteng
Respirators are widely used as a primary / only means of exposure control to airborne hazards. But a surprisingly high percentage don't protect the users adequately. NIOSH and Chinese panels are not appropriate for the SA black population. To overcome this, work has been done on a new bivariate respirator fit test panel representing black SA users in Gauteng



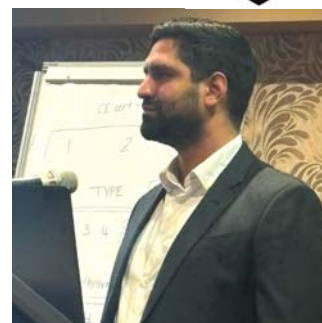
Loren Pearson
Sales and Marketing Manager Chemical Industrial SSA, DuPont
Selecting the correct protective clothing for a hazardous chemical environment
Across all operations, workers are regularly exposed to hazardous chemical environments that demand more than just basic safety measures. The selection of protective clothing is a matter of compliance, but also a critical factor in safeguarding lives and maintaining productivity.



Prof Cas Badenhorst
Associate Professor, Occupational Hygiene and Health Research Initiative (OHHRI), North West University
Diesel particulate matter and welding fume protection through PPE
DPM and welding fumes are serious carcinogenic hazards. According to the hierarchy of controls, PPE may be the last, but it is essential when exposures remain. To be effective, respirators must be selected by hazard and fit test. Ongoing assessment and worker training is critical.



David Selepe
High Voltage Technician at a power utility
Case study: My gripping and debilitating lesson: The high cost of neglecting PPE
During an on-the-job assignment, David made contact with high voltage electricity after disregarding clear safety rules and regulations. He fell from 8 meters above the ground and sustained serious injuries which included loss of fingers and a broken hip. He has been a workplace safety motivational speaker for the past 15 years to raise awareness about the importance of adhering to safety rules and regulations and the importance of using the correctly provided PPE.



Mustapha Adam
Managing Partner Premier Workwear
Workwear comfort is compliance: Fit & fabric choices reduce risk & improve efficiency
Workwear is often treated as a uniform: something you issue, replace, and hope people keep wearing. However, in safety-critical environments, workwear acts as a visible safety control that either supports safe behaviour or quietly works against it. When garments are hot, restrictive, heavy, or poorly fitted, workers adapt in their own way: sleeves get rolled up, zips get left open, jackets get "forgotten" on warm days, and people swap items to something that feels easier. Comfort, therefore, is not simply a luxury it is a primary driver of PPE compliance.



Dylan Sutherland
Protekta Safety Gear
Making fall protection practical
Working at height is by its very nature potentially dangerous. But only potentially. Properly planned and executed, working at height is in fact safe. However, accidents and injuries are common. Why? Most businesses do fall-protection plans as tick-box exercises. Industry must always plan correctly.



Wynand Englebrecht
CEO & Founder Fire Ops SA
Surviving the blaze: How flame resistant clothing saved the day
Supplying fire fighters with the highest quality of flame resistant clothing is crucial. This will not only reduce the risk of severe burns, but also insulate against extreme heat, giving fire fighters more time to escape dangerous situations and perform rescues safely. Supplying fire fighters with inferior quality flame resistant gear can increase the risk of injury or death in a fire.



Leighton Bennett
Chairman Safety First Association
PPE procurement in workplace safety: An OSH professional's responsibility
Health and safety aspects and requirements apply to every item, article, material, machine etc that is procured, bought, used and even sold. But H&S is often ignored. Often, only with hindsight, after an incident occurs that the issues that should have been considered in procurement activities are identified.



Miguel Bustin
Safety Product Specialist PPE
Proactive or reactive? Choose correctly to save your hands
Hands are the most used and abused tools. Hand protection has evolved significantly in response to the critical need to reduce workplace injuries. Modern advancements in science, ergonomic design and performance engineering have reshaped the hand protection landscape. Organisations must adopt a proactive approach.



Kobus van Wyngaardt
SACPCMP
PPE in construction management



Nivie Atkinson
SAPEMA Secretary and Administrator, was the glue that kept the flow of presentations running.

NETWORKING and LEARNING





EXHIBITORS



Dräger South Africa



Sendi Apparel



Sedulitas



RealPPE



Palm Footwear



DuPont



Premier Workwear



PSA



Lithemba Environmental H&S



FireOps SA



Mining safety matters: *Alcohol and drug testing that saves lives*



Alcohol interlocks prevent vehicles from operating when drivers are impaired — eliminating risk before engines start

In South Africa's high-risk mining environments, ensuring that every worker arrives fit for duty is non-negotiable. Research by the Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) has shown measurable alcohol presence in workers involved in occupational injuries, highlighting the direct link between impairment and workplace incidents.

Alcohol and drug impairment continue to be leading contributors to preventable incidents, with [miningsafety.co.za] reporting that substance abuse among mineworkers significantly increases lapses in judgement, reduces motor skills, and poses serious safety risks to teams underground and on surface operations.

At the same time, the Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA) requires mine employers to implement appropriate, proactive measures to eliminate or mitigate workplace health and safety risks.

Legal analyses confirm that, under this obligation, many mining operations enforce mandatory alcohol and drug testing policies, including on-site breathalyser screening, to ensure only fit-for-duty personnel enter hazardous operational areas.

Interlocks prevent vehicles from starting when breath alcohol concentrations exceed set limits, eliminating risk before operation begins.

Measurement accuracy is very high, and manipulation is virtually impossible.

Existing fleets can be retrofitted quickly with minimal maintenance, often aligned with standard workshop routines.

Studies show alcohol-related relapse rates can be reduced by 70.75%.

Sustainable effects are achieved when devices are combined with coaching, compliance rules, and data feedback.

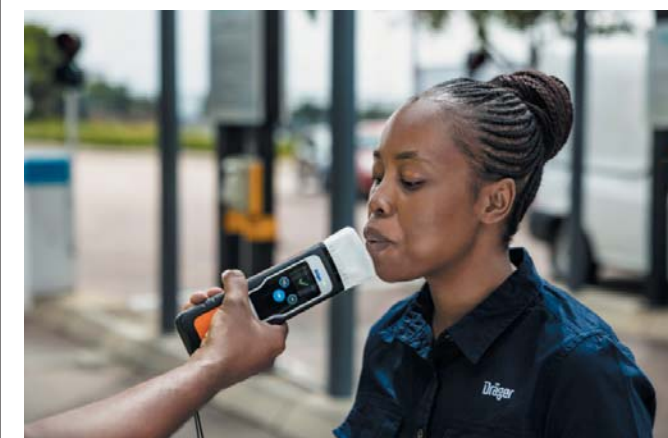
In 2023, the industry bulletin highlighted that mining companies face increasing safety risks from drugs such as cannabis and nyaope (South African street drug), and that this drives the adoption of saliva-based drug testing on mine premises.

The MHSA requires employers to implement drug testing, with saliva tests enabling rapid on-site detection of recent drug use [africanmining.co.za].

In high-risk mining environments, preventing impairment before work even begins is one of the most effective ways to save lives—and technology makes it achievable.



Using the Drug testing equipment such as the Dräger DrugCheck 3000 to find out within minutes whether a person has recently consumed certain drugs in the workplace



Alcohol Breathalysers such as the Dräger Alcotest 5000 can test up to 12 people per minute, quickly identifying whether individuals are intoxicated



Warren Kraak Marketing Manager:
Business Field Processing Industries:
Law Enforcement

RealPPE Marketplace: *Where safety meets smarter procurement*

RealPPE Marketplace is a 100% black women-owned B2B PPE marketplace built for the South African industry.

Founded after years of witnessing safety officers and procurement teams lose time to fragmented suppliers, inconsistent pricing, and missing documentation, RealPPE was created to bring structure and reliability to industrial PPE sourcing.

The platform serves clients across mining, construction, manufacturing, healthcare, and waste management—connecting buyers to a network of vetted suppliers across the full range of occupational safety requirements: head protection, respiratory equipment, hand and foot protection, high-visibility workwear, eye and face protection, chemical-resistant clothing, and fall arrest equipment.

At RealPPE, quality, inclusivity, and efficiency are at the centre of everything. The platform carries trusted brands including Bova Safety Wear, Dromex, 3M, Delta Plus, Rebel, Pioneer, Uvex, Jonsson Wear, and Altitude Workwear, giving buyers access to recognised, reliable names across every safety category.



Where required, supplier certification documentation is available through the platform's vetted supplier network.

PPE FOR WOMEN

A standout feature is the HerPPE category—a dedicated range of PPE designed specifically for women in trades and industrial environments.

In sectors where women have historically been issued with ill-fitting, male-proportioned gear, HerPPE

addresses the gap with purpose-fitted protection across key safety categories. It is both a product commitment and a statement about who belongs on site.



Contact: Lebo Mashaba (Founder and CEO)
+27 83 696 0191 / lebo@realppe.co.za / www.realppe.co.za

Sendi Apparel: *South African manufacturer of workwear*



Sendi Apparel is 100% female owned.

Sendi Apparel is a manufacturer of conti suits, boiler suits and reflective vests—all part of its in-house range.

With the safety of workers as their top priority, all garments are proudly designed and crafted to the highest standards at their factory in Durban.

Sendi Apparel offer PPE at wholesale prices.

Contact: sales@sendiapparel.co.za
WhatsApp: 0837841964



DuPont Personal Protection



DuPont Personal Protection is a global leader in chemical protective clothing serving industrial, life sciences, controlled environments, and emergency response professionals worldwide.

Focused on delivering trusted protection, the business helps workers safely perform tasks ranging from the routine to the most demanding—so they can return home safely every day.

DuPont Personal Protection is home to some of the industry's most trusted and innovative brands—including Tyvek®,

Tyvek® APX™, Tyvek® IsoClean®, Tychem®, and ProShield®.

DuPont Personal Protection provides durable barrier protection against infections, diseases, chemicals, and hazardous materials.

Its solutions are built on advanced fabric technologies, thoughtful garment design, and customer-driven innovation.

From product manufacturing to packaging and distribution, DuPont Personal Protection is focused on continuous innovation to advance

sustainability along the value chain.

Supported by a broad distribution network and expert field support, DuPont Personal Protection is guided by a simple belief: every worker deserves trusted protection at every stage of their work.

For more information, visit tyvek.com/ppe
Contact number: 080 691 0042
loren.pearson@dupont.com
Patricia.Ntsekhe@dupont.com

PSA Africa: *Supplier to the PPE Industry*



Since 1997, PSA Africa has supplied high quality precision instrumentation for the detection of atmospheric and respiratory hazards. PSA Africa boasts a network of skilled professionals across South Africa, ready to meet your needs for high-quality products and exceptional after-sales support.

We provide a range of safety services for our clients, such as maintenance and calibration of purchased instruments, training in their usage, and assistance with interpreting test results. Our offerings cater to multiple industrial sectors:



PSA has been the provider for MSA Safety Respiratory Protection equipment for over 25 years. The range includes air-purifying respirators (APR), supplied air respirators (SCBA), escape respirators, and disposable respirators.



PSA has been the LifeLoc Technologies authorised distributor in South Africa since 2005 providing maintenance and calibration as well as policy formulation and training.

Contact: Tel: 0860543356 / enquiries@psafrica.co.za
www.psafrica.co.za



PSA distribute MSA's fall protection equipment in sub-sahara Africa.



PSA Africa's HERO hard hats deliver reliable head protection with specialised designs for mining, industrial, heat-intensive and electrical environments.

Palm Footwear Manufacturers (PTY) LTD

We are a Proudly South African, SABS ISO 9001 certified company. Fifty-nine years on, Palm continues to be a family-owned business, whose cornerstones remain people, quality, service and innovation.

With the production and development of our own raw materials, we are able to deliver responsible, earth friendly footwear, as we navigate our green journey. Our factory is partially powered by solar energy, highlighting our dedication to sustainable. Quick turn-around times are the foundation of our legendary service!

THE PALM APPROACH

Our business, an extended family operation with average permanent staff service of 20 years; is steeped in a culture set by our founding father's simple philosophy of treating people with dignity and decorum. People before profit – this is still important to us.

The steadfast support from our business partners both locally and abroad, ensures that we remain at the forefront of innovation and development in our market segments.

All PVC for school shoe soles and gumboots are both compounded, using our very own phthalate-free formulae, and injected at our plant. This ensures that we deliver lead-free,

“greener” shoes to the market. Palm endeavours to vertically integrate continually. Our unique selling proposition remains our exclusive developments from our suppliers, ensuring the highest quality standards we can strive for.

OUR BRANDS



Almost 20 years ago, Palm moved from being a pure production facility by launching Trustees, as South Africa needed a school shoe brand that offered great value and uncompromising quality. Trustees is a flexible school shoe that is built on a podiatry approved last. Trustees offers, to the children of Africa, affordable shoes with high standards of workmanship. The Trustees school shoe brand continues to grow exponentially year-on-year. Our mission remains to fit every child in Africa into correctly engineered school shoes. We are proud to say that we are born, bred and still growing into Africa.

Our uppers are fully breathable, and offer high scuff resistance. Our carefully formulated inhouse, virgin, phthalate-free PVC, from which our soles are injected, ensures an unsurpassed 3 million flexes. We therefore confidently offer a six-month



guarantee for our school shoes.

Our green journey has enabled us to partner with key retailers who share a similar vision, particularly in the area of children's fashion. Our upcycled, eco-friendly materials are exceptionally well received. This has set a new standard in responsible, sustainable value-for-money footwear.

terraPOD

In 2010 we launched our Safety Footwear range with steel toe-capped virgin PVC gumboots with profiled midsoles. To date, this safety gumboot with a unique ergonomic steel toe cap is the only gumboot to be approved and recommended by the Podiatry Association of South Africa (PASA).

2019 was another watershed year for Palm, as we entered the Industrial Safety Footwear segment - an elemental expansion from our gumboot range. Our wide fitting last, together with our unique Born Free Walking System offers safety and comfort with unhindered freedom of movement. All our shoes are constructed with genuine leather uppers and dual-density polyurethane (PU) soles, supplied by our preferred raw material partner BASF.

Our Industrial Safety Footwear range conforms to European standards (CE).

terraPOD footwear was created to be both comfortable and durable for the tireless artisans and breadwinners on the African continent.

We invite you to journey our websites www.palm.co.za, www.terrapod.co.za & www.trustees-sa.com for further information.



DON'T HOPE SO, KNOW SO!

In case of a workplace incident, know that your PPE Suppliers are **Compliant and Trustworthy!**

When choosing a PPE supplier, ensure that they are an official **SAPEMA Member**. SAPEMA Members are experienced Manufacturers and Distributors of compliant PPE to recognised and approved Safety standards. **SAPEMA and its Members stand for Compliant Product, correct usage of PPE according to standards and specifications.**

Your Protection is Our Priority!

For more information, contact SAPEMA on 063-442-9935 or info@sapema.org.



www.sapema.org

When nature strikes:

Are South African OHS systems ready for the forces of nature?



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For too long, South African workplaces treated earthquakes, tsunamis, flash floods, tornadoes, and other extreme natural events as distant possibilities or 'acts of God' outside the scope of routine hazard management. That mindset is no longer defensible. From the KZN coastal floods of 2022 to mining-induced seismicity on the Highveld, from tornado swaths in Mpumalanga to storm surges along the Wild Coast, natural forces are increasingly testing our infrastructure, our supply chains, and most importantly, our people.

In South Africa, we don't have a FEMA. We don't operate under OSHA. We work within the framework of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, the Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002, and the guidance of the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC). And crucially, we do not have a national network of automatic tsunami or earthquake sirens. Preparedness here isn't handed down from a federal agency; it must be built, tested, and owned at site level.

So, how prepared are we to remedy these forces? The truth is: we don't remedy nature. We anticipate it, mitigate its impact, and respond with discipline. The question is no longer if these hazards will intersect with our operations, but whether our OHS systems are engineered for reality, not paperwork.

DOES YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT ACTUALLY COVER THESE THREATS?

Many South African organisations claim emergency readiness while relying on generic, template-driven plans that ignore local hazard profiles. If your Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) doesn't explicitly map natural hazards against your site's geography, operational footprint, and municipal disaster context, it is incomplete, and non-compliant.

Under the OHS Act, employers have a legal duty to identify foreseeable hazards and implement controls. The Disaster Management Act reinforces this by requiring alignment with provincial and municipal disaster management plans. A compliant HIRA must integrate:

- NDMC and provincial hazard mapping
 - South African Weather Service (SAWS) climate and severe weather projections
 - Council for Geoscience seismic data (natural faults + mining-induced tremors)
 - Historical flood, storm, and tornado incident records
 - Site-specific vulnerabilities: drainage capacity, structural age, load-bearing limits, utility dependencies, and communication redundancies
- A risk assessment that treats natural forces as "low

probability, ignore" isn't just inadequate. It exposes leadership to civil, criminal, and regulatory liability when the foreseeable becomes reality.

WHAT IS THE RISK, AND HOW DO WE PREPARE?

Natural hazards present two distinct OHS risk phases: acute threat to life during the event, and chronic, cascading hazards in the aftermath. Structural compromise, electrical faults, chemical releases, contaminated water, airborne particulates, and psychological trauma routinely follow extreme weather or seismic activity.

Preparation must follow the hierarchy of controls, adapted to South African operational realities:

- **Engineering controls:** Seismic bracing for racking and machinery, flood-resistant foundations, wind-rated roofing, elevated critical control panels and data servers, reinforced safe rooms, and backup power/water systems designed for load-shedding resilience.
 - **Administrative controls:** Site-specific emergency action plans aligned with municipal disaster protocols, multi-channel early warning integration, accountability drills under degraded conditions, cross-trained emergency response teams, and post-incident hazard screening procedures.
 - **PPE & emergency equipment:** High-visibility gear, hard hats, N95/P2 respirators for dust/mold, trauma and first aid kits, satellite or two-way radios, emergency lighting, and water purification supplies.
- Preparedness isn't a static document. It's a living system, reviewed annually, after near-misses, or when municipal hazard maps, climate data, or site infrastructure changes.
- **Coastal readiness:** No sirens, No excuses.

South Africa has no national tsunami or coastal surge siren network. Warning relies on SAWS, the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning Centre (IOTWIC), municipal SMS trees, and community radio. Waiting for an official alert can cost lives. Coastal workplaces must operate on a self-activating protocol:

- **Recognise natural warnings:** Strong, prolonged ground shaking; sudden, abnormal recession of water; loud ocean roar; rapid tide changes.
- **Evacuate immediately:** Move inland and to verified high ground (0.30m elevation or 0.1km inland, depending on topography). Do not wait for confirmation.
- **Use vertical evacuation if trapped:** Ascend to reinforced concrete upper floors or designated safe structures if high ground is inaccessible.
- **Account for personnel:** Use pre-assigned muster points, digital check-ins, or headcount protocols. Do not assume "missing" staff are safe until verified.

- **Stay clear until official all-clear:** Tsunamis and storm surges arrive in waves. The first is rarely the largest. Return only when municipal emergency management or NDMC provincial coordinators declare it safe.

Property damage reduction is a safety issue. Flooded electrical infrastructure, displaced hazardous materials, and compromised structural integrity create lethal post-event conditions. Engineering controls and strict post-event lockdown/tagout procedures save lives long after the water recedes.

EARTHQUAKES, FLOODS, TORNADOES, AND METEOR THREATS: DO WE HAVE CONTROLS?

- **Earthquakes:** South Africa experiences both natural seismicity (Western Cape, Ceres-Tulbagh fault zone) and mining-induced tremours (Gauteng, Free State, North West). *Protocol:* Drop, cover, hold on. Secure heavy loads, overhead piping, and storage racks. *Post-event:* restrict re-entry until structural inspection is complete, monitor for gas/electrical faults, and isolate compromised systems per SANS 10400 and SANS 10330 guidelines.
- **Floods:** KZN's 2022 devastation proved that drainage, topography, and urban sprawl compound natural rainfall into lethal events. *Controls:* elevate critical controls, deploy flood barriers or sandbag protocols in advance, train staff in water hazard awareness, and maintain post-flood screening for electrical faults, chemical contamination, mold, and waterborne pathogens.
- **Tornadoes and severe storms:** Common in KZN Midlands, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng Highveld. *Controls:* designate FEMA-equivalent reinforced safe rooms (interior, windowless, ground-floor or basement where feasible), integrate SAWS severe weather alerts with backup power, and practice rapid accountability drills (<3 minutes to shelter).
- **Meteor threats:** Ultra-low probability, but managed under South Africa's all-hazards emergency framework. *Controls mirror other sudden-impact events:* shelter-in-place protocols, communication redundancy, coordination with municipal disaster centres and SAPS, and post-impact debris/air quality management. The objective isn't predicting the unpredictable; it's ensuring your emergency structure scales to high-impact, low-probability events.

RISK ASSESSMENTS VS. STARTING A FIRE AND SINGING KUMBAYA

Let's address the question directly: No, we do not skip risk assessments and hope for the best. Magical thinking, passive optimism, and "kumbaya" complacency have no place in South African OHS. Under the OHS Act, employers bear a non-delegable duty of care. The NDMC and provincial disaster centres coordinate response; they do not replace workplace preparedness. Municipal resources are stretched, communication networks fail, and

emergency services prioritise life-threatening incidents over commercial or industrial sites.

A robust risk assessment doesn't guarantee safety; it guarantees responsibility. It forces leadership to allocate budget for engineering controls, mandates realistic training cycles, establishes communication redundancies, and creates accountability when conditions change. Hope is not a control measure. Planning is.

ACTIONABLE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST FOR SOUTH AFRICAN OHS LEADERS

- ☒ Integrate natural hazards into your formal HIRA using NDMC, SAWS, and Council for Geoscience data
- ☒ Align emergency plans with municipal disaster management frameworks and provincial NDMC guidelines
- ☒ Implement multi-channel warning systems: SAWS alerts, SMS trees, WhatsApp broadcast groups, two-way radios, and PA backups
- ☒ Conduct scenario-based drills quarterly under realistic conditions: load shedding, comms failure, blocked access routes, night shifts
- ☒ Secure hazardous materials, fuel storage, and electrical infrastructure against flood, seismic, and wind loads
- ☒ Train designated response teams in post-event hazard screening (structural, electrical, chemical, biological, psychological first aid)
- ☒ Establish mutual aid agreements with neighbouring facilities, local disaster centres, SAPS emergency units, and private medical responders
- ☒ Review and update plans annually or after any near-miss, regulatory change, municipal hazard map revision, or extreme weather event.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Nature doesn't negotiate. It doesn't care about production targets, quarterly reports, or compliance checkboxes. In South Africa, where municipal response capacity varies, infrastructure is under strain, and early warning networks are limited, workplace self-reliance isn't optional—it's a legal, ethical, and operational imperative.

Forces of nature are no longer external surprises. They are foreseeable hazards that demand the same rigour we apply to chemical exposure, machine guarding, and confined space entry. If your risk assessment covers them, your controls are validated, your drills are realistic, and your leadership treats preparedness as a core operational value—you're not just compliant. You're resilient.

If you're still waiting for a siren that doesn't exist, it's time to rewrite your plan. Before the wind howls, the waters rise, or the ground shakes.

Preparedness isn't an expense. It's the foundation of modern South African OHS.



Publication of Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work Regulations under COIDA



Mendel Sass, Partner,
Bowmans



Amandlaka Thixo
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Bowmans

The Minister of Employment and Labour recently published various sets of regulations under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (COIDA) which came into effect on 6 March 2026, including the Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work Regulations (RRR2W Regulations).

The publication of these regulations follows the proclamation notice in January 2026, which brought into effect various amendments to COIDA.

The RRR2W Regulations, which give effect to the new section 70A of COIDA, introduce a comprehensive, collaborative, person-centred framework aimed at supporting employees who have sustained occupational injuries or contracted occupational diseases to return to the workplace safely and sustainably.

We address some of the key features of the RRR2W Regulations below:

APPOINTMENT OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS REPRESENTATIVES

Employers or employers individually liable must designate a Health and Wellness Representative (H&W Representative) to act as a liaison officer between the Compensation Fund / Licensee, the affected employees and medical and rehabilitation service providers.

‘Employers individually liable’ are those who, in terms of section 84 of COIDA, are exempt from paying assessments to the Compensation Fund.

The H&W Representatives must possess the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to exercise the listed functions, including coordinating and monitoring rehabilitation efforts, collaborating with the Rehabilitation Case Manager, accessing medical and rehabilitation reports (with consent), supporting employees, coordinating the provision of assistive devices and technology, and maintaining confidential case files.

ENROLMENT INTO REHABILITATION AND RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAMME

Where an employee suffers a permanent or temporary total disablement because of an occupational injury or disease, the Compensation Fund / Licensee / employer individually liable must, with the consent of the employee, provide the employee with access to rehabilitation programmes to assist in restoring the employee’s health, independent living and participation in the labour market and society.

The Compensation Fund / Licensee / employer / employer individually liable may approve the

referral for the Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work Programme upon the recommendation of the employer’s H&W Representative or a healthcare service provider.

The requirements for enrolment are that the liability for the accident or disease must be duly accepted by the Fund / Licensee; and the injury must be classified as a temporary and/or permanent disablement as defined in section 1 of COIDA.

Before providing rehabilitation, the employee may be required to undergo assessments and cooperate with the Fund / Licensee / employer / employer individually liable, as the case may be, in developing and implementing an individual rehabilitation plan.

ROLE OF REHABILITATION CASE MANAGERS

Rehabilitation Case Managers would be appointed by the Compensation Fund / Licensee to execute a variety of functions, including to set guidelines for referrals of affected employees to the relevant multi-disciplinary rehabilitation team, coordinate multi-disciplinary interventions, approve rehabilitation plans, track return-to-work progress and report on outcomes.

EXPANDED EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS

An employer or employer individually liable must facilitate access to rehabilitation for employees who have sustained or contracted occupational injuries or diseases and assist in their reintegration into the workplace as far as reasonable practicable.

In so doing, the employer has a number of obligations, including, among others:

- facilitating required access and assistance to enable a case manager to perform their functions;
- establishing and maintaining a secure and readily accessible data system containing relevant health and rehabilitation information and submitting reporting data on enrolled Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-To-Work cases to the Fund / Licensee in the prescribed manner on an annual basis;
- keeping Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work reports for a period of not less than 30 years;
- including workplace Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work provisions into their applicable human resources policies;
- integrating workplace Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work cases into



relevant internal structures to implement and monitor the programme within the workplace;

- facilitating access to vocational guidance, skills development initiatives, and job placement opportunities; and
- providing reasonable accommodation and transitional/temporary work to allow affected employees to work safely in the return-to work process.

In addition, employers may not dismiss an employee based on incapacity, reduce her/his rate of remuneration, or alter terms and conditions to those that are less favourable, as a result of being injured on duty or contracting an occupational disease, without adhering to labour legislation and notifying the Fund / Licensee of its intention to do so.

Should an employee be dismissed, the employer must report this to the Chief Inspector and the Fund/ Licensee in writing, stating the reasons for dismissal.

Further, the employer is required to notify the Fund / Licensee in writing about the resumption of duty or inability to retain the employee after reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the employment of the affected employee.

EMPLOYER REBATE

An employer may qualify for a section 85(3) rebate if it participates in the rehabilitation of employees and includes its Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-To-Work procedures into its applicable HR policies.

The HR policy provisions must be freely accessible and communicated to all employees in writing and contain certain prescribed features.

EMPLOYEE OBLIGATIONS

Where affected employees have consented to participate in Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Return-to-Work programmes, they are then required to avail themselves and participate actively.

They will be required to return to their pre-injury roles and perform pre-injury duties, where functionally and medically reasonable; and to accept an offer of reasonable accommodation by the employer (which can include alternative job placement, with or without assistive devices, technology, or duties) where this is part of an agreed Return-To-Work plan.

COST OF REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION BENEFITS

The costs for clinical and social rehabilitative and assistive devices and technology for beneficiaries with a permanent or temporary total disablement shall be borne by the Compensation Fund / Licensee / employer individually liable.

The costs of non-clinical vocational rehabilitation for employees who returned to work shall, however, be borne by the employer / employer individually liable, including the costs of reasonable accommodation.

Despite the benefits mentioned above, affected employees would still be entitled to receive compensation benefits payable under the COIDA, with the necessary adjustments as deemed to be equitable in the circumstances of each case.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR EMPLOYERS

With the RRR2W Regulations now in force, employers are encouraged to take steps to put the necessary policies and procedures in place, so that they will be ready to implement the RRR2W Regulations when faced with an occupational injury or disease in the workplace.

SAIOH President's Message

Prof. Cas Badenhorst: SAIOH President, e-mail: president@saioh.co.za

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) remains committed to serving its members and advancing the occupational hygiene profession.

As part of this commitment, the Institute regularly shares updates and highlights key developments with its community.

SAIOH thrives on the active participation and ethical contributions of its members, whose engagement continues to shape and strengthen the field.

The Institute therefore welcomes and encourages feedback on the topics presented in this publication, as part of its ongoing effort to support dialogue and collective progress.

Occupational Hygiene in South Africa: *From Compliance to Accountability*



Prof. Cas Badenhorst:
SAIOH president,
e-mail:
president@saioh.co.za

Fellow members and colleagues,

The past two quarters have tested SAIOH's resolve, exposing vulnerabilities in our administrative systems even as our profession's importance grows across southern Africa. Rapid membership expansion, compounded by staff shortages and an essential but rigorous audit of continuing professional development (CPD) submissions have strained our capacity to deliver the timely service you expect. I acknowledge the frustration many of you have experienced with delayed certificates, unanswered enquiries and a website that has not met our needs. For all these constraints, on behalf of the SAIOH Management Board, I apologise.

These operational pressures coincided with a leadership transition in December 2025, when Ms Karen du Preez stepped down and I accepted the presidency. Together with the SAIOH Management Board and our dedicated staff, we have moved quickly to stabilise governance, approve a responsible 2026 budget and prioritise a focused action plan for the year ahead. Our immediate objectives are clear: strengthen administrative capacity, revitalise branch

functionality, and finalise the Quality Management System (QMS) and new website to restore efficient member services.

Despite constraints, our professional work continues: the Professional Certification Committee (PCC) is progressing assessments, the Occupational Hygiene Skills Set and ethics initiatives are advancing, and members retain access to international CPD through the offerings from the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA). We are also forging ahead with conference preparations, 28 September to 1 October 2026 in Johannesburg, where SAIOH and the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) will convene to build stronger partnerships for healthier workplaces.

SAIOH's resilience is rooted in our membership, volunteers and partners. I am confident that by concentrating on these priorities and fostering open communication, we will convert recent challenges into lasting improvements that strengthen our profession and better serve our members.

SAIOH's Quarters in Review

The past two quarters have been one of the most challenging periods for SAIOH in recent memory. Between November 2025 and March 2026, the organisation grappled with mounting administrative pressures, driven by a rapidly expanding membership base and compounded by reduced staff capacity.

With one team member on maternity leave and the PCC enforcing a full audit of CPD submissions, the strain on the administrative office has been palpable. Member frustrations have grown, with complaints of unanswered calls, delayed certificates, and a website with limited functionality while awaiting its long-overdue upgrade.

Leadership changes added to the turbulence. In December 2025, SAIOH bid farewell to its President, Ms Karen du Preez, who stepped down for personal reasons. Prof. Cas Badenhorst, the Vice President, has since assumed the presidency, guiding the

organisation through this transitional phase. The Management Board approved the 2026 budget, keeping fee increases modest at 4%, and has resolved to tackle the administrative crisis head-on. The focus will be sharpened on three critical areas: strengthening administrative capacity, revitalising branch functionality, and finalising both the QMS and the new website.

Despite these operational constraints, the PCC continues to discharge its core mandate, with first-quarter written assessments having proceeded and remaining fully on track, despite a brief postponement. The Occupational Hygiene Skills Set development team remains committed, meeting regularly to advance professional standards. Members also benefit from ongoing access to international webinars through the IOHA and AIHA, ensuring CPD opportunities.



Looking ahead, there is cause for optimism. Planning for the 2026 SAIOH Annual Conference is well underway, led by the Gauteng Branch in collaboration with the NIOH.

Scheduled for 28 September to 1 October in Johannesburg, the conference will celebrate NIOH's 70th anniversary under the theme 'Building

Stronger Partnerships for Healthier Workplaces'.

While the past few months have tested SAIOH's resilience, this trying time has also underscored the organisation's determination to adapt, refocus, and deliver on its commitment to members. The months ahead will be critical in turning challenges into opportunities for renewal.

SAIOH Annual Conference 2026 in collaboration with the NIOH

Date: 28 Sept - 1 Oct 2026
Venue: Thaba Eco Hotel, Johannesburg
Theme: Building Stronger Partnerships for Healthier Workplaces

The NIOH celebrates 70 years of excellence and impact in 2026

SAVE THE DATE

SAIOH

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
 Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

National Council Feedback

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SAIOH Management Update: 19 November 2025 – 25 February 2026

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

The SAIOH Management Board held several impromptu / special meetings, over and above its scheduled meetings, to address a broad range of issues, viz., the resignation of Ms Karen du Preez from her position of SAIOH President and the appointment of the new President, Prof. Cas Badenhorst, who stepped up to the plate from his post of SAIOH Vice President; the way forward for SAIOH as it manages the change in leadership and addresses the current administrative crisis; the development and approval of the budget for 2026; and an initial discussion around the current SAIOH Strategy Plan 2023-2027 and areas of focus for 2026 in preparation for the SAIOH Strategy Session (19 November 2025, 1 and 4 December 2025, 22 January 2026, 16 and 17 February 2026).

Two administrative staff meetings were held on 19 and 20 November 2025; and the Chief Administrative Officer Ms Kate Smart and SAIOH PCC Administrator Ms Lee Doolan attended a three-day online management training course presented by Dr Charles Cotte (an independent global learning and development strategist and practitioner).

SAIOH is experiencing an administrative support crisis, caused by a perfect storm of factors, including:

- The current administrative staff not being able to keep up with a large and growing membership,
- One of the four administrative staff members – Ms Tracy Mphaphuli – being on maternity leave over this critical time of the year,
- The decision taken by the PCC to audit 100% of all CPD submissions before releasing the members’ registration certificates (mainly brought about by apathy and dishonesty from members in terms of self-reporting of CPD activities),
- An ever-increasing number of complaints received from the members regarding poor service delivery, such as unanswered telephone calls and e-mails, certificates not being released, etc.,
- The complicated logistics around in-person written PCC assessments,
- The additional administration burden around the next cycles’ ‘Ethics Certificate’, and

- The QMS which is incomplete and outdated, combined with the non-functional existing website, while the new website version is yet to be adopted and implemented.
- The SAIOH Annual Strategy Session was held on 23 February 2026 in hybrid format at the Spaces premises in Broadacres, Johannesburg. The decision was made to focus only on critical areas within the SAIOH Strategy Plan 2023-2027 (coordinated by Mr Jaco Pieterse), at least for the remainder of the current year, to manage uncertain times and address the administrative crisis being faced by SAIOH over recent months.
- The critical areas include: increasing administrative capacity, an overhaul of the functionality of SAIOH Branches, and finalising the website and QMS, all aimed at improved service delivery to SAIOH members.
- The first SAIOH Council meeting of the year followed on 24 February 2026, in virtual format.
- Other engagements worth noting include the following:
- The final meeting of the Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) for the previous year was held virtually on 25 November 2025; the OHSF also hosted an Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) feedback meeting for the OHTA Approved Training Providers (ATPs), online on 4 December 2025,
 - Several members of SAIOH Management attended the online meetings of the Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authority (OHAIA) Association on 21 November 2025 and 20 February 2026,
 - On 3 December 2025, several SAIOH management members attended and presented at the Eskom Occupational Hygiene Management Groups (OHMAG) workshop at Dräger SA in Midrand, Gauteng,
 - The SAIOH then Assistant Manager, Ms Claudina Nogueira, represented SAIOH at the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Professional Registration Bodies Forum online workshop on 28 January 2026,
 - The South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) reported there are currently 58



- accredited OHAIA's; the new ISO IEC 17020 of 2026 will be released in the near future; and
- SANAS has started its assessments and competency declarations on the new Noise Exposure Regulations (NER), and
- The new occupational hygiene report formats from the Department of Employment and

Labour (DEL) came into effect on 30 June 2025 and are strictly enforced during assessments; and the DEL invited SAIOH members to attend its hybrid Occupational Health and Safety Conference at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Johannesburg, 17 to 19 March 2026.

COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND TRAINING – LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

- SAIOH publishes its newsletter and President’s page in two electronic media formats, namely the Occupational Health Southern Africa (OHSA) journal, and the African Occupational Safety and Health (A-OS&H) magazine. These publications are issued every two to three months. As the issues are published online, the links are shared with SAIOH members via the Mailchimp system and posted on the SAIOH website.
- Several e-mail notifications on occupational hygiene and health webinars, conferences and short courses were distributed during the reporting period, including:
- Safety First Association’s PPE Conference (held on 10 - 11 March 2026 at Emperor’s Palace) - Ms Karen du Preez, Prof Cas Badenhorst and Dr Jeanneth Manganyi, among other SAIOH members, delivered presentations,
 - The announcement for the 8th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health, 15 - 17 April 2026 in Leuven, Belgium, organised by the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Scientific Committee on the History of the Prevention of Occupational and Environmental Diseases,
 - The announcement for the IOHA webinar ‘Crystalline silica exposure and the innovative practices shaping prevention worldwide’, held on 8 December 2025. Prof Cas Badenhorst presented

- on South Africa’s 20-year journey to reduce and eliminate respirable crystalline silica exposure – driven by strengthened regulations, advanced dust-control technologies, industry collaboration, and robust worker education initiatives,
- The announcement for the IOHA webinar ‘Beryllium: Haven’t we been here before?’ held on 25 February 2026 and organised by the IOHA’s Beryllium Health and Safety Committee (BHSC), and
 - The newsletters OHTA Global Link (latest issue being November 2025) and the IOHA Global Exposure Manager (GEM, the July-September 2025 issue was shared in December 2025) are posted on the SAIOH website and shared with SAIOH members via the Mailchimp system.
- SAIOH maintains proactive and regular engagement with its members through direct e-mail notifications, e.g., the Mailchimp system, telephone calls, and virtual meetings.
- These communications provide updates on, for example:
- Legislative changes and new standards,
 - Industry news and technical developments,
 - Professional opportunities in occupational hygiene, and
 - Products, services, courses, and webinars related to occupational hygiene, occupational health, and environmental safety.

SAIOH 2026 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

- The Conference Organising Committee, led by the SAIOH Gauteng Branch, has held several meetings since December 2025.
- This year’s Scientific Conference will be hosted by SAIOH in collaboration with NIOH, in celebration of the latter’s 70th anniversary:
- **Conference dates:** 28 September to 1 October 2026
 - **Venue:** Thaba Eco Hotel, southern Johannesburg
 - **Conference theme:** ‘Building Stronger Partnerships for Healthier Workplaces’.
- The Conference Organising Committee has finalised two guideline documents for the organisation and management of the Conference,

viz. ‘Terms of Reference for Conference Collaboration between SAIOH and NIOH’ and a proposed fees structure for conference participants.

Deliberations are underway for identification of tracks and sub-themes for the scientific programme, as well as decisions on professional development courses (PDCs) and keynote presenters.



From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC)

Lee Doolan: SAIOH PCC administrator, e-mail: lee@saioh.co.za
Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH past general manager, e-mail: deon.jvvuuren@gmail.com
Ivan Niranjan: PCC chairperson, e-mail: ivann@dut.ac.za

- The PCC ExCo held its first online meeting of the year on 25 February 2026,
 - The results of the total number of CPD assessments for 2025 were circulated to the PCC and ExCo, and to the SAIOH Council and Management Board. A summary of the assessment results for the period February to
- December 2025, is available from the PCC Administrator on request, and

 - The first PCC written assessments originally scheduled to take place on Friday, 27 February 2026, were postponed by one week until 6 March 2026, due to the current SAIOH administrative crisis.

SAIOH PCC Assessment Dates for 2026

Assessment / Meeting Dates	Closing date for applications and Payments for Application and Evaluation	Final date for all assessment payments	Assessment Date (Written)
Written Assessments	9 January	6 February	06 March
Oral Assessments	after 27 March		
Written Assessments	24 April	15 May	12 June
Oral Assessments	10 July*		
Written Assessments	7 August	28 August	9 October
Oral Assessments	13 November*		

*Oral Assessments will run over a two-week period, commencing on the dates provided.

Other news from the PCC:

- The SAIOH PCC continues to strengthen its certification, assessment, and professional development systems.
 - Significant progress has been made in developing the Occupational Hygiene Skills Set to support a new PCC Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool. The draft framework has been completed and is currently undergoing verification before submission to the PCC ExCo for approval.

The working group is also refining oral assessment scenarios and guidelines, while continuing assessor training initiatives introduced in 2025, including the launch of the tool at the 2025 SAIOH Annual Scientific Conference.
 - In response to security concerns and the growing risk of AI misuse in examinations, the PCC has decided not to pursue fully electronic written assessments at this stage. Written assessments will instead be conducted at controlled venues invigilated by at least two PCC assessors, with all examination papers securely couriered and centrally coordinated.

Oral assessments will continue primarily online via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, with recordings
- retained for quality assurance, while in-person assessments remain an option.

 - Enhancements have also been implemented in the CPD system. Members can now upload CPD activities throughout the year via MySAIOH, and since February 2025 all CPD submissions are subject to audit prior to certificate release.

New annual CPD minimum requirements for the different categories of occupational hygiene practitioners have replaced the previous five-year rolling cycle, and updated guidelines are currently under revision.

Due to the increased administrative complexity of the new system, SAIOH has decided to appoint an additional full-time administrative staff member to strengthen PCC capacity.
 - Members may request CPD amnesty or extensions through a motivated submission to the PCC ExCo, and the updated 'SAIOH QMS Chapter 2: PCC Assessment Rules and Procedures' is available on the SAIOH website.



Self-Assessment Tool & Skills Development

- A resolute sub-committee continues to refine the Occupational Hygiene Skills Set and Self-Assessment Tool.
- The first draft was completed earlier this year and is now undergoing final review.
 - The team is also developing oral question scenarios and updating the PCC Oral Assessment Guidelines.
 - Bi-monthly sessions were held in July, August, September, and October 2025.
 - On 21 October 2025, the PCC hosted a dynamic hybrid Professional Development Course (PDC 04) as part of the SAIOH 2025 Conference programme:
 - The opening hour, accessible to all SAIOH

members, introduced the official launch of the new Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool, designed to support members in evaluating their professional readiness and identifying growth opportunities.

- The remainder of the session was reserved for PCC assessors who engaged in targeted in-service training on SAIOH's newly implemented oral assessment system. This hands-on segment ensures assessors are well-prepared to uphold the integrity and consistency of the updated evaluation process.

The PCC extends its appreciation to all participants for their engagement and commitment to CPD.

Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF)

- The SAIOH OHSF continues to coordinate the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials, training providers, and academic programmes, while supporting the development of assessment systems where required.
- During 2025, the OHSF engaged with the OHTA-Approved Training Provider Forum and advanced the accreditation of tertiary qualifications.
- Notably, the occupational health qualification from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) was approved in July 2025.
- Engagements were also undertaken with several regional and national institutions to expand recognition of occupational hygiene programmes,
- with details of approved providers and qualifications to be published on the SAIOH website to guide students and certification candidates.
- Looking ahead, the OHSF plans to develop a SAIOH occupational hygiene legislation course in 2026 to support members who do not meet the legislative training requirements through existing pathways.
- The Forum is also strengthening professional development initiatives through collaboration with Hennie van der Westhuizen to develop CPD questions based on articles published in the OHSA journal, encouraging proactive member engagement with the publication.



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He has personally engaged in inspections and training over the years, accompanying Ministers of Labour and other senior officials in an advisory capacity during ministerial inspections. His extensive involvement includes training employers, employees, trade unions, and members of the public, as well as delivering keynote addresses and presentations at major occupational health and safety conferences.

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4. **Excellence:** We strive for continuous improvement, delivering quality outcomes that exceed expectations.
5. **Safety First:** We prioritise the wellbeing of people, fostering workplaces where every employee can thrive.

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At **Global 365 Health & Safety**, our values are more than words—they shape how we serve our clients every day. Integrity ensures transparent pricing and honest advice. Professionalism means you receive reliable, expert support at every stage. Through client partnership, we tailor solutions to your unique challenges, while our drive for excellence guarantees quality outcomes that exceed expectations. Above all, our safety-first approach protects your people, helping your business thrive with confidence.

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Founder: Tibor Szana

World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2026:

A call to action on mental health in Africa

While the world marks the 2026 World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2026 with the theme “Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment”, it is important to examine how we have thrived positively in Africa, in keeping with the theme of this year’s event. We need to examine the keywords “Psychosocial Working Environment”: this transcends beyond physical hazards such as machineries and chemicals, to addressing invisible factors that affect mental health and wellbeing of employees, covering how work is designed, organised and managed.

According to several reports, Africa is currently facing a prevailing pandemic influenced by the new world of work which is characterised by increasing job demands such as workload, work pace and elongated working hours. Above these is fair treatment, clarity in roles, job autonomy, workplace violence, harassment and many more. These factors are fast heightening the mental health of employees across the African region with approximately 64% of countries in Africa lacking dedicated mental health legislation or laws that are “custodial” rather than “therapeutic”. The “lunacy” legacy prescribed by the pre-colonial laws which focuses on locking patients away from people, rather than protecting their rights as employees and citizens, is still evident in countries like Sierra Leone and Gambia. While a number of African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Egypt and Cape Verde have updated their mental health laws, we need the others to emulate these positive steps in the overall interest of its citizens.

Approximately 15% of working age adults in Africa have mental health conditions at any given time, with a high number of employees working even when mentally unwell. With the growth of digital exposure and the fast economic growth across many African countries, there are clear indications that this prevalence will increase proportionately in years to come. Stress, burnout, fatigue, anxiety disorders and cardiovascular diseases will steadily grow. It is projected that Africa which currently has the world’s youngest population, will be the largest workforce in the world by 2035. If the mental health of this population is not protected, the burden of mental health conditions will be unmanageable.

CALL TO ACTION

We call on African policy makers, business executives and institutional leaders to:

- **Modernise the law:** Most mental health laws in Africa are outdated. We need countries to repeal their custodial legislation and champion right-based mental health laws that not only protect the right of workers from discrimination, but also legally protect workers from psychosocial hazards and mandate reasonable accommodation.
- **Advocate for promotion of mental health laws:** Some African countries have been able to draft and sign modern day mental health legislations into law. However, all-too-often these laws are not promoted. With the result, employers of labour are hardly aware of them, making their implementation a huge concern. The Nigerian Mental Health Act, 2023 is a clear example.

- **Improved capacity building for mental health management in Africa:** Africa currently has only 1.4 mental health workers per 100,000 people, compared to the global average of 9 per 100,000. For every 500,000 people in Africa, there is an average of only one psychiatrist. This needs to improve.
- **Improved budgetary allocation to mental health, and increase in the number of mental health centres:** A vast majority of African countries allocate only 1% of their total health budget to mental health against the 5% - 10% global average. This has grossly led to poor funding of mental health across Africa. Critically, 80% of this funding is channelled towards developing mental health centres in urban cities while rural areas are only sparsely funded.
- **Recognition of digital exposure as a mental health hazard:** With the fast rate of digital acceleration in Africa, the digital tools adoption rate in Africa is currently 10% higher than their global peers. Africa needs implementation of enforceable guidelines for the supervision of extremely high digital exposure in workplaces.
- **Redefine workplace safety:** The inclusion of Psychosocial Risk Assessments should be mandated into organisational Quality Management Systems (QMS). Mental health must be treated with the same urgency as physical safety and physical health.
- **Mandatory training of managers:** Workplace culture must shift from the existing culture of silence to a culture of support. Organisational leaders and managers must be trained not to be therapists, but to be “Empathetic First Responders” who are able to recognise early signs of burnout before employees suffer a breakdown.

CONCLUSION

While we collectively mark the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2026 with events being held across countries and cities in Africa, it is important to keep in mind the importance of ensuring healthy, psychosocial working environments. The inherent difficulties that exist such as the huge mental health knowledge gap and outdated mental health legislations in Africa need to be tackled.

We recommend immediate actionable interventions at regional, country and enterprise levels that focus on the psychosocial health and wellbeing of employees across the African continent. We call on the African Union, sub-regional economic blocs, policy makers, government ministries, departments and business leaders to lead this process towards ensuring healthy psychosocial working environments.



Dr Ehi Iden
President of OSHAfrica

ALCO-Safe, the first privately owned laboratory SANAS-accredited for breathalyser calibration



Rhys Evans, Managing
Director of ALCO-Safe

In South Africa's safety-critical industries, a single breathalyser reading can carry serious consequences—from removing a worker from a site, to defending a dismissal at the CCMA. Yet workplace alcohol testing operates in an environment with limited formal regulation, leaving employers exposed when results are challenged.

Against this backdrop, ALCO-Safe has reached a significant industry milestone, becoming the first privately owned laboratory in South Africa to achieve accreditation by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) for breathalyser calibration, and the only privately owned provider accredited to manage the full lifecycle of handheld breathalysers, from sales and servicing to calibration, under a single accredited framework.

This accreditation by SANAS marks a major shift, formally recognising the technical competence of ALCO-Safe's calibration laboratory, and confirming that its breathalyser calibration and verification processes meet strict national and international standards for accuracy, consistency and traceability.

TURNING UNCERTAINTY INTO DEFENSIBLE CERTAINTY

In the absence of a prescribed national standard for workplace breathalyser testing, employers are often required to justify the credibility of their testing equipment after the fact, particularly during CCMA or Labour Court proceedings.

"Without an independent benchmark, employers can find themselves trying to prove the accuracy of their instruments every time a result is challenged," explains Rhys Evans, Managing Director at ALCO-Safe.

"SANAS accreditation removes that uncertainty by confirming that our calibration procedures, documentation and accuracy calculations have already been independently assessed and approved."

The accreditation process required ALCO-Safe to demonstrate not only the precision of its calibration instruments, but also the strength of its quality systems.

Detailed procedures, traceable records and repeatable methods ensure calibration results remain consistent, regardless of which technician performs the work.

PROTECTING SAFETY PROGRAMMES AND LABOUR OUTCOMES

For organisations operating in mining, construction, transport, and manufacturing, the risks associated with inaccurate alcohol testing extend beyond compliance.

Questionable results can undermine zero-tolerance policies, expose employers to costly disputes and weaken overall safety cultures.

"The real risk of using non-accredited calibration services is not just technical, it's operational and legal," Evans notes.

"If a breathalyser result cannot be defended, employers may be forced to reinstate employees or settle cases, even when safety was genuinely at risk."

SANAS accreditation strengthens the legal defensibility of test results, giving employers confidence that alcohol testing outcomes will stand up to scrutiny when challenged.

MAKING AUDITS SIMPLER AND COMPLIANCE STRONGER

The benefits of SANAS accreditation extend into day-to-day operations, particularly during audits and safety reviews.

In heavily regulated sectors, employers are frequently required to demonstrate that their testing equipment meets recognised standards.

"When customers are audited, they can point directly to the SANAS certificate of the laboratory that supplies and calibrates their breathalysers," Evans says. "That single document carries significant weight and removes the need for lengthy technical explanations or repeated verification requests."

The certification also reduces administrative burden by streamlining audit processes and minimising delays linked to calibration challenges.

SETTING A NEW BENCHMARK FOR WORK-PLACE ALCOHOL TESTING

With this accreditation, ALCO-Safe has strengthened its position as a leader in breathalyser distribution, maintenance, and calibration in South Africa.

"This accreditation is about more than compliance," Evans concludes. "It's about trust, trust in the numbers, trust in the process and trust that employers are making decisions based on results that are accurate, fair and defensible."

By achieving SANAS accreditation, ALCO-Safe has not only reinforced its own standards but helped raise expectations for workplace alcohol testing across South Africa's safety-critical industries.



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Why most organisations are managing safety but ignoring emerging workplace risks



Providence Akpa is a Business Risk and Operational Excellence Advisor and Executive Consultant with over 25 years of experience delivering strategic solutions in Occupational Safety, Environmental Sustainability, ESG, HSE and climate risk. He is the Principal Consultant at QHSE Services Provyda Ltd, Nigeria. Providence has a PhD in Occupational Safety Health, a Master in Environmental Chemistry and Pollution Control, a BSc in Industrial Chemistry.

Most organisations today will confidently say they take safety seriously. They have HSE policies, conduct toolbox talks, track incidents, and pass audits. On paper, everything looks right. But from practical field experience, there is a growing disconnect between what organisations think they are managing and the risks that are actually shaping their outcomes.

The reality is this: many organisations are managing safety, but they are not managing workplace risk as it exists today.

Traditional HSE systems were built around visible hazards such as slips, trips, falls, equipment, and high-risk operations. These are still important, but they no longer represent the full picture.

Today's most critical risks are less visible and more complex. For instance, fatigue from extended work hours, mental strain from unrealistic targets, poor supervision, communication breakdowns, and increasing psycho-social pressures are quietly influencing how work is done. These factors are rarely captured in safety reports, yet they directly affect decision-making, human error, and incident occurrence.

I have seen organisations record strong safety metrics while the workforce is overstretched, near-misses are underreported, and operational pressure continues to build.

Everything appears compliant until a serious incident occurs. When it does, the focus is often on immediate causes, while the underlying system pressures that created the conditions are ignored.

THIS IS THE GAP

Organisations are focused on what is easy to measure, while overlooking what is critical to manage.

Emerging risks such as fatigue, cognitive overload, workplace stress, and even ESG-related exposures are not just "soft issues" they are real operational risks with direct impact on safety and performance.

Compliance alone is no longer enough. It provides structure, but it does not guarantee outcomes. The organisations that will perform consistently are those that understand that safety is not just about preventing incidents, but about managing how work is designed, supervised, and executed in reality.

The future of workplace safety is shifting from compliance to performance.

THE RISKS YOU DON'T SEE

The real question is no longer whether emerging

risks exist, but whether organisations are deliberately managing them with the same discipline applied to traditional safety hazards.

From practical experience across projects and operational environments, several critical risk categories are consistently underestimated, yet they are increasingly shaping safety outcomes.

Fatigue

Fatigue remains one of the most mismanaged risks in the workplace.

Extended shifts, compressed schedules, and unrealistic productivity expectations create a workforce that is physically present but cognitively compromised. Decision-making slows, situational awareness drops, and error likelihood increases.

Yet, because fatigue does not appear on incident dashboards in the same way as injuries, it is often ignored until it manifests as a serious event.

Organisations that are serious about performance must begin to treat fatigue as a measurable and controllable risk, not an individual weakness.

Cognitive overload

Closely linked to this is cognitive overload. Today's work environments demand constant multi-tasking, rapid decision-making, and continuous adaptation to changing priorities.

When workers are overloaded with information, instructions, and pressure, the ability to execute tasks safely is reduced.

I have seen competent personnel make critical errors, not due to lack of knowledge, but due to competing demands and mental saturation. This is not a training issue; it is a work design issue.

Psychosocial risk

Psychosocial risk is another area that continues to be underestimated.

Workplace stress, job insecurity, poor leadership engagement, and lack of psychological safety influence how individuals behave on the job.

When workers feel pressured, unheard, or disengaged, risk tolerance increases and reporting culture declines. Near-misses go unreported, unsafe conditions are normalised, and small failures accumulate into major incidents.

These are not abstract concerns; they are direct contributors to operational breakdown.

Supervisory effectiveness

Supervisory effectiveness also plays a defining role in managing emerging risks.

Many organisations promote technically competent individuals into supervisory roles without equipping them with the skills to manage

people, pressure, and performance dynamics. Poor supervision leads to unclear instructions, inconsistent enforcement of standards, and weak risk anticipation.

In reality, supervisors are the most critical control point in translating HSE systems into actual safe work execution.

Communication breakdown

Communication breakdown remains a silent but powerful risk driver. In high-risk environments, clarity, timing, and accuracy of communication can determine outcomes.

However, fragmented communication channels, assumptions, and lack of structured briefings often create gaps that are only discovered after incidents occur.

Effective organisations are those that intentionally design communication as a safety control, not an afterthought.

ESG risks

Additionally, ESG related risks are increasingly intersecting with workplace safety. Environmental pressures, community expectations, and governance failures can influence operational decisions, often introducing new risk exposures. For instance, cost-cutting driven by sustainability targets or reputational concerns can unintentionally compromise safety margins if not properly managed.

Forward-thinking organisations are already integrating these considerations into their risk management frameworks.

Addressing these emerging risks requires a shift in mindset. It is not about adding more procedures, but about improving how work is planned, resourced, supervised, and executed.

GOING FORWARD

Organisations must begin to ask different questions: Are workloads realistic? Is the workforce mentally and physically fit for the tasks? Are supervisors equipped to manage complexity? Are we capturing weak signals before they escalate?

The organisations that will lead in safety performance are those that move beyond compliance and start managing the conditions under which people work.

Because ultimately, incidents are rarely the result of a single failure, they are the outcome of accumulated, unmanaged pressures within the system.

LEADERSHIP ENSURES SYSTEMS REFLECT REALITY

Emerging OSH & ESG risks ultimately leads to one point: leadership.

Fatigue, cognitive overload, and psychosocial pressures are not isolated issues; they are outcomes of decisions made at the highest levels of the

organisation. This is where real control exists.

From experience, many organisations invest heavily in systems, audits, and compliance structures, yet overlook the governance decisions that shape how work is actually executed. Targets are set, resources allocated, timelines defined, often without fully considering the operational conditions they create. When these decisions are misaligned, they introduce pressures that no frontline control can effectively manage.

OWNERSHIP OF RISK

Managing emerging OSH & ESG risks requires integrating safety, wellbeing, and sustainability into core business strategy, not treating them as support functions. Boards and executive teams must begin to see risk not only in terms of incidents, but in terms of the conditions that drive human performance.

The critical shift is from lagging indicators to leading insight. Low incident rates do not necessarily mean low risk. Leaders must begin to ask: What is the workload reality? Are people operating within safe limits? Is supervision effective under pressure? Are we creating conditions where risk is being absorbed rather than reported?

Governance becomes effective when these questions influence decisions. Resource planning must reflect actual workload. Performance targets must align with safe execution capacity. Accountability must extend beyond compliance to include how decisions impact people on the ground.

In our environment where economic and operational pressures are significant, this becomes even more critical. Organisations are often pushed to deliver more with less, but without deliberate leadership intervention, this approach transfers risk directly to the workforce. Over time, this weakens systems, erodes culture, and increases the likelihood of failure.

Strong organisations recognise that safety performance is a direct reflection of leadership decisions. They build structures where operational feedback informs strategy, where supervisors are supported as key control points, and where employees are empowered to speak up without fear.

From an ESG perspective, this is the intersection of social and governance in action. Workforce wellbeing, ethical decision-making, and responsible leadership are no longer optional—they are indicators of organisational maturity and sustainability.

The organisations that will lead are those that move beyond compliance and begin to manage the realities of work through informed, accountable leadership. In the end, safety is not created by procedures alone, it is shaped by decisions.

This is where leadership becomes visible, and where sustainable performance is built.

RISK ASSESSMENTS:

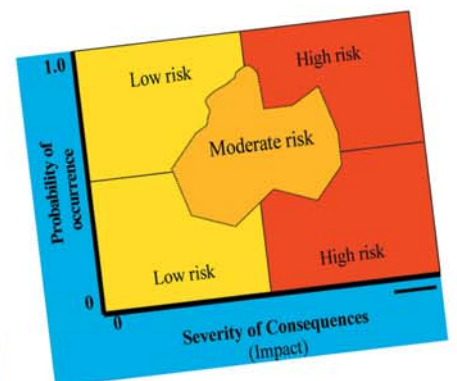
A Guide to Understanding the Basics

Risk Assessments are a “Do” requirement within the SANS/ISO 9001 Quality, 14000 Environmental & 45001 Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Management Systems standards and in the Risk Management System standard (SANS/ISO 31000).

The aim of this booklet is to facilitate the development of an understanding of the Risk Assessment basics and the Risk Assessment Process, with the outcome of enabling a novice or a professional, to perform a basic to baseline risk assessment with confidence.



Risk Assessments: Guide to Understanding the Basics



Second Edition

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