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2024 SAIOH CONFERENCE *Botswana*

Theme:

Sustainable Occupational Hygiene In Changing Work
Environments And Emerging Economies

21st - 24th Oct 2024

Phakalane Golf Estate & Convention Centre,
GABORONE

Enquiries Contact

Kate Smart - info@saioh.co.za

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EMS CONFERENCE 2024

QUO VADIS: FUTURE OF FIRE SAFETY AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES - INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS: IGNORE AT YOUR PERIL

FIRE FIGHTER OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

RISK ASSESSMENTS SAVE LIVES

A ROUTINE FIRE IS A MYTH

DEL INSPECTIONS: COMPLIANCE AND TEAM CAPABILITIES

TRAINING: CHANGES TO REQUIREMENTS

STRONG TEAM BUILDING THROUGH EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH

ELECTRIC VEHICLE AND LITHIUM BATTERY FIRES

USE OF AI TO FIGHT AND PREVENT FIRES

PRODUCT INNOVATIONS

HAZMAT TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

LEGAL PITFALLS

21-22
October 2024

Venue:

Dräger Auditorium
Sandton

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+27 83 266 6662

Email:

debbie@safety1st.co.za

Websites:

www.safety1st.co.za

www.emsguide.co.za

Some of our speakers - presentations

Below is a sample of our line-up of speakers.

For a full programme email: debbie@safety1st.co.za or
phone +27 83 266 6662



Trevor Abrahams

Managing Director, (WoF)

Presentation title:

Climate change and wildland fires: A potential catastrophe facing South Africa

Abstract: Worldwide many countries have battled the effects of rising temperatures resulting in flooding, rainstorms, wildfires and other catastrophes. National average temperatures in South Africa have surged at twice the pace of global temperatures posing a grave scenario resulting in escalating death tolls and devastated communities? This presentation will discuss responses that are needed to minimise the effects of such catastrophes.



Lizelle De Villiers

Senior Consultant: Empower Talent (BBA; MBA; Dip LC (LC Inst. UK).

Presentation title:

First Responder and emergency worker burnout

Abstract: A high percentage of first responders develop behavioural health conditions such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced ability to perform their work efficiently. This presentation will provide valuable advice on what can be done to reduce and manage such stress exposure and its impacts on the working environment.



Fulufhelo Hendrick Sibara

Vhembe District Municipality, Senior Divisional Officer, (Assistant Fire Chief), Fire Safety Section Head (SDO)

Presentation title:

Prevent fire deaths through community education programmes

Abstract: None of us likes reading headlines such as "Another tragic fire". "Another family destroyed". "Another worker loses his life a fire". Many fires are preventable and public education aims to educate communities in fire prevention. Stakeholders, including employers should get together to help with public education initiatives. Much of this can start in the workplace.



Louis Pretorius

Chief Fire Officer - Fidelity Services Group

Presentation title:

Modernisation of EMS services & challenges

Abstract: The emergence of the private fire services in South Africa is a growing phenomenon that needs to be examined, including the reasons, their relevance and their professionalism.



Mziwakhe Nhlapo

CEO of MMAT SHEC & ESG Training & Consulting, specialising in compensation.

Presentation title:

Ignore the law at your peril.
Abstract: Corporates can find themselves falling foul of the law if they fail to protect employees and assets both at incidents and at the workplace.



Tibor Szana

Retired Chief Inspector DEL

Presentation title: **Inspections, compliance and fire fighter/team competencies**

Abstract: Observations from an inspector's perspective of fire fighter competencies. Are they adequately trained in technological advances such as drones or to control fires in modern environments.



Riaan Janse van Vuuren

MD Elpis Training and Development. Retired Manager: Sol Plaatje Emergency Services

Presentation title:

Effective teams through employee wellness
Abstract: Employee wellness programmes should be introduced into every department and company. Healthy employees will be more motivated and have a positive attitude.



Saritha Wolff

Technical Consultant: Fire Safety, Accu-SHERQ Risk Consultants

Presentation title:

First responder vs Fire Inspections
Abstract: Fire investigators face enormous challenges sifting through the devastation and damage after the fire is under control, impacting the resulting investigation.



Linda Botha

CEO Skills Train Distribution

Presentation title:

Can AI be used to help fight fires?
Abstract: Fires and other disasters can be prevented and fought through the rapid involvement of artificial intelligence (AI) such as early detection, optimized resource allocation, training and simulation.

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QUO VADIS: FUTURE OF FIRE SAFETY AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES - INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

THE FUTURE OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES - its impact on industry and workers

Anyone involved in the emergency services, fire fighting and fire safety cannot afford to miss this conference which will focus on the future of this vital service.

Over the past few years we have witnessed significant transformations, bringing about a new era in technology. Embracing this new technology is a key to the success of all emergency services

Until recently, words such as lithium batteries, artificial intelligence, drones, Apps were not part of every day vocabulary, but now they cannot be ignored. They are integrated into the working life of fire fighters and other emergency workers.

Some presentations of the conference will examine:

- The challenges of fighting lithium battery fires - are they pitfalls of new technology?
- Can AI can be used in fire prevention and fire fighting?
- Drones and their uses. Are fire fighters properly trained to operate them?
- Are fire fighters adequately trained to fight fires in modern building structures?
- How can emergency services mitigate the potential catastrophes of climate change?
- The growth of the private fire services. Why and how did they become part of the South African landscape? Are they here to stay?

This conference will focus not only on the importance of reinforcing the familiar, but also on familiarising attendees with the unknown - factors which impact all emergency services / fire fighters / paramedics / rescue teams etc.

After learning from experts in the field, attendees will leave with a wider knowledge, understanding and improved capabilities of what is in store for them in an era when rapidly changing technology cannot be avoided.

REGISTER TODAY:

Dates: 21-22 October 2024

Price per delegate: R6900

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QUO VADIS: FUTURE OF FIRE SAFETY AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES - INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Day 1 - Monday **21** October 2024

Time	Topic	Speaker
07:00-07:45	Registration	
07:45-07:50	Welcome/OSH regulations	Leighton Bennett
1. 07:50-08:35	Keynote: Navigating the emergency services to success during current difficult times	Jonathan De Villiers
2. 08:35-09:20	Keynote: SAESI: Past, present and plans for the future	Theresa Geldenhuys
3. 09:20-10:00	Modernisation of the emergency services	Louis Pretorius
10:00-10:30	Tea break	
4. 10:30-11:10	Johannesburg inner city fires in hijacked buildings - Lessons learned	Andries Mucavele
5. 11:10-11:50	Privatised fire services - a necessity in today's age or just a nice-to-have?	De Wet Engelbrecht
6. 11:50-12:30	Improving medical emergency efficiency through Apps and emerging technology	Saul Behrmann
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
7. 13:30-14:10	Strategic Roadmap 2030: Shaping the future of the fire services	Roland Hendricks
8. 14:10-14:50	The first responder vs The fire investigator	Saritha Wolff
14:50-15:20	Tea break	
9. 15:20-16:00	Team building through employee wellness	Riaan Janse van Vuuren
10. 16:00-16:40	First responder and emergency worker burnout	Lizelle De Villiers
11. 16:40-17:20	Ignore the law at your peril	Mziwakhe Nhlapo
17:30	Cocktails	

Day 2 - Tuesday **22** October 2024

Time	Topic	Speaker
07:55-08:00	Welcome	
12. 08:00-08:40	Prevent fire deaths through community education programmes	Fulufhelo Hendrick Sibara
13. 08:40-09:20	Team building for USAR effectiveness	Thabo Charles Mabaso
14. 09:20-10:00	Climate change and wildland fires: A potential catastrophe	Trevor Abrahams
10:00-10:30	Tea break	
15. 10:30-11:10	Inspections, compliance and fire fighter competencies in the 21st century	Tibor Szana
16. 11:10-11:50	Pitfalls of modern technology - Vehicle battery and lithium battery fires	Firebreak
17. 11:50-12:30	From prediction to response: AI's critical role in fire fighting and fire prevention	Linda Botha
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
18. 13:30-14:10	Implement effective risk assessments and help save more than lives	Marius Atterbury
20. 14:10-15:50	Closing, wrap-up, competition winners	Leighton Bennett

Please note: This is only a provisional programme. Speakers and topics may change before the event. Circumstances beyond the control of the organisers may result in substitutions, alterations or cancellations of topics or speakers. The organisers reserve the right to alter or modify the advertised speakers or topic if necessary.

Register today to attend this exciting and informative 2-day event - 21-22 October 2024 - contact Debbie: email debbie@safety1st.co.za telephone +27 83 266 6662

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- Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA)
- Occupational Safety & Health Africa (OSHAfrica)

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- Occupational Hygiene
- Gas Safety
- Ergonomics

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Editor's Comment

Welcome to another issue of African OS&H. Following are some of the highlights of this issue - there is plenty more to read of interest to all OSH Practitioners.

ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

Asbestos continues to plague Africa. Only 7 of the 54 countries on the continent have legislated a ban on this deadly fibre. While people continue to die from exposure, and entire communities are exposed, these 47 countries are not taking positive steps towards enforcing legislation, banning or monitoring usage.

The onset of asbestos-related diseases such as asbestosis or mesothelioma can take upto 50 years from the time of exposure. For many of these countries, therefore, the health risks will only be felt in a few decades going forward.

With this in mind, OSHAfrica has launched a 3-year campaign on asbestos risk and prevention. In his article, Ehi Iden implores all practitioners to join hands in this important campaign.

DEL CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

We join Tibor Szana in congratulating the Department of Employment and Labour on their 100th Anniversary. Established in 1924, to deal with labour related matters it has grown in strength and significance, surviving the Great Depression, World War 2, South Africa becoming a republic and it witnessed the birth of South Africa as a democracy. It has also undergone a few name changes and expanded its services to keep up its relevance of addressing sound labour relations in the workplace. Now as a member of ILO, it is on par with the rest of the world as well.

SINGAPORE ACCORD

Following ongoing questions about the training, competence and capability of health and safety practitioners, Leighton Bennett republished a 2019 article compiled from Singapore Accord documentation to provide some insights as to where the world sees the OHS Profession going.

His article provides some insights as to what growth and development OHS professionals and practitioners need to aspire to.

EXTREME CLIMATE CHANGES

Global headlines in recent times have been dominated by extreme weather conditions with catastrophic consequences, such as floods, heatwaves, firestorms, tornadoes, especially in regions such as South Africa.

In his article, Harry Fourie writes that the role of an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) practitioner extends beyond ensuring everyday safety protocols in the workplace. To safeguard employees and minimise potential damage and loss of life, OHS practitioners must implement comprehensive strategies to prepare for and respond to these extreme weather events.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Bill Pomfret asks why accountability and responsibility in the workplace should be basic concepts, but are not. In reality, he explains they are not as simple as they seem. They require mutually agreed targets that can be reported against, assigned to employees properly skilled to do the work and empowered with sufficient and appropriate resources to perform the work.

Innovation that Saves

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Workplace fatality arising from industrial accidents –

What is a Coroner's Inquiry? What is a Inquiry Committee?



Han Wenqi is an experienced workplace safety and health professional from Singapore, and an advocator 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.

All workplace fatalities arising from industrial accidents must be immediately reported to the authorities and stakeholders. The authority may assign a team of investigation officers to conduct a thorough investigation into the case to understand the causes leading to the fatality.

The findings of the authority's investigation officers will then be forwarded to the coroner and public prosecutor for further examination and investigation.

Although I specifically refer to Singapore in this article, the application is relevant world-wide.

WHAT IS A CORONER'S INQUIRY?

The purpose of a coroner's inquiry is to determine the identity of the deceased and how, when and where the deceased died. It is not intended to find fault in terms of identifying who may be liable for criminal, civil or disciplinary sanctions for causing the death. If the death is due to natural causes, a coroner's inquiry is unnecessary. The coroner may then issue an order for the body to be released.

However, there are instances where it is mandatory to conduct an inquiry. The investigation into the circumstances of a deceased's death will then be done by a coroner with the aid of the police or authority's investigation officers.

The coroner is a judge of the state courts and deals with cases that are classified by the police as coroner's cases. If necessary, a state counsel may work closely with the investigating officer to present evidence at the inquiry.

SITUATIONS FOR A CORONER'S INQUIRY

In Singapore, the Coroners Act sets out that a coroner's inquiry is mandatory where:

- A person dies while in police custody;
- The death was the result of lawful execution of a death sentence (to determine whether the sentence of death was duly carried out);
- The public prosecutor is satisfied that an inquiry is necessary or desirable;
- The death occurred in any of the situations set out in the Third Schedule of the Coroners Act, unless the coroner is satisfied that the death was due to natural causes.

Some examples when an inquiry must be held under the Third Schedule of the Coroners Act:

- The deceased's identity is unknown;
- The death occurred due to road traffic and industrial accidents (to ascertain the medical

cause of death and circumstances leading to it);

- The death was caused or suspected to have been caused by an unlawful act or omission;
- The manner or cause of the death is unknown (even where the deceased appears to have died of natural causes);
- The death occurred under suspicious circumstances.

The coroner must always take into consideration factors such as:

- A death that appears to have been unnatural or violent, whether it appears to have been due to the action or inaction of any other person;
- The extent to which the drawing of attention to how the death occurred may be likely to reduce the occurrence of other deaths in similar circumstances;
- The desire of any next-of-kin, immediate family member of the deceased that an inquiry should be conducted;
- Whether the death occurred outside Singapore, or was caused by matters arising outside Singapore (as the coroner only has jurisdiction over deaths or causes of death occurring in Singapore);
- Whether an inquiry or investigation into the death has been or will be conducted by a coroner or a corresponding authority of a foreign country.

The process of holding a coroner's inquiry after a death reporting of the death

Any person who becomes aware of a death that is a "reportable death" must report it to a police officer or relevant authority, as soon as possible. The obligation to report could fall on an occupier of a workplace, employer of the deceased, any passer-by or family member of the deceased who had noticed the reportable death, a person who had official custody of the deceased, or a police officer. Such persons are known as the informant.

Situations constituting reportable deaths are similar to those where an inquiry must be held as stated above.

INVESTIGATIONS

The authority and police are obliged to investigate reportable deaths. When the authority or the police receive such information from an informant, they will investigate the circumstances leading to the death and report their findings to the coroner.

Upon receiving information about the death, the coroner will, as soon as possible, make a preliminary investigation to determine if an autopsy is necessary. The coroner will also view the body if it is practicable to do so.

However, recent amendments to the law have been proposed for the viewing of the body to be discretionary instead of mandatory. This is because there are already measures in place to ensure the correct identification of the body, such as tagging with the deceased's particulars. The investigating officer will also verify the accuracy of a body identification form (containing the deceased's particulars and photograph), and sign the form before sending it to the coroner.

The coroner or the public prosecutor may then direct a forensic pathologist to investigate the cause and circumstances into the death. The pathologist may advise the coroner on whether to proceed with the autopsy, and then carry out examinations on the deceased's body once the autopsy is authorised.

AUTOPSY

The pathologist will provide the investigation officers, coroner, police and public prosecutor with regular updates on the progress of his investigations and findings. Once completed, the findings of the autopsy become part of the evidence adduced at the coroner's inquiry. The informant of the deceased's death, the deceased's spouse and children (aged 18 years and above) and parents of the deceased can apply for the autopsy reports.

OPEN COURT HEARING

Before the coroner's inquiry hearing, the coroner will conduct a pre-inquiry review called a Coroner's Mention. This is to settle any initial legal and administrative matters relating to the coroner's inquiry so it can be expedited.

The coroner's inquiry will then be held in open court unless the coroner has sufficient reason not to do so. If so, these reasons must be reported to the public prosecutor. The coroner may also appoint up to 2 assessors (authority investigation officers or subject matter experts who possess academic knowledge and industrial experiences) who are skilled and experienced in the subject matter of the inquiry to advise him/her at the hearing.

The public prosecutor will then assist the coroner by presenting evidence gathered during previous investigations in the matter including:

- The investigation report by the investigating officer;
- Documentary evidence such as the autopsy report and toxicology report of the deceased;
- Conditioned statements of the relevant witnesses;

- The report (if any) of expert witnesses, e.g. a medical opinion on a possible cause of death.

The coroner may conduct the inquiry in any manner he reasonably thinks fit. This means he is not bound by the rules of evidence and can admit any evidence he thinks is necessary. The coroner may also require a witness to give evidence in person if necessary.

Properly interested persons may attend the hearing and examine witnesses including:

- The spouse or next-of-kin of the deceased;
- The personal representative of the deceased;
- Any person who, in the coroner's opinion, has an interest in the inquiry and should be allowed to attend.

Other parties who may attend the hearing also include representatives from the embassy of the deceased's country of birth or domicile (if the deceased is a foreigner), and lawyers acting on behalf of an interested third-party, such as a hospital or insurance company.

RECORDING OF FINDINGS

At the end of the coroner's inquiry, the coroner will record his findings as to the identity of the deceased and how, when and where the death occurred. This will be recorded in the Coroner's Certificate. The coroner may make findings that the death occurred by "suicide", "misadventure", or any other cause.

If a person is charged with any offence related to the death, the coroner will adjourn the inquiry only after criminal proceedings have ended.

After recording his findings, the coroner will forward a copy of the Coroner's Certificate setting out the cause of death as found at the inquiry, to the registrar of births and deaths and the public prosecutor.

Copy of the coroner's certificate

A family member of the deceased can apply for the coroner's certificate by submitting an application to the court. They would have to provide details of the case, their relationship with the deceased and specify why they are requesting the certificate. They should also attach any supporting documents.

Can family insist that a coroner's inquiry be conducted in case of an offence committed?

A family member of a deceased who may have died from an offence committed against him/her, may want to know the cause of their death and seek "justice", and may insist on an inquiry. However, where an inquiry is not mandatory as mentioned above, the decision whether to hold an inquiry lies with the coroner.

The coroner is not legally obliged to hold an inquiry if he is satisfied that the inquiry is unnecessary. This could be because the coroner finds that either the death was due to natural causes, or there is no public interest in holding an inquiry.

Nevertheless, the coroner will consider the desire of the immediate family. Should the coroner decide not to hold an inquiry, the reasons for such a decision will be reported to the public prosecutor.

On the other hand, the next-of-kin or family members may want closure from the death of their loved one. As a result, they may refuse a coroner's inquiry so that the funeral can be held. While their objection may be taken into consideration, they cannot refuse an inquiry in situations where it is mandatory.

If an autopsy has been ordered on the body, the coroner is allowed to release the body only after the autopsy has concluded.

RE-OPENING OF CORONER'S INQUIRIES

The inquiry is considered concluded once a coroner has issued a report. However, while uncommon, the coroner may re-open the inquiry. This may be where new evidence has been found or where more investigation into the circumstances of the death is required.

Where the public prosecutor thinks that further investigations are necessary, he/she may direct the

coroner to re-open the inquiry and make further directions. If the body has been buried, the public prosecutor may direct that a body be exhumed if he views that it is necessary.

Conversely, where no new matters are raised, the coroner would be unlikely to re-open the inquiry. For example, there was the case where a prison inmate died while in his prison cell. Although a request was submitted to re-open the case, the AGC clarified this was not necessary. This was because the cause and circumstances leading to the death had already been decided upon in the criminal proceedings of the prison officer responsible for the inmate's death, and no new matters called for the inquiry to be re-opened.

If the deceased has been a victim of an offence leading to his/her death, the next-of-kin may want to consult a criminal defence lawyer. A criminal defence lawyer can represent the next-of-kin in court and prepare questions for them ask during the inquiry. The lawyer may also visit the scene of the incident leading to the deceased's death and advise on possible claims after the inquiry has been carried out.

MINISTER MAY DIRECT INQUIRY TO BE HELD

The minister may appoint an inquiry committee to hold an inquiry into any accident, dangerous occurrence or occupational disease that has

occurred in a workplace and into its causes and circumstances, and direct that the committee reports its findings to the minister.

The inquiry committee shall hold the inquiry in open court in such manner and under such conditions as it thinks most effectual for ascertaining the causes and circumstances of the accident, dangerous occurrence or occupational disease; and enabling it to make the report to the minister.

The inquiry committee shall have, for the purposes of the inquiry:

1. All the powers of a district court when trying offences under the Workplace Safety and Health Act;
2. All the powers of an inspector under the Workplace Safety and Health Act;
3. All of the following powers:
 - (i) to enter and inspect any premises, the entry or inspection of which appears to the inquiry committee requisite for the purpose of the inquiry;
 - (ii) by summons signed by the district judge, to require attendance of all such persons as the inquiry committee thinks fit to call before it and examine and require answers or returns to such inquiries as it thinks fit;

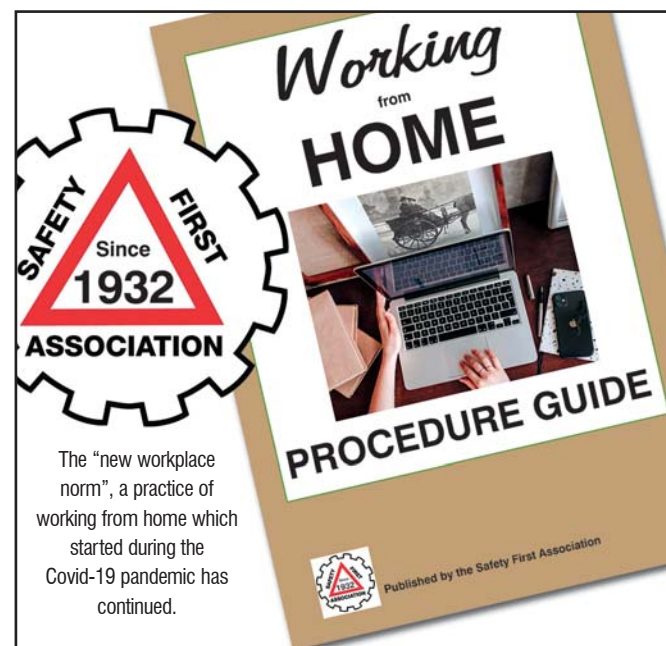
(iii) to require the production of all books, papers and documents which the inquiry committee considers important for the purposes of the inquiry;

(iv) to administer oaths and to require any person examined to make and sign a declaration of the truth of the statements made by him in his examination.

Upon conclusion of its inquiry, the inquiry committee shall make a report to the minister by stating the causes and circumstances of the accident, dangerous occurrence or occupational disease; and adding any observations or recommendations which the inquiry committee thinks appropriate to make.

If the district judge is of the opinion that criminal proceedings ought to be instituted against any person in connection with the accident, dangerous occurrence or occupational disease, he shall also forward a copy of the report to the public prosecutor.

The minister may cause the report of the inquiry committee to be made public at such time and in such manner as he/she deems fit.



Working from HOME PROCEDURE GUIDE

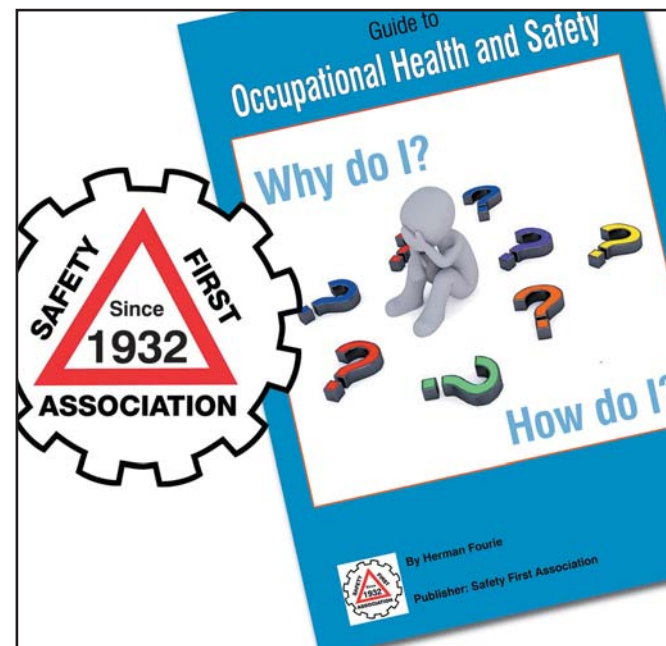
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The "new workplace norm", a practice of working from home which started during the Covid-19 pandemic has continued.

The employer is required to provide, maintain and ensure a safe and healthy workplace for all his/her employees at the company premises and this extends to work at essentially a remote employee "workplace" venue where required.

This guide details all health and safety requirements that need to be applied to both the company employee working from home and the responsibility of the employer.

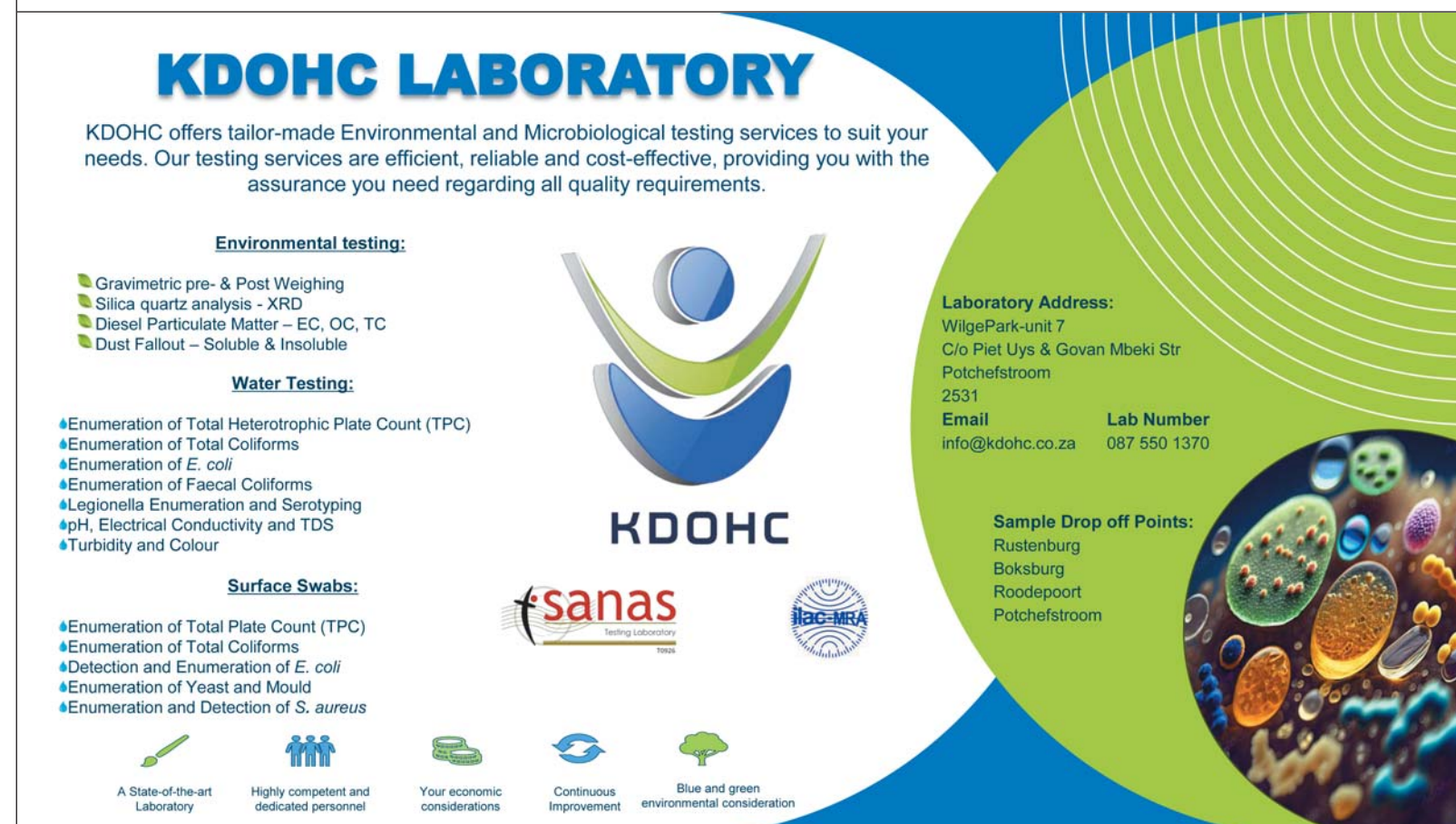
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Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is the practice of ensuring the safety and well-being of workers in their workplace. Employers and employees need to understand the Dos and Don'ts of OHS to maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

This guide discusses some of the key Dos and Don'ts of OHS.

To order a copy email: debbie@safety1st.co.za



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- Diesel Particulate Matter – EC, OC, TC
- Dust Fallout – Soluble & Insoluble

Water Testing:

- Enumeration of Total Heterotrophic Plate Count (TPC)
- Enumeration of Total Coliforms
- Enumeration of *E. coli*
- Enumeration of Faecal Coliforms
- Legionella Enumeration and Serotyping
- pH, Electrical Conductivity and TDS
- Turbidity and Colour

Surface Swabs:

- Enumeration of Total Plate Count (TPC)
- Enumeration of Total Coliforms
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- Enumeration of Yeast and Mould
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employment & labour

Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Tibor Szana
Chief Inspector:
Occupational Health and
Safety (Retired.)

I think most people are happy to celebrate their birthdays every year, it is the one day you can be extremely happy or extremely depressed, of

course depending if you are the half full or half empty type of person and age is a burden to you.

But, let's go on a quick trip 100 years back.

Now not many people get to celebrate a centenary birthday but organisations do have this good fortune especially state departments albeit that they do evolve and may morph over time by the addition of more functions or a shift of functions, a case being the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy or the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. These Departments however, could be renamed in 20 or 50 or even a 100 years from now. The Revenue Service of course is one of the oldest state departments in the world. They have been collecting revenue since forever. You have all heard the saying that there are two things in this life you cannot escape, one being death and the other being taxes.

But, I digress ever so slightly. About a 100 years ago in 1924, we were well into the first industrial revolution in South Africa, kick-started by non other than the discovery of diamonds in about 1860 and approximately twenty years later the discovery of gold (circa 1880), and as they say, the rest is history.

At the time, South Africa was still under colonial rule so these discoveries lead to the influx of people from all over the world to work on the mines and in industry in general. South Africa needed to develop its infrastructure. It needed to establish a transport system to handle the minerals that were mined and needed to be processed. Machines that were involved had to be maintained and built if necessary or imported. Shipping was in place as shipping was one of the primary forms of transport in those days. The British were naturally well developed in this area having conquered quite a bit of the world back then using ships which travelled west to east and back. The railways needed to be developed fast between the key cities inland and the major cities at the coast. Air transport would eventually follow and was relatively new in 1924.

South Africa was a different world back then, having come out of two major wars known as the Anglo-Boer wars at the turn of the century and then moving on into a world war, known as "World War 1". As if this was not bad enough, South Africa was also experiencing a severe drought as well as a locust plague coupled with a catastrophic period of unemployment. This was a recipe for the unemployed to continue with civil unrest which had

already been going on for a number of years, reaching a peak in 1922 with a number of deaths.

In order to deal with these labour related issues, a component was working under the auspices of the Department of Mines and Works. The time had however arrived, given the simmering environment (on-going civil unrest) to establish a Department to deal directly with labour related matters.

This gave rise to a new Department being born — the "Department of Labour". Between 25 July 1924 when the functions were formally handed over, and August 1924 when the Government Notice 1305 of August 6, 1924 was published in the Government Newspaper (Staatskoerant) August 8, 1924. The Department comprised of six (6) sections each with its own responsibilities.

Over the past 100 years, the Department would experience the "great Depression" from 1929 for several years further adding to its already dire situation on unemployment, and another World War (WW2) from 1939 – 1945. South Africa would become a Republic in 1961 and would eventually become a Democracy in 1994 with a new Constitution in 1996.

Over the 100 years, the Department would expand its services. The inclusion of all its population in its services became paramount post 1994. Over the years services to all citizens of the Republic were not inclusive and disparities were huge which gave rise to decades of civil strife.

Also, during the past 100 years, the Department has seen several name changes leading up to its current name — "Department of Employment and Labour". In addition to this change, there have been a number of Acts and Regulations that have been published, ensuring that the legislation remains relative to the period in order to ensure that the legislation does not lag far behind in order to address the issue of 'sound labour relations' at the workplace. By being a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Department also ensures that its legislation and services are on par with the rest of the world.

The staffing component is a far cry today from what it was when it first started. The Department now services all nine Provinces at a Provincial and a Regional level (126 Labour Centres) with about 9000 staff members. It also has several state owned entities that provide services and includes amongst others, NEDLAC, CCMA, Productivity South Africa, etc.

Why not check out the Department's Annual Report to familiarise yourself with its services and its performance? The document is a treasure trove of information.



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Accountability – back to basics

Such a basic concept – why is it so complex?



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.

Many years ago, while giving a presentation to representatives of the Chinese Finance Ministry my translator hit a bump as she attempted to translate something I was saying about accountability. I was a young consultant, fresh from a chemical industry career, and like all my fellow practitioners, I spoke accountability as a first language. I found it fascinating that a concept so basic and fundamental could seem so complex and difficult to understand in this foreign land and culture.

But that was long ago, and I am much wiser now. I now understand that it was never basic, never simple, and never easy to understand. Not in China and not anywhere. But it should be! A recent article about five factors affecting accountability triggered a search of what resources are available on the internet about accountability.

Wow! It is unbelievable how much energy is devoted to the subject. There is a federal accountability act, provincial accountability laws, an accountability website, a citizen for accountability lobby group, an accountability research corporation, an accountability project, accountability courses, countless accountability bills, reports, studies, programmes, services, documents, and posts and, of course, consultants.

A search of images on Google yields even more mind-numbing visual representations. There are Deming cycles, pyramids, wheels, triangles, question marks. It looks like an incredibly complex subject.

None of these materials, however, clarify what accountability is or what it takes to establish it.

WHAT IT IS, OR SHOULD BE

Its very definition can undermine what accountability really is

The wiki definition of accountability is ‘... answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and the expectation of account-giving ...’.

The negativity underlying this definition is disheartening. If this is what accountability is, who on earth would want to accept it? After all, these are just synonyms for blame. And blame is the single biggest force driving efforts to duck, avoid, evade, divert, or subvert accountability.

Any organisation that uses this definition (do I hear ‘government’ here?) is almost certain to wrestle with establishing any accountability at all.

A healthier definition might be Webster’s, which defines accountability as, ‘... an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions...’. This is a little better, but still smacks of blame.

A positive perspective will change everything

The preferred definition that I have used over the years is, ‘... the act of determining responsibility for the results of actions – as a foundation for ensuring future success...’.

The differences should not be too subtle:

- It is not about actions, but the results of actions (you can watch actions, but you have to measure outcomes).
- It is not about past results, but understanding how past outcomes can be used to improve future results (blame all you want, but the real purpose has to be change, not fault).
- It is not just about negative results and/or failures, but can be about positive results as well. It can celebrate success as much as recognise failure. (There has to be an inherent fairness, a willingness to recognise success to be truly accepted).

This definition can be assigned to an individual, a group or an organisation. It can be assigned by a second party, or it can be embraced by those performing the actions themselves. Most of all, it is NOT just about blame.

When failure is indeed involved, large or small, accountability is, or should be, about understanding the root causes and making sure that whoever was involved does not make the same mistakes in the future.

THE BASIC ELEMENTS: IN FACT VERY SIMPLE

Clearly accountability can be made complex, but it does not have to be. In fact, the ultimate basis for accountability can be deconstructed down to two very basic elements:

- **Responsibility:** Before I can be truly accountable, I must first be clearly responsible.
- **Authority:** I can only be accountable if I am empowered with the resources necessary to do the work.

Both the above must be aligned. I often use this in a formula:

$$\text{Responsibility} + \text{Authority} = \text{Accountability}$$

Yes, it is indeed that simple. But there are layers that make it more complicated.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility requires clearly defined roles, but within it there must be clearly defined performance expectations.



The complicating factors are:

- Responsibility for results must be unique. In the situation where more than one individual is responsible for doing something, means neither will be accountable.
- Each job requires clearly defined performance metrics for each responsibility.
- Processes are required for setting reasonable, mutually agreed targets for those metrics.
- Mechanisms for capturing and reporting timely, accurate and relevant actual results against those targets within responsibility centres are essential.
- Most of all, responsibility needs to be aligned with skills and competencies.

In a world of flexible, agile organisations, perhaps the greatest barrier to accountability for performance is the ubiquitous job description term, ‘... and other duties as assigned ...’. This is the ultimate accountability killer.

Common ‘responsibility’ gaps in accountability efforts

Organisations constantly wrestle with establishing accountability for performance. This is nowhere more so than in government with public servants.

Situations I have encountered in helping government clients establish accountability include the following.

- Responsibility is ad hoc, anecdotal, and casual, a result of long outdated (sometimes decades old) job descriptions. There is no time for stuff like job descriptions. Managers just assume the employee knows what the job is today. More importantly, they assume that the

employee sees it the same way, which is rarely the case, especially when something goes wrong.

- Responsibility is shared, or worse, usurped by the very manager who would look for accountability.

Often the manager intervenes and takes on part of the role themselves, or directs so closely on what to do, when and how that the manager effectively assumes responsibility for the actions, and by extension accountability for the results.

- Undefined work metrics, where the job tasks may seem clear but how they are measured is never defined.

Performance measurement might be the fastest growing dimension of government management thinking today, but many government jobs have few metrics, and fewer that are still relevant.

- Performance expectations are vague, absent, or unrealistic, with outcomes left unstated or goals unreasonable.

This is often the case where budgets are the only performance metric but are frozen or cut without changing expectations for service delivery.

- Performance reporting in municipal government is still in embryonic stages compared to the private sector, with only the most basic level of responsibility accounting in many government organisations.
- Many still have the “I don’t need financial reports until year end because I have lots of budget for the year” attitude.

But even with monthly reporting it is just dollars against dollars, with only very rare ability to match spending with service performance.

- The competency gap is another factor, not because staff are incompetent but because the world is changing so much and so fast that it is hard to find people with exactly the right skills for the current tasks, technologies, service expectations and resources. It can be harder still to take the time to pull workers out of the daily whirlwind to make sure they are properly trained as the changes constantly shift what work is done and how.

How many of these above apply in your organisation?

AUTHORITY

Ultimately, you can be as clear as you want about what the employee is responsible for, but if he/she is not empowered with the resources needed to do the job, he/she will not, indeed cannot, be accountable for the outcomes.

- The worker must have sufficient resources for the tasks.
- The worker must have appropriate resources.

Common 'Authority' gaps in accountability efforts

Many organisations get the responsibility part of the equation but fall apart with authority.

Accountability is not just a simple case of not giving enough money or not having enough employees to do the job.

Responsibility and authority can also become more complex, with the most common situations described below:

- Cutting staff but not adjusting expectations for results.
- Moving up my deadlines without recognising that there is a trade-off - without additional resources, something won't get done.
- Giving additional tasks or pulling staff away from other jobs without recognising the impact on outcomes.
- Giving outdated, ineffective or inappropriate resources and expecting the job to be done properly.
- Expecting delivery, but not allowing for the hiring/training/developing of the right competencies in the team essential to do the work properly.
- Setting goals that require 2025 technologies but having 2000 systems to achieve them.

Do any of the above look familiar?

WHO IS MOST OFTEN ACCOUNTABLE BUT LEAST OFTEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE?

I learned years ago that when staff reporting to me struggle or fail, the first place I should look for

accountability is the mirror. I must ask the following:

- What did I not do to make sure my staff could be successful?
- Was I clear what they were responsible for?
- Did I make my expectations for results clear?
- Did they know the results for themselves?
- Did I give them enough authority over resources?
- Were they the right resources?

All these things, which all relate to the details above for the two dimensions of responsibility and authority, are ultimately the responsibility of management. That doesn't mean employees can blame it all on their bosses and not be accountable for results at all. It just means that they can only be accountable when their bosses have done their jobs properly in the first place. (Sounds like management heresy, doesn't it? But I think it lines up perfectly with what Drucker said so long ago and so much better.)

CONCLUSION

So, how simple is accountability? Is it just a matter of aligning responsibility and authority? Okay, maybe it is a little more complex:

Accountability requires clear responsibility with measurable, mutually agreed targets that can be reported against, assigned to employees properly skilled to do the work and empowered with sufficient and appropriate resources to perform the work.



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SAIOH President's Message

Naadiya Mundy: SAIOH President, e-mail: president@saioh.co.za



As part of our service to our members, in the following paragraphs we provide feedback on the latest developments within SAIOH. SAIOH exists due to and for its members and is reliant on its members to continue to ethically serve this noble profession. Therefore, we invite your inputs and feedback on any matters communicated herein.

Guardians of the Workplace: Occupational/Industrial Hygiene as a career path

I recently read a featured article in the African OS&H magazine titled 'Storytelling in Training.' This inspired me to explore a storytelling approach as a means to both celebrate the profession I belong to and encourage young professionals to consider it as a career path.

In the epic saga of Star Wars, heroes like Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia and Han Solo rise to the occasion, defending the galaxy against the tyranny of the dark side. They wield lightsabres, pilot starships and strategise battles to ensure the safety and freedom of countless planets. Their bravery and dedication epitomise what it means to be a hero, standing up against overwhelming odds to protect what is 'just' and 'right'.

Similarly, occupational hygienists are the unsung heroes of our everyday world. While they may not battle Sith Lords or engage in interstellar warfare, their mission is equally crucial, with their main aim focused on protecting worker health.

These professionals are dedicated to identifying, evaluating, and controlling health hazards in the workplace, ensuring that employees can work in safe and healthy environments.

Their tools may not be lightsabres, but they utilise advanced technology and scientific principles to combat invisible threats like toxic chemicals, harmful dust, and excessive noise.

These methods are not arbitrary guesses; much like the Star Wars heroes who use their skills and knowledge to protect the galaxy, occupational hygienists employ their expertise in physiology, toxicology, and industrial hygiene to safeguard the well-being of workers across various industries.

Their ability to accurately assess risks and implement effective control measures hinges on their technical knowledge¹, skills, and adherence to strict professional and ethical standards. This commitment ensures that their work is not only effective but also responsible and trustworthy, highlighting the importance of maintaining high ethical

standards in the field.

More specifically occupational hygiene is defined as the science and art dedicated to anticipating, recognising, evaluating, and controlling environmental factors or stresses in the workplace that may cause sickness, impaired health and well-being, or significant discomfort among workers or the broader community.²

Occupational hygienists are adept at managing biological, chemical, and physical hazards in workplace environments.³

These professionals often possess academic training across multiple disciplines and are equipped with established methodologies and frameworks for hazard assessment and control.³

Pursuing a career in occupational/industrial hygiene offers numerous benefits and opportunities for those passionate about health and safety. Some key elements that are often developed:

- **Adherence to Ethical Standards:** Adherence to ethical guidelines that prioritise the health and safety of workers and the community. This includes honesty, integrity, and accountability in all professional activities.
- **Competency and Continuous Learning:** Occupational hygienists must maintain a high level of expertise through continuous education and professional development. This ensures they remain current with the latest scientific and regulatory advancements and can effectively address emerging hazards.
- **Effective Communication:** Clear and effective communication with stakeholders, including workers, employers, and regulatory bodies.
- **Commitment to Best Practices:** Use of established best practices and evidence-based methods in the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control of workplace hazards.
- **Collaboration and Leadership:** Work within multidisciplinary teams and demonstration of strong leadership and collaborative skills.



- And commitment to quality, detail and getting the job done.
In essence, both Star Wars heroes and occupational hygienists share a common goal: to protect and preserve life. While one defends against cosmic threats and the forces of evil, the other ensures that our workplaces are free from hazards that can harm our health. Their efforts might not be as visible as those of a Jedi in battle, but the impact of occupational hygienists is profound, making them true guardians of our health and safety.
A career in occupational/industrial hygiene offers a rewarding path for individuals passionate about promoting workplace safety and health.

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National council feedback

Naadiya Mundy: SAIOH president, e-mail: president@saioh.co.za

Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH general manager, e-mail: deon.jvuvuren@gmail.com

SAIOH held its first Council and Management Board meetings on 28 February 2024 and welcomed the newly elected council members. A special induction session was held on 18 March 2024. A second round of Management Board (30 April 2024) and National Council (03 July 2024) meetings also took place.

SAIOH Council members have had a busy few months with numerous meetings taking place namely, with the Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL), Occupational Hygiene Approved Training Providers, the Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authority Association (OH AIA Ass), the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS), Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA), and the Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA).

During this period, a Memorandum of Understanding on collaboration was signed between The Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA) and SAIOH in March. The purpose of the MoU is to set out the principles under which the parties intend to co-operate and to outline the activities and areas where both entities agree to collaborate to mutual benefit and to enhance the practice of occupational hygiene and ergonomics within southern Africa.

As well as the DoEL's HCA workshop on the latest amendments to the Hazardous Chemical Agents on the 25th of June 2024, this on-line seminar was hosted by SAIOH on Zoom with some 145 persons attending.

Strategic plan

An in-person strategy session took place on 28 May 2025 at SAIOH's offices in Broadacres.

The SAIOH council, during their meetings, continue to review the 2023 – 2027 strategy, and

ensure that targets are being met and to explore further strategic developments for the Institute and its members.



Ethics

SAIOH and Northwest University (NWU) are in talks to develop SAIOH's "own" Occupational Hygiene Ethics course, focussing on ethics in occupational hygiene. Hopefully the NWU team will present the course at the 2024 SAIOH annual conference in Botswana during October.

SAIOH secured a date with Terry McDonald (BOHS, UK) for a pivotal on-line Ethics event. On 25 July 2024, Terry via webinar, delivered another Ethics seminar (PDC). This online seminar, as always, is expected to bring valuable expertise and insights to our members.

SAIOH Branch activities

On 24 April 2024 SAIOH (SAIOH Richards Bay Discussion Group) and Sedulitas hosted, in-person, one of the Noise Masterclass workshops in Richards Bay.

The Richards Bay SAIOH branch held their second meeting after the workshop.

The Gauteng branch hosted their second meeting in-person coupled to a social event at the Roosevelt Bowling Club in Johannesburg on 12 July 2024. Two presentations were given: *Latest OHS technology* (G. Warne, AMS Haden) and a session on *Welding fumes* (Jaco van Rensburg, Gijima).

SAIOH Technical Committee feedback

SAIOH's technical committee (including members from the OH AIA Association) met and are currently hard at work creating a paper on Welding which is envisaged to be released end 2024.

Emerging Leaders Institute Programme

Three South Africans, Naadiya Mundy, Goitseamang Keretsetse, and Deon Swanepoel, were selected to attend The Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI) Programme, which was held in conjunction with the IOHA 2024 conference in Dublin, Ireland.

ELI is dedicated to enhancing the leadership skills of early-career Occupational, Environmental, Health & Safety (OEHS) and Product Stewardship professionals with less than 15 years of experience.

According to the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), participants learned to improve their self-awareness and awareness of others, manage high-performance teams, and increase their influence within their organisations and the profession.

The programme, an extensive three-day initiative, offered numerous key benefits, including:

- **Enhanced Leadership Capabilities:** Participants expanded their awareness and influence of self and others, developing skills in strategic thinking, decision-making, and effective communication.
- **Team Management:** Training focused on building and managing high-performance teams, equipping attendees with essential team leadership skills.

International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) and Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) feedback

The IOHA 2024 Annual Scientific conference was held in Dublin, Ireland from 9 to 13 June 2024 and was well attended. The 2024 IOHA Lifetime Achiever award was awarded to Deon Jansen van Vuuren.



Deon Jansen van Vuuren receiving the award from Samantha Connell, IOHA President

• Professional Impact:

The programme emphasised making a lasting impact on the future of the profession, fostering a sense of responsibility and forward-thinking among participants.

Moreover, the ELI provided valuable networking opportunities with other emerging leaders, industry experts, and mentors, thereby enhancing professional connections.

The focus on career advancement was evident, as the programme equipped participants with the skills needed to take on leadership roles, boosting their career prospects and professional growth.

In conclusion, attending the ELI proved highly beneficial for the South African participants, offering a comprehensive platform for developing leadership skills, enhancing professional networks, and advancing their careers within the OEHS and Product Stewardship fields.

The SAIOH team are hard at work formalising our IOHA NARC renewal which expires in September 2024. The team are confident that we are able to tick all the necessary boxes and retain our accreditation.



Annual SAIOH Conference

"Sustainable Occupational Hygiene in changing work environments and emerging economies."

Dates: 21 to 24 October 2024

Venue: Phakalane Golf Estate and Convention Centre, just outside Gaborone

The Botswana Branch continue their diligent work on the SAIOH-BAOH Annual 2024 Conference in Gaborone and e-mails to our members are in the works.

Members who wish to present are reminded to please submit their abstracts.



Communications

SAIOH publishes its newsletter/Presidents' page in two electronic media formats, namely the African OS&H magazine (A-OS&H), and the Occupational Health Southern Africa journal.

From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC)

Lee Doolan: SAIOH PCC administrator, e-mail: lee@saioh.co.za
Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH General Manager, e-mail: deon.jvvuuren@gmail.com
Corlia Peens: PCC chairperson, e-mail: corlia.peens@sasol.com

Certification assessments

The second round of written assessments took place on 28 June 2024 with 68 Assistants, 26 Technologists and 15 Hygienists attempting the assessments.

CERTIFICATION CATEGORIES	WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS			
	Total Assessed	Passed	Failed	Pass Rate %
OH Assistants	109	107	2	98.2%
OH Technologists	58	45	13	77.6%
Occ. Hygienists	29	19	10	65.5%
TOTAL	196	171	25	87.2%

PCC assessment improvements

The PCC technical team have completed revising the skill set and are now in the process of developing scenario questions in line with the requirements for oral assessments.

Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF)

The OHSF had their second meeting of 2024 at the beginning of July and continues to work on the developing of short courses for our members.

The OHSF's asbestos modules, e.g., Counting, Bulk and Risk Management are now operational, and have been successfully delivered by OHMS, a SAIOH OHSF recognised training provider.

Celia Keet (OHMS) reports: "Requests have been coming in fast and furious for training on bulk analysis in terms of SAIOH AP 102: The analysis of bulk materials for asbestos content. We had not done this training since 2021 due to Covid and the memory had gone a little foggy, even though we had the full training materials. We decided to call on the expert and brought Julie Hills in from the UK - the original developer of the AP 102 course.

The course took place on the 16th of April to the 19th of April 2024. Candidates came from various areas in South Africa. The one thing about this course, is that you really cannot do more than 7 candidates at a time due to individual time needed at the microscopes.

We started off with the theory for the first two days. To see the faces of the candidates ... when one talks about Birefringence, Pleochroism etc. The candidates went home exhausted and still had to study for the theory exam. The exam consists of three components:

- 1) Theory
- 2) Lab safety and set up
- 3) Practical of 5 bulk samples

Just when the candidates thought that they were onto the easy part, the practical started. First was training on the use of the Stereo microscope then the Polarising light microscope.

All analysts agree that while using the stereo microscope it really looks like a crocodile (tweezers) trying to get an incy wincy fly (an asbestos fibre).

At this stage I really have to emphasise that before doing the actual course I would strongly recommend that you actually go over HSG 248, and practice, practice, practice! During the practical exam, each candidate has limited time to try and extract the fibres and carry out analysis. This is the main cause of failing of the exam.

The course went well, and three candidates passed the exam. Well done to them. For the rest of the candidates, do not be disheartened, you joined the rest of the 80% who do not make the practical the first time.

Doing courses like this, also brings together people from across the country and creates good team building.

One interesting thing to end off with, we do come across other bulk sample analysis reports of which they often attached the SANAS 17020 accreditation to the report. One must remember that bulk sample analysis falls under 17025 and not 17020.

We need more analysts out there so do give the course a bash."



OSHAfrica launches a three-year campaign on asbestos risk and prevention

Asbestos irrespective of the dosage of exposure poses a high level of health risk, not just to an individual but to entire communities where asbestos properties are exposed. While several countries and regions of the world are taking positive steps towards asbestos legislation, bans, monitoring and enforcement, Africa still seems to be far from what we can refer to as safe standards in asbestos risk management. It is easy to pretend that something positive is being done, however the facts will be revealed in the level of health risks that might confront us in about three to four decades from now. So with this campaign, we are calling on African leaders and policy makers from country and regional levels to commit to asbestos legislation and control in the overall interest of Africans and everyone who lives in Africa.

Sadly, the information deficit on asbestos seems huge. The reason is not because there is not enough information, but rather because most people don't show interest in asbestos. If this is about us all, we all need to show deliberate concern and we need to be convincingly interested in joining hands with OSHAfrica as we flag off this three year campaign. We will be engaging with everyone at different capacities in this campaign, Ministries of Labour where we have the inspectorates, Ministries of Health, Workers Compensation Boards and more. We do not want an one left out as we seek all our partners, colleagues and friends of Africa to join us as we commence this campaign on a positive note. We hope you will be with us on this journey for the next three years. Should you want to reach out to us for further conversation on this, kindly email ehi@oshafrica.africa.



These photos were taken at the third Asbestonomy Conference held in Madrid, Spain. Global asbestos exposure was addressed in line with the strict European regulations on asbestos management and safety.





Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS): Its impact in the working environment



Melanie Ossip is a Director Corporate Wellness Centre.

She is a physiotherapist and ergonomic consultant specialising in reducing workplace discomfort and pain.

www.corporatewellness-centre.com

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS), is a condition involving eye problems resulting from excessive screen time with digital devices. It is significantly associated with both insomnia and migraines.

CSV in a person suffering from a stressful event, will have a higher chance of inducing insomnia and triggering a migraine attack.

MANAGING STRESS, INSOMNIA & MIGRAINES

Utilisation of a computer just before going to bed while experiencing stressful life events is associated with insomnia.

Ideally screen headaches should be treated non-pharmacologically with preventative measures such as wearing of blue light filtering when looking at a computer screen.

Poor posture at the computer can activate trigger points in the neck and shoulder muscles that can trigger a migraine. The worse the stress the more likely the CVS will be linked to a migraine

One should therefore limit screen time especially before going to bed, and use blue light filtering glasses to prevent CVS from causing migraine attacks.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Ensure that you have the correct lighting in place. Neither too bright or too dim.

- Use multiple light sources. Adjust the light to suit the task that you are completing.
- Use adjustable screen lamps. Don't rely on your ceiling bulbs.
- Adjust the screen brightness to the room lighting.
- Use screen filters.
- Practice good ergonomics.
- Reduce screen time.
- Take regular breaks when at the computer.
- Make sure to hydrate regularly.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF DIGITAL DEVICE USAGE

Following are some of the effects associated with the prolonged use of digital devices:

- Itching.
- Blurred vision.
- Double vision.
- Eye pain.
- Headaches.
- Backache.
- Neck and shoulder pain.
- Numbness in hands and fingers.
- Insomnia ... blue light from computer can interfere with circadian rhythms.



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Legislation

Culture improvement

- Perform basic life support and first aid procedures
- Provide risk-based primary care firstaid in the work-place
- Apply firefighting techniques
- Apply health and safety to a work area
- Apply health, safety and environmental protection procedures
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of the OHS Act, 85 of 1993 and the responsibility of management in terms of the act
- Apply safety, housekeeping, environment practices and legal requirements when working on machines and equipment
- Receive, handle and store hazardous chemicals safely
- Conduct a continuous risk assessment in a workplace

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The Singapore Accord & the OHS Profession going forward



By Leighton Bennett, Benrisk Consulting, Safety First Association Chairman, OHS & Risk Management Consultant

PREAMBLE

Recently there have been ongoing comments about the training, competence and capability of health and safety practitioners, so I felt it will be worthwhile to re-publish this 2019 article.

This article was compiled from Singapore Accord documentation to provide some insights as to where the world sees the OHS Profession going.

The South African OHS legislators may, in time, also adopt this Singapore Accord OHS professionalism approach for the South African legislation appointed OHS professionals and practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2017, the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations (INSHPO), a global voice for the Occupational Health and Safety Profession, held a conference in Singapore where the Singapore Accord was accepted by the various OHS Professional Bodies around the world that are INSHPO members (South Africa is not a member).

INSHPO provides an international forum for engagement of OHS related matters and for advancing the OHS profession through the engagement of evidence-based practices, and the development of a harmonised global framework for OHS practices in the OHS profession.

An INSHPO project was established to define the roles, knowledge and skills for both vocationally and university-educated (or other higher education) OHS personnel.

COMPETENCE AND CAPABILITY

The project states that OHS professionals and practitioners must be competent, effective and influential, but the OHS personnel must go beyond competent, where “competence” has been defined as “the ability to transfer and apply knowledge and skills to new situations and environments, consistently applying knowledge and skills to a standard or performance required in the work-place”. Competence is about delivering the present based on the past.

This suggested new performance level introduces the term “Capability” where one “applies theoretical knowledge that underpins practice in occupations and professions and also the industry-specific knowledge and skills that transcends particular workplaces and the tacit knowledge of the work-place.”

Capability is about imagining and being able to realise that being confident and adaptable as well as being able to develop and effectively utilise one’s

knowledge and skills in complex and changing circumstances, including those that may not have been previously experienced. This concept of capability adds a further dimension that expands the understanding of the required knowledge and skills and how these should be applied as part of positioning the OHS profession and its OHS professionals for the future.

THE INSHPO FRAMEWORK

An INSHPO framework was developed:

- To facilitate a shared understanding of the difference in roles of the OHS professional and the OHS practitioner
- To position the OHS professional as a key advisor, strategist and leader in fully integrating the management of OHS risk into sustainable business practice.
- To position the OHS practitioner as a skilled implementer of OHS activities and an effective OHS supporter and communicator at site level.

THE OHS PRACTITIONER AND OHS PROFESSIONAL

Furthermore, the world-wide view identifies two clear categories of OHS personnel as follows:

- The normally university educated OHS professional, usually has a role requiring a broad understanding of a wide range of hazards, controls and has a unique multidisciplinary body of knowledge concerning risk and the elimination or reduction or work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses as well as property damage and associated social and financial losses.

The OHS Professional’s scope of activities are often across the organisation, including site, divisional/regional and corporate and may include local, national, global roles.

- The vocationally or technical sector educated OHS practitioner is normally the implementer of the developed OHS strategy, involving maintaining the OHS administration, conducting training and using a range of state-of-art tools, processes and common practice solutions for the generally known behavioural and technical hazards and risks. The OHS practitioner role also required an understanding of a multidisciplinary body of knowledge concerning well known hazards, risks and the elimination and reduction of such issues and the supporting and monitoring the compliance of the OHS management processes and procedures.



on the Standards of OHS Professionals

The OHS Practitioner’s scope of activities are usually at a site (workplace) level of an SME or a section or site within a large organisation. Thus when considering a practitioner’s activities, each activity should be read as applicable “at the local level.”

Obviously, this capability framework describes the activities, knowledge and skills of different levels of OHS person that may work within different sized and complexity organisations, which may impact on the OHS person’s position of seniority, the role’s demands (eg. SHEQ and more) and the organisation’s structure.

The INSHPO framework identified three titled levels of OHS practitioner as follows:

- Level 1: the OHS Officer
- Level 2: the OHS Advisor
- Level 3: The OHS Co-Ordinator – designing, developing and implementing innovative site-level activities to improve OHS.

The framework documentation describes all the three title levels related to

- Position levels (titles, key purposes roles, reporting lines)
- Professional parameters (autonomy, influence, complexity, business skills)
- Nature and complexity of knowledge and skills (both soft and hard skills)
- Qualifications (world qualification framework levels 4 to 6 for practitioners and 6 to 9 for professionals)

Similarly three titled levels of OHS professional were also identified as follows:

- Level 1: A Graduate OHS Advisor
- Level 2 : An OHS Manager
- Level 3: A General/Group OHS Manager, OHS/Safety VP, Director OHS/Safety

KNOWLEDGE

Both the OHS professional and OHS practitioners must have specific technical knowledge to operate effectively. This knowledge is gained through a combination of formal education and experience.

The INSHPO framework describes six knowledge

matrix areas, as follows:

- Hazards and risks
- Hazard and risk controls
- Safety and health management
- Professional role and functioning
- Underlying technical and behavioural disciplines
- Underlying management science

The conceptual and technical knowledge under these areas must be integrated to enable the OHS professional and OHS practitioner to develop a “mental model” to inform and perform OHS practices effectively.

ACTIVITY DIMENSIONS AND DOMAINS

The capability framework defines the role of OHS professionals and OHS practitioners using two activity levels, namely:

- **Dimensions** – providing the scope of the distinguishing boundaries of the roles.
- **Domains** – Describing the fields of activity within the boundaries.

The following seven dimensions are/were used to outline the roles of the OHS professional and OHS practitioner:

1. Systems management approach.
2. Organisational culture and it’s impact of OHS
3. OHS risk management processes.
4. Measurement and evaluation of OHS performance.
5. Knowledge management (re. the depth, breath, maturity and integration of knowledge) and knowledge levels (re. awareness, routine application, comprehensive application, and creative mastery).
6. Communication, engagement and influence
7. Professional and ethical practice.

As with the application of knowledge, there must be a level of skill related to a personal skill, a professional skill and a technical professional skill involved for each OHS professional or OHS practitioner to practice at their level of capability.

I trust this article provides some insights as to where the world sees the OHS profession moving and what growth and development we as OHS professionals and practitioners need to aspire to, going forward.

REFERENCE

<http://www.inshpo.org/docs/INSHPO%202017%20Competence%20Framework%20Final.pdf>



Ensuring safety in extreme weather:

A critical duty of occupational health and safety practitioners



Herman (Harry) Fourie has a passion for occupational health and safety and has been working in the industry for many years. He is Vice-Chairman of the Safety First Association.

In today's world, the role of an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) practitioner extends beyond ensuring everyday safety protocols in the workplace.

With the increasing frequency of extreme weather conditions, including severe cold, intense heat, flooding, and tornadoes, especially in regions such as South Africa, the responsibilities of these practitioners are becoming ever more crucial.

To safeguard employees and minimise potential damage and loss of life, OHS practitioners must implement comprehensive strategies to prepare for and respond to these extreme weather events.

PREPARING FOR SEVERE COLD AND HEAT

Extreme temperatures pose significant risks to employees, potentially leading to hypothermia, frostbite, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

The OHS practitioner's first step is to conduct a thorough risk assessment of the workplace, identifying areas and tasks that are particularly vulnerable to temperature extremes.

Severe cold:

1. Personal protective equipment (PPE):

Ensuring that all employees have access to appropriate PPE, such as insulated clothing, gloves, and thermal headgear, is essential.

2. Work schedule adjustments:

Scheduling outdoor work during the warmest parts of the day and allowing frequent breaks in heated shelters can significantly reduce the risk of cold-related illnesses.

3. Education and training:

Training employees to recognise the symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite and how to respond can be life-saving. It is also crucial to establish clear protocols for emergency situations.

Extreme heat:

1. Hydration stations:

Providing easily accessible hydration stations encourages employees to drink water regularly, dehydration and heat-related illnesses.

2. Cooling areas:

Creating shaded or air-conditioned rest areas where employees can cool down during breaks helps maintain their core body temperature.

3. Heat illness prevention programmes:

Implementing programmes that educate workers on recognising and responding to symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke is vital.

RESPONSE TO SEVERE FLOODING AND TORNADOES

South Africa's recent experiences with severe flooding and tornadoes highlight the importance of preparedness and rapid response to such events.

Severe flooding:

1. Emergency action plans:

Developing and regularly updating emergency action plans that include evacuation routes, emergency contacts, and procedures for accounting for all employees is critical.

2. Flood barriers and drains:

Installing flood barriers and ensuring that drains are clear can help mitigate the impact of sudden flooding on the workplace.

3. Training and drills:

Conducting regular training and emergency drills ensures that employees know how to react swiftly and safely in the event of a flood.

Tornadoes:

1. Shelter Areas:

Designating and clearly marking safe shelter areas within the workplace that can protect employees during a tornado is essential.

2. Weather monitoring:

Utilising weather monitoring systems and apps to stay informed about potential tornado threats allows for timely warnings and actions.

3. Communication systems:

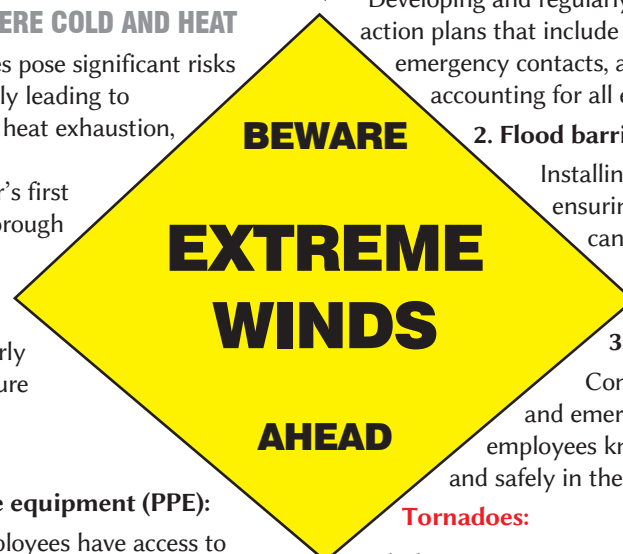
Establishing reliable communication systems to disseminate warnings and instructions quickly can save lives.

MINIMISING DAMAGE AND LOSS OF LIFE

The OHS practitioner must work proactively to minimise damage and loss of life from extreme weather. This involves a multi-faceted approach:

1. Regular inspections and maintenance:

Regularly inspecting and maintaining the workplace infrastructure ensures that buildings and equipment can withstand extreme weather conditions.



2. Employee involvement:

Involving employees in safety planning and encouraging them to report potential hazards enhances overall preparedness.

3. Collaboration with authorities:

Coordinating with local emergency services and government agencies ensures that the workplace's emergency plans are aligned with broader community response efforts.

CONCLUSION

The evolving climate and increasing incidence of

extreme weather events underscore the vital role of Occupational Health and Safety practitioners.

By implementing robust strategies for preparation, response, and continuous education, these professionals can effectively safeguard employees and minimise the risks associated with severe cold, heat, flooding, and tornadoes.

In doing so, they not only protect lives but will also contribute to the resilience and sustainability of workplaces in the face of climatic challenges.

Frustration or opportunity



Roaan van Zyl

As a consultant in the HSE field, I frequently stumble upon a client or a situation where my consultation is counted as nothing more than an opinion or an idea, no matter how much I try to convince them otherwise. Nevertheless, I continue to try my best.

Recently I found myself in a situation where I needed to help a client out of a stumble. In the process I got frustrated to the point of anger toward a fellow HSE professional, let us call this person Steve.

My client was working on a site for a while when all of a sudden they were forced to comply with rules they had never received. There were a lot of faults on both sides, but for now I am going into only some of the details.

The client called me as they needed help urgently. They had bought a safety file from a company, different to what they normally do - and as we all know these are often generic. So when the client took the safety file to the site for approval they were sent away because a lot of specific information was missing. That's when they called me for assistance. I took the file and went to the site to try to get it all sorted out. After several attempts and a lot of frustration, Steve finally approved the file after every single word and detail was to his liking, literally. Steve had some sort of personal thing in the way he wanted this file to be, and not just

according to the OSH Act. This made me angry and frustrated, but the client needed to get on site so I bit my tongue, smiled and complied.

Now to explain why I am writing this story. Most of us in the field try to do the best we can, and we know HSE can help South Africa to do so much more and so much better. But we also need to realise that the OSH Act is legislation and as such we all interpret every word and sentence differently in relation to our background and our influences.

We also need to understand that we cannot let our judgment be clouded due to unprofessional influences. That is exactly what happened to me in this situation. I let my own prejudice or unprofessionalism cloud my judgment to the point where I almost cancelled the client. That is how frustrated this person made me - they had no reason to handle it the way they did. Perhaps they had some prejudice? But that is irrelevant from a professional who wants to take HSE forward and help bring change in all fields.

In conclusion, I want to say this: As professionals we must make sure that we work with an ethic beyond reproach. We must help our fellow professionals learn and not just push an idea or judgment call. We must build together to help teach about safety so that health and safety can bring the change we need to see in all the relevant fields.

For further information email debbie@safety1st.co.za or phone +27 83 266 6662



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QUO VADIS: FUTURE OF FIRE SAFETY AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES - INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Alcohol and drug testing for eCommerce delivery drivers



Rhys Evans, Managing Director of ALCO-Safe

The demand for efficient delivery services has surged to meet the expanding eCommerce market sector. Over 50,000 drivers (both bike and motor vehicle) transport deliveries daily across South Africa. Given that such numbers will only keep climbing, taking measures to ensure the sobriety of delivery drivers on the job has become critical.

The potential risks faced in the event of alcohol (or drug) related accidents, which could result in personal injury, loss of goods, and even death, cannot be ignored.

To safeguard its reputation, prioritise road safety, and protect goods in transit these companies should adopt and implement mandatory alcohol and drug testing procedures.

LEGAL MANDATES

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, employers have a duty to ensure that employees do not consume alcohol or intoxicating substances while at work, and do not perform duties while under the influence.

The National Road Traffic Act (NRTA) prohibits driving while intoxicated, with penalties for doing so. Logistics and delivery companies need to adhere to the road safety regulations, ensuring their workforce refrain from working under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

GET IT DOWN IN WRITING

Logistics and delivery companies that have not yet implemented a policy on intoxicating substances in the workplace, need to do so with urgency.

Drivers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs are more likely to be involved in accidents, and injuries, and are more likely to make mistakes that could harm others.

An alcohol and drug testing policy should:

- be clear, concise, and easy to understand
- explain the reasons for the policy, the types of tests that will be conducted
- explain consequences of a positive test result.
- be fair and consistent, and apply to all employees equally.

AWARENESS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

There are several factors that logistics and delivery companies should consider when managing alcohol and drugs in the workplace. These should include the company's nature of work, culture, policy, procedures, training and education programmes as well as support systems for workers with substance problems.

Drivers need to be educated on the risks

associated with intoxicating substances while on the job and to their overall health in the long term.

With proper awareness training, drivers are more likely to understand that the company policy on alcohol testing is not to catch them and fire them for drinking but to identify and assist where there is a problem.

THE MECHANICS OF WORKPLACE TESTING

One major eCommerce logistics player that implemented workplace testing at a number of their warehousing/collections depots, has tracked positive results.

Every driver who arrives for pickup gets tested before they are issued with their parcels to be delivered.

Testing is conducted by means of an unmanned breathalyser unit that is mounted onto a wall at collection points. This unit is linked to access control biometrics, and before drivers are permitted access to the dispatch point, they must pass the breathalyser.

If a driver blows a positive test, a manager can conduct a confirmation screening, which can set in motion the disciplinary consequences as detailed in the workplace policy.

All results collected by the testing device are stored on a cloud-based platform along with biometric details. This has an auditing benefit and makes it possible to report on the number of tests conducted during a working day, which can help track the progress of workplace safety interventions and identify any personnel risks or operational anomalies.

CONCLUSION

Implementing alcohol testing measures provides vital protection that ensures drivers remain sober while operating vehicles and handling deliveries. By enforcing strict policies and conducting regular testing, companies can mitigate the risks associated with impaired driving, minimise the potential for accidents, and safeguard the well-being of their drivers, other road users, and valuable goods in transit.

By prioritising the implementation of alcohol testing protocols, logistics and delivery companies can demonstrate their commitment to responsibility, professionalism and customer satisfaction. This can solidify their position as trusted and reliable providers in an increasingly competitive eCommerce landscape.

Ultimately, investing in alcohol testing is a proactive step that not only enhances safety but also safeguards the long-term success and sustainability of the logistics and delivery industry.



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Hot work permits in workplace safety



Harshvardhan Singh works as a Senior Service Engineer at a mining equipment manufacturer at Zawar Mines, Udaipur, India

PERMIT TO WORK (PTW)

A Permit to Work (PTW) system is a formal, written procedure that defines the work to be conducted, identifies potential hazards, and outlines the necessary precautions to ensure safe execution. It acts as a crucial communication tool among various departments, plants, supervisors, operators, and contractors, facilitating a clear understanding of responsibilities and safety protocols.

Although the PTW system does not inherently make the job safe, it provides a structured approach to risk assessment and the implementation of safety measures.

The Permit to Work (PTW) system ensures that designated personnel are authorised to perform specific tasks within a designated timeframe and location, with a thorough verification process that guarantees all necessary safety precautions and checks are completed before, during, and after the job. This process helps safeguard both employees and assets.

Key elements of work permit

1. **Hazard Identification:** Identifying potential hazards and threats associated with the job

2. **Risk Assessment:** Evaluating the identified hazards to determine their potential impact and the likelihood of occurrence
3. **Implementing Control Measures:** Putting in place safety controls, procedures, and protocols to minimise or eliminate risks.
4. **Monitoring and Review:** Continuously overseeing the work and evaluating the effectiveness of control measures.

Things to remember in permit to work system

1. Always take a permit before commencing the job.
2. Involve the team and help them understand the permit.
3. Display the permit clearly.
4. Review the permit.
5. Renew or extend the permit, if required.
6. Close the permit after completion of job.

There are mainly eight types of work permits used in industry namely

1. General work permit.

2. Hot work permit.
3. Confined space permit.
4. Excavation permit.
5. Electrical work permit.
6. Lifting shifting.
7. Work at height.
8. Radiation.

Out of the eight permits mentioned above, my focus is on hot work permit.

HOT WORK PERMIT

A hot work permit system is a legal document designed to manage and mitigate the risks associated with work performed that may generate heat, sparks, or flames.

Hazards associated with hot work

1. **Fire:** The most common hazard is perhaps fire which gets generated due to sparks flying by which can cause fires or combustion if they come into contact with flammable materials.
2. **Health hazard:** Exposure to welding fumes can pose significant health hazards such as respiratory problems, skin and eye irritation.
3. **Electrical hazard:** Insufficient electrical safety measures during hot work such as use of damaged welding electrodes, naked wires and uninsulated switches can result in shock and electrocution.
4. **Explosion:** Improper handling, storage as well as use of gas cylinders in gas welding operations can cause an explosion. Untagged and non-colour coded cylinder and uncalibrated valves can also cause explosions.

TYPES OF HOT WORK

1. **Welding:** Generates high temperatures and sparks that can ignite combustible materials.
2. **Grinding:** Grinding metal surfaces via abrasive discs produces sparks that can ignite flammable materials.
3. **Cutting:** Involves using a flame to cut through metals, producing sparks and molten metal that can ignite flammable materials.
4. **Soldering and brazing:** Joins metal parts by melting a filler metal into the joint, producing heat that can ignite flammable materials
5. **Metal drilling:** Drilling metal generates friction, producing heat and sparks that can ignite flammable substances.
6. **Sand blasting:** Generates sparks when abrasive materials strike metal surfaces for cleaning the surface.

Structure of a hot work permit

1. Date and time of work.
2. Location of work.
3. Duration of work.
4. Description of work.
5. PPE and SOP requirements for work.
6. Details of persons with signatures – Initiator, custodian, issuer, isolator and co-permittee.
7. Completing hot work checklist.
8. Hazard identification, likelihood of occurrence, consequences of hazard and measures taken to reduce hazard.
9. Tool box talk of all persons involved.
10. Lockout and tagout.
11. Area barricading.
12. Final review.
13. Handover procedure and cancellation process.

Mandatory precautions to be taken during hot work

1. **Good housekeeping:** Ensure that flammable material is not present in the area close to the hot work.
2. **Personal protective equipment:** Ensure that the person performing hot work is wearing the appropriate PPE, such as fire-resistant apron, gloves, helmets, safety glasses, and face shields.
3. **Fire extinguishing equipment:** Ensure that a suitable fire extinguisher is present at the work area and regularly maintained. A sand bucket can also be kept nearby for extinguishing a fire.
4. **Barricading:** Proper barricading of the area should be done to prevent unauthorised personnel from entering the danger zone.
5. **Fire watcher:** A trained and authorised person should be present during hot work, overseeing all the activities during and after the hot work to mitigate any kind of hazard.
6. **Health of equipment:** Before starting any hot work, equipment such as welding machine, grinder, and gas cylinders should be checked for any abnormality.

By prioritising safety and adhering to the guidelines outlined in a hot work permit, workers can confidently tackle hot work tasks with precision and protection.

Mitigating structural collapse during demolition:

Insights from a PrCHSA



Yaseen Francis,
Director ACHASM

If unplanned and uncontrolled, demolition within the construction industry can lead to structural collapse. Demolition is inherently a high-risk process; this risk is heightened when the intention is to retain existing structural features for future use, such as building facades and frame structures, to preserve the original look and feel.

This practice is becoming increasingly common, especially within the City of Cape Town, which has strict laws concerning preserving historical building architecture. The demolition of buildings with historical significance presents unique hazards due to the complexity involved, such as adjoining structures, old and deteriorated existing structural elements and robust support required to ensure the preservation of the structure, the safety of workers and the protection of the public. Therefore, this article outlines common pitfalls encountered by a Professional Construction Health and Safety Agent (PrCHSA), whose role is crucial and indispensable in ensuring the discharge of specific duties by the client-designer and contractors, providing a sense of reassurance in the safety measures in place.

KEY PITFALLS IDENTIFIED DURING DEMOLITION THAT CAN LEAD TO COLLAPSE

During the planning stages of a project and more so during demolition, the following pitfalls are identified: overloading of floor slabs with demolition debris and equipment, structural information and instructions are provided in an unstructured format (verbally, drawings are issued and updated during demolition), lack of structural information made available to the temporary works designer (information is vague, non-descriptive, and lacks vital details such as loading considerations and load points per meter square), lack of detailed method statements developed by the contractor and lack of oversight by the professional team, insufficient structural inspections due to a lack of mandated structural engineer appointments (intervals and format not specified), and uncertainty and no clear guidelines concerning the temporary work designer's competency relative to complexity.

These pitfalls can lead to severe consequences such as structural failures, multiple fatalities, serious injuries, project delays, legal and financial repercussions, compromised work quality and diminished accountability and professionalism.

This underscores the gravity of the situation and the urgent need for clear guidelines and structured information, which are not just essential but a fundamental requirement for the success and safety of any demolition project.

KEY MITIGATION STRATEGIES DURING DEMOLITION TO AVOID COLLAPSE

Competency

It is imperative that the PrCHSA, along with the Principal Agent or Client Representative, verify that the structural engineer is competent for the project. So, how does one measure competency?

Competency should be assessed beyond the standard parameters, such as qualification and professional registration. Competency should be evaluated based on the project risk profile, including complexity, size and value. The structural engineer must demonstrate in a detailed project CV or project profile that they have successfully designed and provided oversight on a demolition project of a similar nature in complexity, size and value.

In addition to the measure of competency, they should be aware of their limitations in scope, as accepting a project outside of their expertise is unethical and jeopardises H&S and quality. Consideration should also be given to the construction manager's competency, which is responsible for managing the entire process, especially H&S. The construction manager's role is crucial. Their competency must be all-encompassing, including background and technical knowledge of structures.

CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

It is essential to verify that the structural engineer's scope of services they have been appointed based on the project risk profile, as mentioned earlier, includes project complexity, size and value. A standard service level agreement or contract document may omit duties contradictory to the risk profile. For example, a highly complex demolition project, such as a multi-story demolition of an existing structure, which requires retaining the facade, may necessitate increased inspections not specified in the engineer's initial agreement. They may have only been appointed for the design with inspection intervals not defined relative to the risk profile, such as requiring increased inspections weekly or twice a week instead of twice a month, serving as a form of early intervention.

The PrCHSA, in conjunction with the Principal Agent, ensures that designers are appointed and mandated in writing. Without a written mandate, designers have no contractual obligation to conduct inspections beyond what has been specified. Designers must be mandated under CR 6(g), which outlines the requirement "to conduct the necessary

inspections at appropriate intervals to verify that construction of the relevant structure is carried out following the approved design." It is crucial to ensure that this agreement corresponds with any other contractual agreement, i.e., the PROCSA agreement and does not contradict the required duties initially specified.

Where the responsibilities specified lack of inspection intervals, this agreement must be revised to suit the project risk profile. Furthermore, the contractual agreements should specify the inspection frequency and inspection formats based on the project's risk profile; for instance, a highly complex demolition project may require increased oversight and frequent inspections, such as twice a week, with detailed inspection reports including photographs and detailed descriptions of the current conditions and the management of predetermined hold points.

INSPECTION FORMATS AND SITE INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions

Often, complex demolition situations arise, and the supervisor should be asked whether the structural engineer has provided written instructions to proceed with the demolition of specific structural elements, i.e. loadbearing wall, if there are updated demolition drawings and a methodology and whether they are aware of those structural elements being load bearing. Often, the response is that the instruction was issued verbally. It is imperative that contractors insist on written formal instructions supplemented with updated drawings and modifications before proceeding with any demolition, and should not assume that verbal instruction is sufficient. Verbal instruction cannot be evidence in a formal inquiry or court proceedings.

Inspection formats

Structural inspection should extend beyond visual inspection. Visual inspections are only sufficient with documented evidence. The inspection must be recorded in an appropriate format; why? Date-stamped photographic records serve as accurate and verifiable records of inspection. They can

highlight any deviations identified in photographs, such as changes in the structure's condition, new or widened cracks or support work shifting from its original position. This ultimately allows for timely intervention, preventing minor issues from escalating into major structural failures.

INFORMATION REQUIRED

To develop a detailed method statement, it is essential to ensure that the structural engineer makes available a structural engineering survey as specified in Construction Regulation 14 for Demolition Work. This should include structural analysis, an evaluation of the existing structure to be demolished, identifying critical load-bearing elements and potential points of failure, and the current condition of structural elements such as walls, slabs, beams, and pre-and post-tension cables (not limited to).

METHOD STATEMENTS

The appointed structural engineer or competent person must make available a detailed method statement of demolition depicting the demolition sequences, i.e. top-down demolition, proposed methods and equipment, support requirements and loadings (not limited to). The contractor should develop a corresponding detailed site-specific method statement, including details on equipment and machinery based on the proposed method. The method statement should reference the structural engineering survey, temporary work design, and pertinent hold points. The structural engineer, PrCHSA, and all other professional team members should review and comment on the method statement and read it in conjunction with the temporary work design.

CONCLUSION

Despite robust regulations that exist within the construction regulations, particularly regarding high-risk activities like demolition work, implementation often falls short. Preventing structural collapse during demolition requires an all-encompassing approach which entails the verification and appointment of competent personnel in the planning stages, detailed documentation review, clearly defined oversight and inspection requirements to be reflected in contractual agreements and detailed preliminary investigative information concerning the structure to address the pitfalls mentioned above in applying the proposed mitigation strategies 'Hold Points' can aid in mitigating collapse during demolition.

Disclaimer: This article is intended for informational purposes (opinion piece) based on the insights of an H&S professional and should not be considered a guideline for demolition work.



A-OSH Expo 2024 puts safety first

Anyone tasked with ensuring the safety and wellbeing of their employees in the workplace, gathered at Gallagher Convention Centre between 11 and 13 June to attend Africa's largest OSH expo.

Over the three days, 2576 industry captains joined the other 7539 visitors at the co-located Securex South Africa, Facilities Management Expo, and Fireexpo to network with their peers, discuss solutions to their needs with experienced exhibitors, watch live demonstrations of solutions, and listen to thought-provoking presentations at the free-to-attend seminar sessions.

"We never cease to be amazed at the overwhelmingly positive response we receive from both exhibitors and visitors to A-OSH EXPO. The aisles were busy from the opening at 9:00 on Tuesday 11 June to the closing at 16:00 on Thursday 13 June. Overall, visitors expressed satisfaction at the wide variety of OSH solutions on display, and were thrilled at the professionalism of the knowledge downloads at the Saioh Seminar Theatre and the Working at Height and Safety Seminar Theatre (powered by SafetyCloud)," says Mark Anderson, Portfolio Director at Specialised Exhibitions.

TAKING CARE OF EMPLOYEES

Almost ninety exhibitors displayed a vast array of PPE solutions, OSH training programmes, safety-driven software programmes, gas detection systems, environmental management systems, working at height and fall arrest equipment, first aid/medical supplies, OSH auditing systems, and noise control, monitoring equipment and services.

SATISFYING EXHIBITORS AND VISITORS

"It is important to us that exhibitors reach the expo goals



they set at A-OSH EXPO and the four co-located expos. We provide them with tools to ensure that their expo experience is unsurpassed. Our extensive marketing and PR campaign, pre, during and after the shows ensures maximised brand exposure for each exhibitor," says Anderson.

"Last year's participation paid for itself, just by getting one new client! The right people come to the expo, in other words, our ideal target market. Face-to-face is a great way to get contacts, then follow up with a meeting after the show. The show was well organised, and we had a great spot. We had some good visitors on our stand on the first day," says Gary Dollman from Prismia.

"This year marks our 13th A-OSH EXPO. Exhibiting is crucial part of our marketing plan, as it allows us to showcase our products and promote our company directly to potential customers, creating a tangible and interactive experience. The exhibition, coupled with seminars, also provides valuable opportunities for networking, market research, and staying up to date with industry trends. The combination of security, OSH, FM, and fire invites visitors from various market segments, making it worthwhile for all exhibitors," says Frikkie Stroh from Safequip.

"I was interested in what was on show at A-OSH EXPO, and I've attended the last six expos. I was looking for new suppliers, forming new bonds, and finding info on environmental changes. This information is important to me in the workplace, and also at home. I was thrilled with the gas detection solutions, and I found some great suppliers for both this and the safety shoes. I loved the seminar theatres at A-OSH EXPO, and the virtual reality technology. We would like to implement the concept that Mr Zee shares of dancing to get a safety message across, in our workplace," says Mildred Mukombiwa from ABS Alloys & Metals.

"I was a Premier Guest at A-OSH EXPO this year. I was particularly interested in the working at heights solutions since we work predominantly at height, and I also got some great ideas on other OSH solutions, which I can use in my business. I also found some high-quality, affordable PPE equipment, and I ordered some chemicals I can use in my business. The horizontal lifeline on show was particularly interesting for me. As a sole operator, this expo broadens and opens up other aspects of the industry," says Thomas O'Connor from Go Away Bird.

To sponsor or exhibit at A-OSH EXPO 2025 contact: zelda.jordaan@montgomerygroup.com or johan.vanheerden@montgomerygroup.com

Engage with A-OSH EXPO 2025 on social media using the show hashtag #A-OSH2025.

See some of the A-OSH EXPO 2024 highlights here <https://youtu.be/SBJRHVUxZM?si=3G6BUoPEgPGGo-MQq>



Mastering the five core capacities for sustainable safety excellence



Shawn M. Galloway is CEO of ProAct Safety and an author of several best-selling books. He is an award-winning consultant, trusted adviser, leadership coach, expert witness, and keynote speaker. He also hosts the highly acclaimed weekly podcast series Safety Culture Excellence®.

How much value does your safety system bring to your organisation? And what about your leaders and the culture they create? Do you believe your organisation has what it takes to achieve excellence in safety performance consistently?

With over two decades of experience leading companies in various industries, I have noticed the organisations that stand out from their competitors are those actively working towards building the capability to maintain sustainable excellence.

Safety excellence goes beyond just achieving and repeating exceptional results. It involves a deep understanding of how those results were achieved, with a shared mindset that continuous improvement is always possible within the organisation.

This mindset is reinforced by systems in place to prevent accidents, respond and recover effectively when they do occur, as well as mechanisms for proactively learning from deviations to expectations before unwanted events occur.

Organisations must focus on developing five core capacities to achieve sustainable safety excellence. These capacities are essential for creating a work environment where safety is not just a priority but an integral part of the organisational culture.

Let's explore each of these capacities further to understand their role in achieving sustainable safety excellence.

SYSTEM CAPACITY TO PREVENT AND RECOVER

The first capacity to master is the **System Capacity** to Prevent and Recover.

Despite the best-laid plans, deviations and mistakes are inevitable in complex work environments. Great corporations understand this and create systems not only to prevent unwanted events but also to recover swiftly when they occur.

By having robust recovery mechanisms in place, organisations can minimise the severity of incidents and quickly bring operations back to the pre-incident state.

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Leadership Capacity is another essential element in achieving safety excellence.

Organisations must invest in developing their leaders, especially those on the front line, to ensure they have the competency and confidence to align their teams with safety protocols.

Effective leaders proactively seek out opportunities to learn from deviations and errors before they escalate into incidents. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement, leaders can better prevent safety incidents and create a safer work environment for their teams.

CULTURAL CAPACITY

Cultural Capacity is crucial to achieving safety excellence because it is the sustainability factor.

It involves creating an environment where new employees are introduced to the desired beliefs, behaviours, and experiences that align with the organisation's safety culture.

In a culture of excellence, team members take responsibility for each other's safety and uphold

safety standards even in the absence of supervision. This means that safety remains a top priority for everyone, regardless of their position or role within the company, making it a core value and how work is performed.

Building a strong safety culture involves acclimating new employees to the written and unwritten rules and the desired beliefs and behaviours.

A culture of excellence goes beyond following rules and procedures. It fosters a sense of camaraderie and mutual support among team members, who actively look out for each other's well-being. This creates a tribe-like atmosphere where everyone is committed to maintaining a safe work environment.

ENGAGEMENT CAPACITY

Engagement Capacity is crucial for creating a sense of ownership and employee commitment to safety. Organisations must create an environment where employees feel empowered to take ownership of safety initiatives and actively participate in activities to improve safety.

When employees feel a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for each other's safety, they are more motivated to uphold safety standards and work together as a team to ensure a safe workplace.

STRATEGIC CAPACITY

Strategic Capacity is essential for ensuring that safety efforts are aligned with the organisation's overall goals and objectives.

Organisations must develop a strategic framework that focuses on creating sustainable value through safety initiatives.

By making strategic choices and tradeoffs that prioritise safety, organisations can demonstrate the value of their safety efforts to internal stakeholders and consumers. This strategic approach to safety management ensures that safety remains a core component of the organisation's long-term success.

These five capacities are interconnected and essential for creating a safe and productive work environment. By focusing on prevention and recovery, leadership, culture, engagement, and strategy, organisations can build a culture of safety excellence where every employee feels empowered to prioritise safety and contribute to a safer workplace.

Investing in these capacities is not only a commitment to the well-being of employees but also a strategic decision that can drive long-term success and sustainability for the organisation.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

To complement the elucidation on the five capacities crucial for sustainable safety excellence, it is important to emphasise the significance of **continuous improvement** and ongoing evaluation.

Developing these capacities is not a one-time task

but a continuous journey of improvement and refinement to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging risks.

Organisations must regularly review and enhance their safety systems, leadership practices, cultural norms, employee engagement strategies, and strategic frameworks.

By seeking opportunities for improvement and implementing changes based on lessons learned from incidents or near-misses, organisations can continuously enhance their safety performance and culture and remain agile in dealing with the uncertainty of the future performance of the work.

ONGOING EVALUATION

Ongoing Evaluation is equally important in the quest for safety excellence. Organisations must establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the efficacy and perceived value of the efforts to prevent injuries and incidents and continuously improve the culture.

Regular audits, inspections, safety performance indicators, and feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights into the safety programme's strengths and weaknesses, enabling organisations to make data-informed decisions and adjustments as needed.

By overlaying continuous improvement and ongoing evaluation into the development of these five core capacities, organisations can ensure that they remain proactive, responsive, and adaptive in addressing new safety challenges.

This iterative approach to safety management fosters a culture of learning, innovation, and resilience.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable safety excellence requires a commitment to continuous improvement and ongoing evaluation while working to master the five core capacities.

By embracing a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, organisations can more effectively improve safety performance and create a workplace where every employee is empowered and feels psychologically safe to prioritise safety, report injuries, concerns, and mistakes made, and contribute to creating a safer work environment.

Continuous improvement and ongoing evaluation serve as the pillars that sustain the foundation of safety excellence, ensuring that organisations remain resilient, proactive, and successful in their safety endeavours.

As you embark on this journey of mastering the five core capacities, know that it is through these pillars that you can achieve and sustain safety excellence and ensure the well-being of all who are a part of your organisation.

You can create a workplace where safety is not just a priority or a situational value but a way of life.



Figure 1: Five Core Capacities for Sustainable Safety Excellence

Working abroad in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)



Q: When you decided to work abroad, did you consider various countries?

A: Initially, I considered Australia, but ultimately chose the UK due to having family members on both my side and my wife's side living there. We recognised the importance of having a support system, especially for our children, as it can be quite lonely otherwise.

Q: How did you go about finding a job?

A: I uploaded my CV to the Total Jobs platform. A company agent contacted me, indicating they had a client seeking someone with my skills and experience. The recruitment process included three stages: an initial interview with the agent, a second interview with the Managing Director, and finally, a site tour of the waste management facility.

The first interview was conducted online, followed by a face-to-face meeting. Interestingly, they focused less on my background and more on explaining their operations and the type of person they were looking for.

Q: What was the position and the company?

A: I secured a position as an HSEQ Manager with a recycling company based in London. The role involves the collection, treatment, disposal of non-hazardous waste, and recovery of sorted materials.

Q: How long did the process take from application to relocation? When did you leave?

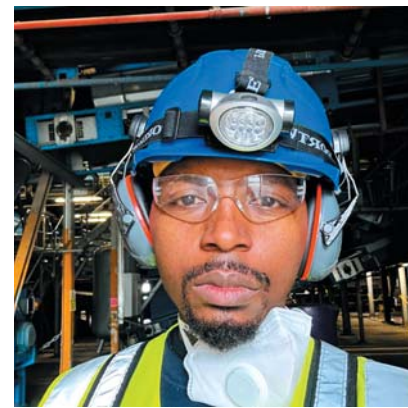
A: I left South Africa in February 2023. Initially, I worked at a relative's company to help set it up. Within a month of applying for health and safety positions, I landed my current job.

Q: What does your job entail?

A: My responsibilities include overseeing all SHEQ functions, implementing and maintaining safety protocols, conducting risk assessments, ensuring regulatory compliance, and managing incident reporting and investigations. Additionally, I promote a culture of safety and continuous improvement through toolbox talks, fire and smoke incident recording, fire prevention system oversight, and daily temperature and wind direction monitoring. Monthly reports are compiled and presented to the board.

Q: Are there differences in educational requirements for OHS positions between South Africa and the UK?

A: In South Africa, safety positions typically require a degree or diploma in OHS. In the UK, a



NEBOSH certification is commonly needed. Both countries prioritise a solid understanding of legislation, risk assessment, and hazard control, but specific regulations and practices can vary. UK companies often hire candidates with a diploma or degree, relevant experience, and short courses such as ISO 45001, incident management/investigation, legal liability, working at heights, first aid, and fire prevention. However, many qualified individuals in the UK lack experience, which can be a barrier to employment due to the associated risks. The UK is also very strict about safety compliance, with significant penalties for non-compliance, which is less rigorously enforced in South Africa.

Q: What were the biggest challenges for you?

A: Transitioning to the UK was relatively smooth for me as OHS principles are similar between the UK and South Africa. Despite some differences in legislation, I quickly adapted and received ample support and training from the company and the MD. The main adjustment was to the work culture, which is fast-paced and efficient, with a strong emphasis on time management. I also had to acclimate to addressing management by their first names, stringent time management, and the winter weather.

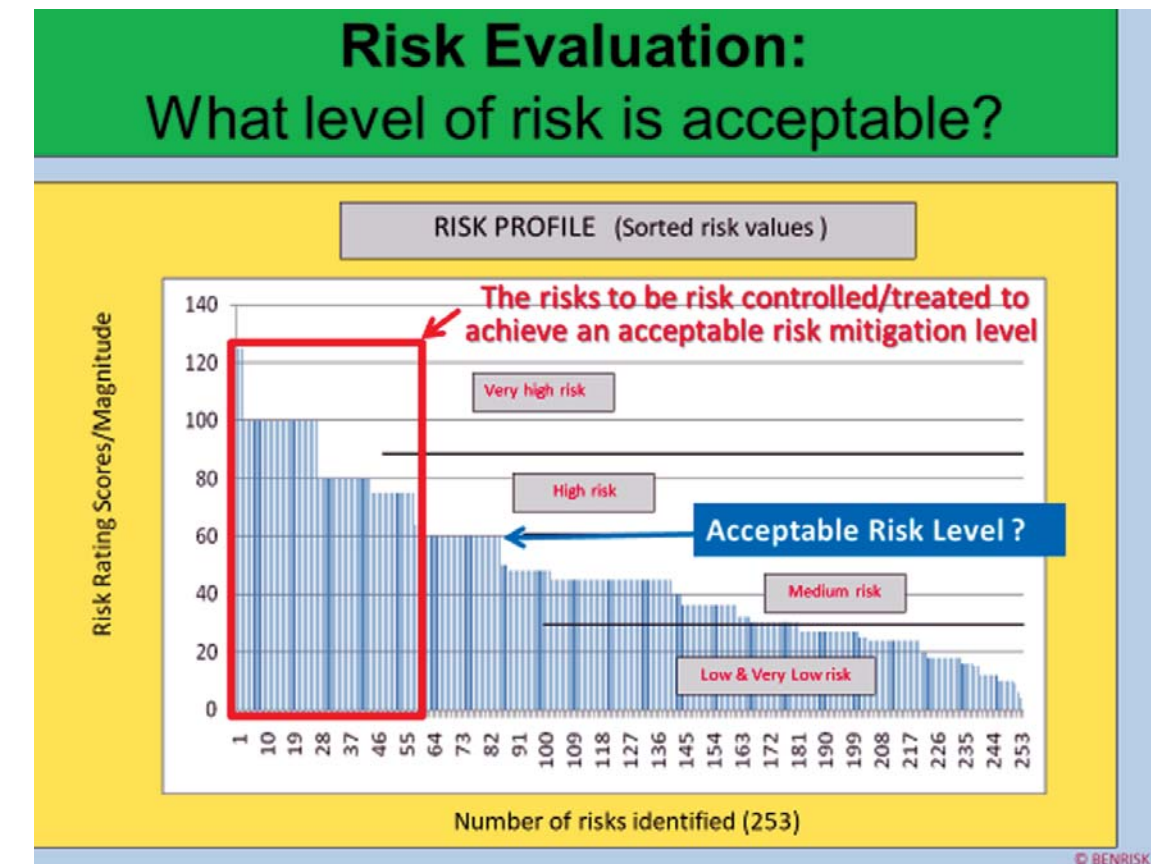
Q: How do you compare the working environment to that in South Africa?

A: The OHS work environment in the UK is more demanding and exhausting. The role requires hard work and the ability to handle pressure. Passion for the field is essential for long-term success in the UK.

Q: Is there scope for people wanting to take up positions in the UK?

A: Yes, there are numerous vacancies in OHS in the UK, reflecting a high demand for safety professionals.

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Benrisk Consulting provides a "3P" Service; a Personalised, Practical and Professional service to businesses wishing to cost effectively manage their liability risks and to positively impact on the profitability of their operations within the Construction, Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) and the Risk Management fields.

Our Pr.CHSA has consulted in Occupational Health & Safety Management field for some 40 years and 24 years from Benrisk Consulting.

Our Pr.CHSA is usually involved from project inception, through design stage to performing the project Baseline Risk Assessment (Construction Regulation 5(1.a) , its Risk Profile & develop the Client's site-specific Health & Safety Specification (Construction Regulation 5(1.b) for the project, assess and approve the compliance of the Contractors' Health & Safety Plans & Files, monitor the construction work & perform the Monthly Contractor Compliance Audits for the Client.

Benrisk Consulting is based in Johannesburg, but the Pr.CHSA work has been performed in various of the Provinces of South Africa (Western Cape, Gauteng, KZN, OFS, Limpopo & Mpumalanga).

Our Pr.CHSA is not only SACPCMP professionally registered but is also professionally registered with SAIOSH, Institute of Risk Management SA (IRMSA), & the Institute for Work at Heights (IWH), while being BSC degreed and worked as an Engineering Geologist in the past.

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