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OS&H

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION EMAIL: SANKIE@SAFETY1ST.CO.ZA

TEL: +27 (12) 809-3023 / MOBILE: +27 (65) 9797879



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Editor:	Debbie Myer
Production Editor:	Lindsay Myer
Chairman:	George Browne
Vice Chairman:	Leighton Bennett
Administration & Membership:	Sankie Greyling
Committee members:	Wensley Misrole
	Wellington Mudenha
	Steward Shapiro
	Fabian Buckley
	Herman (Harry) Fourie
	Warren Manning

Administration / Membership :
Sankie Greyling
Tel: +27 (0) 65 979-7879 E-mail: sankie@safety1st.co.za

Advertising & Editorial :
Delinds Publications cc
Tel: + 27 11 886-5985 / Cell: + 27 83-266-6662
E-mail: delinds@mweb.co.za

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Editor's Comment

SAD STATE OF THE OSH PROFESSION

In this issue, Leighton Bennett reviews the state of the OSH profession in South Africa which he feels is “sadly in a poor state without an accepted OHS degree”. He explains that a company can get their OHS training course SETA accredited, without the course content being assessed and verified as valid, compliant and compliant. He gives examples where even though workers have the correct certification, they don't seem to have the knowledge to perform safely. Other examples he cites are skewed audits enabling a company to get a contract.

EATING AND BREATHING CEMENT

Almost 10 years ago an article was published in a Nigerian newspaper about the ill-health of citizens living near cement factories in the Ogun State. In this issue, Ehi Iden laments that the situation hasn't changed. Dust and other emissions continue to plague those living nearby causing adverse health conditions.

FEET HEALTH AND FOOTWEAR PROTECTION

In her article, foot expert and researcher Dr. Anette Thompson highlights the importance of understanding the feet, their functions and care before using and purchasing footwear.

Without feet that function properly, she explains, the worker will not be able to perform adequately which will result in a loss of productivity for the company. She goes on to give examples and cite different scenarios in the workplace which impact on the functioning of the foot, also explaining how proper footwear can prevent problems and damage to feet..

NOISE INDUCED HEARING LOSS

Dr Marinda Uys emphasises that hearing conservation programmes in the workplace should be implemented, explaining that employees, especially those working in noisy environments are in danger of permanent hearing loss.

She therefore encourages employees to submit themselves to annual tests as required by the company's hearing conservation programme.

PPE MAINTENANCE

Delta Health & Safety explains the importance of PPE maintenance through regular inspections and replacements when necessary, giving checklists that companies can use as a reference.

PREVENTING WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS

Han Wengi works with the philosophy “Doing Safety Right First and Every time”. He assures the reader this is not just a slogan, but a heartfelt intent and passion in how improved workplace safety and health outcomes can be attained in the workplace. A safety and health professional from Singapore, he emphasises that understanding contributory causes is the best remedy to prevent accidents and curb unwanted workplace injuries, dangerous occurrences and fatalities.



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LEIGHTON BENNETT,
SHE & Risk Management
Consultant
Cell: 083 325 4182
Email:
benrisk@mweb.co.za

Feet an important worker's tool – but often ignored



Foot expert and researcher Dr. Anette Thompson discusses how foot research can influence PPE shoe design to support foot health.

This article has been adapted from the presentation given at A-OSH

The two acts of parliament that determine PPE, the Occupational Health & Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993 and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act No. 130 of 1993 were drawn up with two intentions in mind: First, employers must provide employees with PPE (personal protective equipment) and second, they must ensure their employees have full knowledge regarding the correct use of all items of PPE. Multiple SANS regulations covering PPE are also in place. The legislation regulates the technical properties of PPE footwear such as its construction and performance against outside risks. But what about the foot itself?

If we only had to worry about technical specifications for PPE footwear, life would be much simpler. But the truth is different. Considering their small area compared to the massive weight they have to carry, feet work hard and need to be properly cared for. The foot's important role has resulted in extensive research into the density and performance of shoe compounds as well as the design and fit of the shoe.

PPE footwear are designed to protect the worker against different hazards such as falling objects, wetness / water penetration, slipping, cuts and punctures, abrasion, extreme heat or cold, hot metal, chemical splash and electrostatic discharge / build up.

All of these hazards require different specifications in shoe design with one common requirement: the toecap must be able to withstand an impact force of 200 joules. As an example, 200 joules would be like taking 20 kg and dropping it from a height of 1 metre.

Much research has been done into technical specifications, but is the health of the foot is adequately considered? The shoe is the foot's environment and has a direct bearing on the foot's health. To complicate matters for the footwear designer, no two feet are exactly the same, even on the same person.

On an average day, most workers take at least 8000 steps. If their feet don't function properly, they probably won't be able to walk those steps or work productively.



Different foot arch shapes. South Africans tend to have flatter feet

The demands placed on feet vary according to where they work, what work they do and how much they are expected to walk. The foot has to cope with additional pressure, bearing 3-4 times the person's normal weight when the person works on inclines or jumps.

SHOE DESIGN AND FUNCTIONS OF FEET

Feet are mostly associated with balance and walking, but they are also responsible for posture, body support, propulsion, direction changes and blood circulation. For feet to perform these functions efficiently, shoes must be flexible and fit properly. Proper fitting shoes support and improve blood circulation, enable movement, give strength, reduce pressure and friction, prevent growth of corns or calluses.

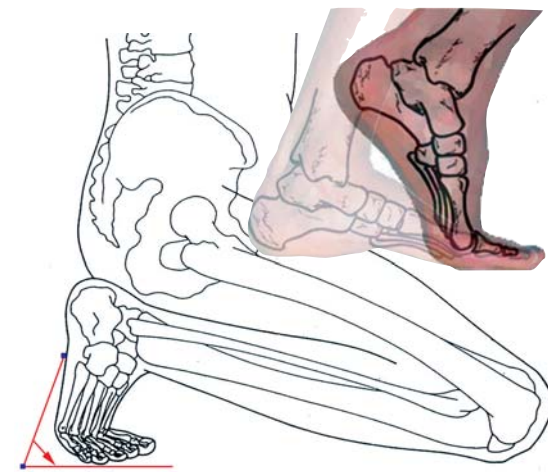
Proper fitting footwear

Workers must be properly measured for the correct size of PPE. When carrying a weight or jumping, the arch flexes like a spring making the foot stretch longer. To accommodate this, there must be at least 1.5 cm space ahead of the longest toe. The shoe must also be wide enough so that toes have enough space to move and are not squashed together.

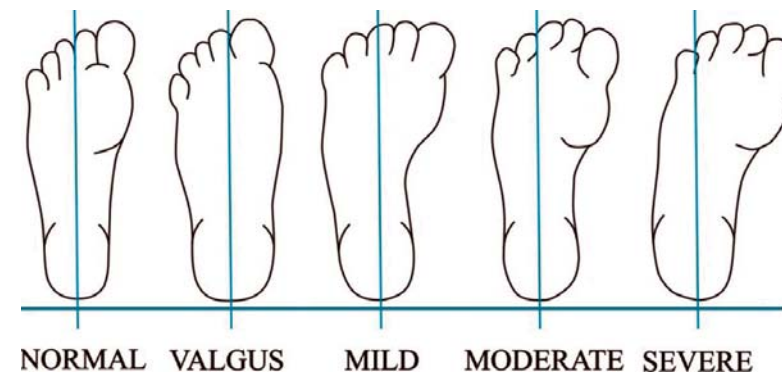
Importance of flexibility

Good muscle function helps blood circulation and feet cannot work well without good blood supply. Contraction and expansion of the foot around the blood vessels create a pump or bellows effect moving blood back to the heart.

Symptoms resulting from bad blood circulation include fatigue, swollen ankles, feet or legs, varicose veins, blood clots, deep vein thrombosis (DVT), difficult wound healing, restless leg syndrome (RLS), venous and arterial insufficiency causing leg ulcers.



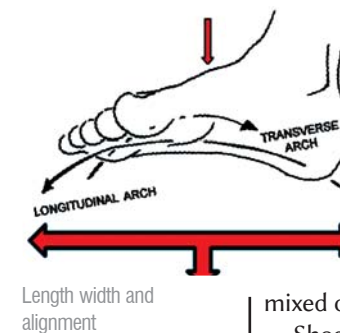
Flexible shoe design enables the foot to bend easily



Above are examples of the different foot shapes

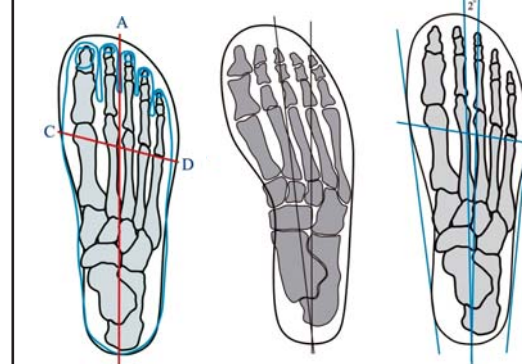
Different foot shapes

The basic foot shape and alignment is balanced into two halves on either side of a long axis. There are variations, some we inherit, some we cause (example women's fashions, high heels) making it difficult for the manufacturer to design shoes to fit all foot types. Ongoing research has shown many South Africans have straighter feet, possibly due to barefoot habits. Feet not only have different shapes but they also have different arch heights which can be mixed on the same person.



Length width and alignment

Shoes must be designed to match the axial alignment of the foot to the shoe otherwise torsion or twisting may occur leading to problems such as bunions, bunched up toes and sore feet



Shoes must be designed to fit the foot's axial alignment

Heel strikes and shock absorption

To limit the impact of a heel strike on the body, its shock needs to be absorbed. The foot also needs to adjust to different terrains and to convert transverse torque from the lower extremity of the body. Proper shoe fit helps absorb the shock.

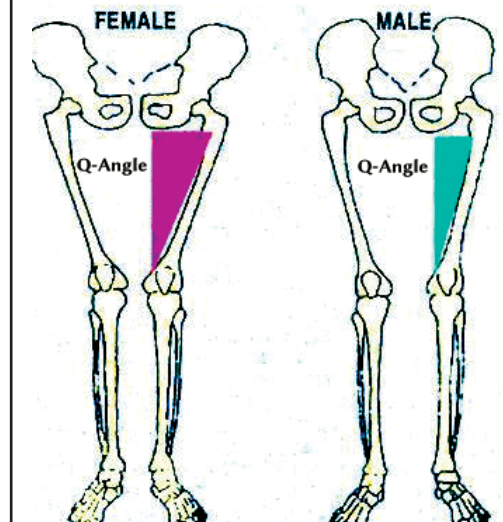
Socks also play a role

The top layer of the skin is constantly being renewed leaving behind dead skin. Combined with sweat and bacteria the dead skin will begin to decay. Socks must therefore be washed daily to clean the debris. Technical socks are specifically manufactured to help keep moisture from perspiration away from the skin.

Alignment and the anatomy

Anatomy such as hip alignment which differs between men and women can also impact the foot and the knee when a person stops suddenly, lands incorrectly, or changes directions rapidly.

Women for example have a wider pelvis affecting gait and the pull of the Quadriceps muscle. The Q angle which for men is normally 8 - 12 degrees and for women 14-19 degrees, is important when considering shoe design. For example, women's work shoes must protect leg muscle strength to prevent greater inward rotation of the knee.



Male and female have different Q-Angles

Heels are another anatomical difference impacting the design of shoes. Women have narrower heels than men, with differences in heel to forefoot ratio.

Boot maintenance

The boot is equally important. BBF footwear manufacturer constantly researches the linings and innersoles looking at ways to make the inside of the boot more comfortable.

Maintenance and hygiene of the boot is important. Innersoles must be checked and replaced when necessary. Hand sanitisers can be sprayed inside the boot, but before putting on the boot, it must be left to dry. Anti-perspirants up to 3 x strength can be used if boots pick up a smell, and changing socks at lunchtime is a good idea.

To help boots dry out, one can either take out the innersole every evening or keep two pairs of innersoles that can be alternated in-between the drying out process.

Proper fit can prevent skin problems

Skin responds to pressure and friction by forming a thickened hardened layer called a callus which can compress into a corn causing discomfort. Often this can be prevented by determining what is touching or rubbing the foot. Most commonly, it is the wrong size shoe or wrong fit. Bone structure is another possible factor.

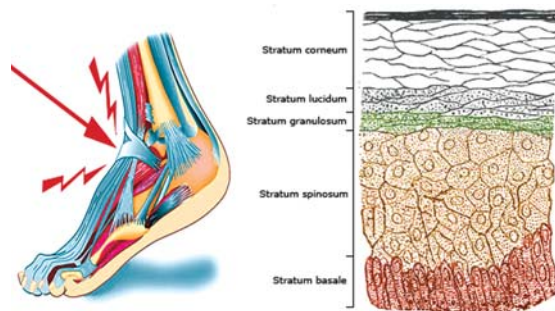
Burning feet

But burning feet is not uncommon and may result from poor blood circulation or illnesses such as diabetes, TB, HIV/Aids, underactive. Often the reasons for burning feet is much simpler and can be caused by friction, heat and moisture. Other causes are shoes that are too wide or too narrow, plastic linings in shoes, socks that are too thin, or the wrong type. Friction can result from feet sliding around inside the shoes creating heat with a burning sensation.

Sometimes this can be resolved by tightening the lacing on shoes and boots to hold the top of the foot in position and prevent it from sliding forwards. Wearing an extra pair of socks or an extra half foot bed underneath the full length also helps. Bova makes a thicker footbed for half size needs.

FEET ARE HEALTH INDICATORS

Feet have another interesting function, they can be an indication of ill health by protecting, warning and acting as a guide. The skin on the foot contains many different sensory receptors which warn against heat, cold, pain, vibration and pressure. Intact skin also acts as a protective barrier against infection.



Sensory receptors of the foot warn against heat, cold, pain, vibration, pressure. Intact skin acts as a protective barrier against infection.

Broken skin

Some foot and skin symptoms must not be ignored, may need medical intervention, and the reason feet and legs need to be checked every day.

Broken skin and colour changes to watch out for include redness, bleeding and rashes.

Feet and skin also display diabetes warning signs

- Swelling of foot or ankle
- Very cold feet or legs
- Colour changes – red, black or blue discolouration
- Pain in legs at rest or while walking
- Open sores/cracks – no matter how small
- Non healing wounds
- In-growing toe nails
- Corns and calluses
- Lack of hair growth on the toes/foot
- White streaks on top of or side of nail; white crumbly nail
- Blueish discolouration of the toes, ankles, legs, enlarged veins
- Purple streaks on top of nail

- Greenish streaks on top of nail; green soggy skin between toes
- Yellow spots on nail; oozing pustules or blebs (large blisters)

DAILY FOOT HYGIENE

It is important to keep feet healthy and clean.

- They must be washed daily with plain soap and water, inbetween the toes, rinsed and dried well before putting on clean socks.
- Bleach must never be used on the skin, rather wipe with Vicks or Spirits.
- Innersoles of boots should be taken out when off shift (to dry)
- Innersoles should be washed if a spare pair is available using soap and bleach.
- Insides of boots must be cleaned with a dampened bleach cloth, or a sponge with hand sanitiser
- UV radiation kills fungi, so whenever possible shoes should be placed under the sunshine
- Nail clippers and files/stones must be cleaned with bleach or spirits
- Sanitiser or spirits can be used to wipe down the feet after washing if they still smell.

**EDUCATION**

Employers have an ethical imperative to supply workers with research-based, correct fitting PPE footwear, inserts and socks, and this must be done in conjunction with foot health education.

Education to prevent complications should be part of PPE usage and must include instructions on how to care for the PPE. The wearer must understand that caring for shoes and feet go hand-in-hand.

BOVA TRAX

Extensive research has been conducted by a leading local manufacturer into performance of shoe compounds as well as the varying shapes and flexion positions of South African males across a multitude of races and industries. This research inspired the development of the BOVA TRAX Range.

Its anatomical shape caters to the needs of the larger South African population meaning, that with the right fit, wearers will experience a reduction in torsion, resulting in less fatigue and greater comfort. It further caters to the wider girth of the typical South African foot through the use of the data-inspired extra-wide steel cap, thereby reducing the pinches and irritations on the toe area often experienced with imported styles.

In 2001, BOVA relaunched their popular TRAX range with TRAX 2.0. The 2.0 version introduced a lighter boot with improved flexibility and better slip resistance better improving performance in manufacturing environments.



This article is brought to you by BOVA Safety Wear in the interest of Foot Health
<https://www.bbf-safety.com>

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Noise-induced hearing loss in the workplace



Dr Marinda Uys –
Eduplex Training
Institute

Many people are exposed to noise at their workplace. The iron and steel industry, one of the largest employers in South Africa with more or less 55,000 employees is one of the noisiest work environments and as a result, noise-induced hearing loss is common amongst people doing this work.

Many other industries also have extremely high levels of noise, for example mining, construction, manufacturing and even transportation such as airports.

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is caused by exposure to high levels of noise. After the first exposure to a loud noise, a person will experience temporary hearing loss, meaning that hearing may go back to normal after a rest of 24 hours. When the person is continuously exposed to noise, the hearing loss will become permanent.

The intensity (loudness) of noise as well as the duration (time) of the noise exposure are two factors that contribute to damage to the hearing system. The louder the noise and the longer a worker is exposed to it, the more damage it can cause to the hearing system.

To reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss under workers, it is important to implement hearing conservation programmes at workplaces where workers are exposed to high levels of noise.

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) regulation set the limit of hazardous noise at and above 85 dB HL – indicating that from this level, hearing loss can start to occur.

The most important goal of a hearing conservation programme is to prevent or minimise hearing loss due to workplace noise exposure by providing training, hearing protection and annual occupational hearing tests to all persons working for 8-hours or more per day in noise levels to or higher than the limit of 85 dB A.

An occupational hearing test can be performed by an audiometrist or nurse who checks the hearing thresholds of workers and tracks any changes over time. By doing this, any shifts in hearing that may signal the beginning stages of noise-induced hearing loss are detected.



The types of occupational audiometry testing include:

- Baseline testing or initial testing when a worker starts their employment at a company.
- Periodic or follow up testing every year to monitor a worker's hearing status.
- Exit hearing testing when a person is finishing employment at the company.
- Diagnostic testing when a worker is referred to an audiologist or ear, nose and throat specialist for in-depth testing.

Hearing conservation programmes also help to determine the noise-control measures at a workplace. This will help prevent hearing loss, identify areas with high levels of noise and educate workers and staff. It will also bring the company inline with current laws and regulations on noise reduction and noise management, therefore reducing the possibility of compensation claims.

Hearing loss can be compared to listening to a radio where the signal is unclear. Even when increasing the volume, you will still not be able to understand what the person over the radio is saying because the signal is unclear. Persons with NIHL also often complain of a ringing or buzzing sound in the ears. This is called tinnitus.

Occupational hearing testing is of the utmost importance for all employees working in noisy environments. Employees therefore are encouraged to submit themselves to annual tests or as required by the company's hearing conservation programme.

Factors that indicate potentially dangerous noise levels
• Noise in the workplace is louder than the traffic of a busy city.
• A person needs to raise his/her voice to talk to another person who is one meter away.
• After the work shift, a person needs to increase the volume of the television or radio to hear it properly.
• After working a few hours, a person struggles to hear properly in a group of people and/or experiences a ringing sound in his/her ears.



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PPE inspection and maintenance



Personal protective equipment is the last line of defence in the workplace protection hierarchy. Keeping it in good condition and performing regular checks is crucial. If equipment is in poor condition, the user will often choose not to wear it and they are then vulnerable.

The best practice is to create a safety protocol that allows for regular equipment inspections. Conducting an annual survey of all your gear can help determine whether replacement is needed.

HOW OFTEN DOES PPE NEED TO BE REPLACED?

While replacing equipment is vital, it is also financially prudent to ensure that you only do so when necessary. Sticking to a rigid replacement schedule that does not allow for discretion means you risk disposing of equipment prematurely.

One key determining factor dictates when PPE needs replacing. If it looks like it has done its job, then it needs to be changed. There are, of course, more formal identifiers that signal the need for replacement.



WHEN TO REPLACE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- There is discolouration
- There are visible signs of wear and tear
- An item has perished
- There are cuts, rips, or tears
- An incident such as an impact or chemical exposure has occurred
- The manufacturer's expiration date has passed
- An item has damaged components
- Parts of the equipment are failing

YOUR PPE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Delta Health and Safety recommends the following checklist to ensure that your PPE is ready and right to keep your employees safe.

- Take stock of your workplace PPE, both in use and in storage
- Check clothing and gloves for any signs of soiling, stains, fabric degradation or wear
- Check all safety boots for tears or other signs of compromise
- Check all hard hats and helmets for any sign of cracks or perished material
- Check gloves for wear, chemical damage, cuts, rips and tears
- Dispose of any damaged, compromised, or expired PPE
- Service and test any serviceable equipment
- Issue your employees with their yearly quota of safety clothing
- Set up a refresher PPE training session for your staff
- Ensure that you have an appropriate stock of replacement PPE should any be damaged during duty.

THE CORRECT WAY TO DISPOSE OF PPE

If your equipment shows any of the signs detailed above, you must get rid of it. The correct disposal or phasing out of PPE is also essential.

PPE taken out of circulation needs to be removed from the workplace entirely. There must be no risk of an employee making use of decommissioned equipment.

Expensive equipment, such as respirators, can often be repaired or serviced to avoid incurring excess costs. However, you must replace hardhats or fall protection equipment after an impact or extended use. Hardhats and fall protection may not show visible signs of damage but can still be compromised.

HOW TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR PPE

Cutting corners and buying sub-par PPE is not only dangerous, but it can also be costly. Being savvy with spending is important but not at the risk of your employees' safety. Buying quality equipment may be expensive initially, but it often lasts longer and offers better protection.

Ensure that you appropriately train your employees to use their PPE correctly. Using gear in the wrong manner can be damaging.

Store PPE away from direct sunlight in a clean and dry place. Exposure to sunlight can degrade the equipment, as can mildew. Any stored PPE must be regularly checked and disposed of if necessary.

Keeping precise records of what equipment you have on-site is imperative. Equally important is keeping a clear description of when it is inspected and maintained. This allows you to keep track of your PPE both in use and storage. It also ensures that you make the most of your equipment before it expires.

The Delta Health and Safety team is on hand for any assistance on how best to stock, inspect, and maintain your PPE. We can offer advice on making the most of your PPE while properly protecting your employees.



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<https://www.deltahealth.co.za>



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Ehi Iden is the President of OSHAfrica and Occupational Health & Safety Management Consultant in Africa.

Excerpts reprinted from an article published in 2013 Biyi Adegoye and Tai Anyanwu of The National Mirror Newspapers

After coming across an article written by Biyi Adegoye and Tai Anyanwu in The National Mirror of 24th March, 2013, a Nigerian newspaper, Ehi Iden was shocked and saddened at the way the Nigerian Government trivialised critical issues concerning the health of Nigerians across different environments. When we spoke to him recently, he expressed disappointment that this article is still relevant today, almost 10 years later.

There are fears that the inhabitants of host communities of Cement Companies in Ewekoro and Sagamu in Ogun State live in danger due to emissions from the companies' factories. The fears are not misplaced. Experts confirm the risk of a cancer outbreak in the neighbourhoods if nothing is done to arrest the ugly trend.

But, is the government of Ogun State aware of this risk? What has the company been doing to mitigate the effect of these hazardous emissions? This and more were the focus of an investigative report by Biyi Adegoye and Tai Anyanwu

Host communities, workers and visitors to cement manufacturing companies in Ogun State and elsewhere in the country have something in common – they are contending with gales of dust and other airborne related particles dangerous to health. Residents of communities like Elegunshé, Sabo, Ode Ilemo, all in Sagamu, like their counterparts at Ewekoro, which covers towns and villages like Alaguntan, Papalanto, Lageleke and Akinbo are in danger. The streets adjacent to the factories are also disturbed by what they described as a daily diet of haze of dust emitted from the plants. They expressed worries that air-borne emissions from the company's plants pose great dangers to their health and properties. "Our roofs, beds and vehicles are covered daily by dusts and other particles, while we wash our vehicles daily because of the pollution. We also fear the emissions are dangerous to our

health," said Yekini Adeyemi, a resident of Sabo at Sagamu.

People that have visited Lafarge Wapco Pls, a cement manufacturing company, which has been in operation in the country for over 50 years, have their stories. For the residents close to Dangote Cement Company that is in the same neighbourhood at Ewekoro and staff at the cement plant at Sagamu, it is the same sad tale.

HAZARDS OF CEMENT

The chemical contents of cement like calcium carbonate, limestone, calcite, cement kiln dust, iron, silicon and fly ash combine to emit air-borne particles, which are dangerous to health. A report by the Council of Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN) titled "Earthworm as Bio-indicator of Heavy Metal Pollution around Lafarge, Wapco Cement Factory in Ewekoro, Nigeria", seem to lend credence to this fact.

It stated that "heavy metal pollution of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems has long been recognised as a serious environmental concern. The use of earthworm as bio-index of soil heavy metal pollution was examined to reach such conclusions.

Four replicates each of the soil and earthworm samples were collected from five points for analysis. and histological studies were conducted on earthworm sections. The result revealed dark spots and patches on the tissues of the earthworm samples collected from the cement factory area compared with clear earthworm tissues at the control site. Bioaccumulation of heavy metal in soil and earthworm was noticeable around West Africa Portland Cement factory at Ewekoro and could serve as a possible bio-index of heavy metal pollution. The report further stated that the pollution is dangerous to humans.

When Sunday Mirror visited the areas, they saw vehicles parked within the premises or homes nearby suffering damage.

A former distributor of Lafarge at Sagamu, who did not want his name in print said the problem has been there for over 40 years of the company's existence. "When the factory was constructed, it occupied several acres of isolated land on the Sagamu-Ikorodu road. There were no residential houses. But these days, expansion of the town has culminated in the construction of residential houses around the factory".

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE

But, the company is not unaware of the danger posed by the factories and it has thus made safety



concern a major company policy for workers and the community.

Lafarge's Head of Corporate Affairs, Mrs. Temitope Oguntokun, insisted that the company is a responsible corporate entity, which carries out periodic environmental impact assessment and ensured environment friendliness. She, nonetheless, promised to look into the complaints of the communities, adding that relationship with the community has been cordial in terms of safety and environmental concerns. She restated the fact that her organisation has a full scale policy and implementation on health and safety. "And that cuts across all cadres of staff. In terms of visible ones you can see, we have our policy on Partners Protective Equipments (PPE), which are mandatory for not only our staff, but for everybody that visits our factory. If you had attempted to enter that site, they will not allow you to enter without a PPE; you will have to undergo a safety induction; and the PPE is essentially protective equipment like goggles, nose mask, ear muff, the helmet and the boot. All of these things are compulsory for the people within the factory."

To the residents, she said, "in Ewekoro, we have a lot of health and safety initiatives that we have put in place at all our locations. It comes as our community Social Responsibility activities (CSR). It cuts across four key areas. We have health and safety as our number one activity. We have education; we have youth empowerment and we have shelter and contribution to basic and infrastructural development within the community. On health and safety, we do a lot of enlightenment campaign within the community. We get the (NGOs) that go into the community to enlighten our people."

DENIES AND CLAIMS. WHAT IS THE TRUTH

Oguntokun however deny claims that her company pollutes its environment. "We do not produce dangerous gas, which is why you need to understand the process of cement production. As regards the issue of pollution, it is just like any other manufacturing concern. There are times you have something like technical issues. When we have a technical issue, once in a while, it can lead into substitutions emission; basically dust emission. But, our organisation is very proactive when it comes to health and safety.

"At Lafarge, health is our number one priority. And with health and safety comes the issue of environment as well, in term of protecting the environment. So, when we have such technical issues, it will just be dust pollution but we are very proactive and the communities will attest to that," she said.

GOVERNMENT LIABILITY

It can be noted that the company started in this environment when there were no residential

settlement about 50 years ago. But, it is necessary to question if the functions or roles of the Ministry of Town and Urban Planning have changed over the years and if consideration has been given to the settlements which have been established.

When we place a right ladder on a wrong wall, it will definitely lead us to a wrong destination, some of the flaws we see here are the outcomes of the inefficiency of the Ministry saddled with the repositibility of town planning.

In the first instance, land with environmental hazards should not have been allocated for residential purposes, now we have people living in the midst of a company with high level of hazardous operating processes. It summarises the lack of foresight.

This in no ways makes excuses for the company in question, there is an urgent need to put an abatement plant in place to mitigate the overall hazardous emissions generated by its presence in that environment.

In responsible economies where the health of citizens and safety of environment are issues of concern to the government, as evident by the presence of enabling legislations, people go to law courts to make claims and seek compensation, because the law has provided a basis to argue and demand for their right.

Iden concludes by reviewing the statement of the Mrs. Oguntokun, the Head of Corporate Affairs of Lafarge. It is obvious that there are safety processes in place to support the company's operations, but that is not what the residents are complaining about. The issue at stake here has to do with the pollution of the environment, air quality standard and associated health risks the operations poses to the surrounding residents.

Quite a number of companies are quick to refer to CSR but how are these initiatives measured in terms of impact and benefits? How timely are these CSR programmes reviewed in the best interest of the community or supposed target beneficiaries.

The answer is to regulate occupational health and safety activities in Nigeria must be duly regulated in Nigeria is the only answer, we need to put pressure on Mr President to sign off this Nigerian Occupational Health and Safety Bill which has been passed by The Nigerian Senate since September, 2012. It is of utmost importance to Nigeria and Nigerians in this phase of our checkered economic evolution to have an enforceable National Legislation on Occupational Health and Safety.

We also need the States and their legislators to rise up and initiate enabling legislations to safeguard the health of workers and safety of environment in areas within their geographical control. WE CAN DO IT. "IF YOU WILL, I WILL".

<https://www.oshafrica.africa>

<https://www.ohsm.com.ng>



The history as to why the OSHPC is necessary

I have over 40 years of experience in the OHS field after joining NOSA in 1978 and did the month long NOSA SAMTRAC course. Subsequently I have attained some 36 OHS, fire, risk, insurance, maintenance and related training course certificates on top of my BSc degree and Graduate school Management Development Programme Diploma. I furthermore am professionally registered with the SACPCMP as a Pr.CHSA, Associate with IRMSA, a Graduate with SAIOSH and as a IWH Fall Protection Planner.

With that background and years of practical experience I should be suitably aware to review the State of OHS profession in South Africa.

WHERE IS THE OHS PROFESSION CURRENTLY?

I feel, sadly in a poor state. We do not have an accepted OHS degree in South Africa. A person can run to a SETA to get their OHS training course accredited, without the course content being assessed and verified as valid, compliant and compliant.

As a Pr.CHSA, I recently encountered a contractor worker, with a work at height certificate where he had not even donned a safety harness nor climbed onto a scaffold or similar. So, is that deliberate incompetent or "income-driven" fraud (plus a 2-year expiry date) by the OHS training provider?

A company CEO referred an OHS corporate member company and their registered practitioner's OHS audit report to me to review, only to find the audit was skewed so they could obtain an ongoing OHS service contract from the company.

The completed monthly checklists were ignored, a spray-painting booth and hazardous materials wash bay was ignored and implied that many legal appointments were missing, for a company of only 17 employees, when there is no actual legal appointment clause prescribed (e.g., GSR 3(4)) a person must be available during working hours and who is in possession of a valid first-aid certificate". Is that a prescribed legal appointment requirement?

These cases provide a sample of what is happening in our OHS profession daily

WHO IS A COMPETENT OHS PRACTITIONER?

I was a lead assessor for OHS practitioner professional registration with the former Institute of Safety Management Professional Body (IPOSMB). Back in 1998, IOSM established knowledge Unit Standards for assessing the knowledge and application of necessary OHS application requirements and standards of the three then Voluntary IOSM registration designation level.

There was a multiple-choice assessment paper at level 1, a written test at level 2 and a scenario presentation by the candidate to a peers panel at



Leighton Bennett (Pr.CHSA)
Benrisk Consulting Vice
Chairperson of the Safety
First Association, and a
practising statutory and
SAQA professionally
registered OHS
Practitioner.



level 3. In 2013 when SAQA accredited IOSM as a profession body, this registration process became a formal designations registration process, like the assessment process the SACPCMP have now.

OHS Practitioners applying for IOSM professional registration had an over 30% failure rate, from 2013 until IOSM's closure in 2019, when the same OHS Unit Standards were being applied as from 1998! That suggests the present standard of OHS training and education is lacking, as the "Old School OHS Guys passed". Currently, no assessment examination is performed for general health and safety professional designations registration.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PRACTITIONERS

Most OHS practitioners have probably not heard of INSHPO, the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organisations. It is a global voice for the Occupational Health and Safety Profession that provides an international forum for the engagement of OHS-related matters, and for advancing the OHS profession through the application of evidence-based practices, and the development of a harmonised global framework for the OHS principles and practices in the OHS profession.

To provide an INSHPO insight on the terms "competence and capability" for the OHS profession, INSHPO has stated that the OHS Professional and Practitioners (at 2 levels) must be competent, effective and influential, but the OHS Practitioners 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 and applying knowledge and skill to a standard or performance required in the workplace". Competence is about delivering the present based on the past.

INSHPO suggested a new performance level be introduced using the term "Capability" where one's "applied 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 workplace."

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

Where are our OHS practitioners in terms of these two INSHPO definitions?

Where can OHS practitioners get professional practice knowledge, guidance and help?

Currently OHP Practitioners would "surf the internet", possibly review the HSE, ASSP, ILO, WHO sites and similar for information, when some experienced OHS Practitioners share OHS information and insights to help improve and grow the OHS knowledge and practices within the OHS field and profession.

THE MUCH-NEEDED OSHPC IS ESTABLISHED

This concept has led to the establishment and launch of the Occupational Safety and Health Practitioner's Chamber (OSHPC) as a specifically OHS practitioner structured outreach programme, as part of the Safety First Association's 1932 objective to educate management and workers on safety and health practices, mainly through publishing informative literature.

Currently, one can email or call to obtain OHS advise, guidance, copies of OHS forms and documents? The members of the OSHPC are working to establish such an information facility for our profession.

The OSHPC hope you will join and add your knowledge and insights to help promote OHS knowledge and practice growth into our OHS profession and practitioners.

JOIN OUR JOURNEY ... CUT RISKS NOT OSH



PROVIDE INFORMATION NEEDED BY THE OSH PRACTITIONER

HELP THE OSH PRACTITIONER ACQUIRE OHS KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PRACTICES INFORMATION

ENABLE OSH PRACTITIONER TO GROW WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, APPLY THEIR GAINED PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CAPABILITIES IN THEIR WORKPLACES.

HARRY@OSHPC.SAFETY1ST.CO.ZA

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Death at the tavern - How safe are our chilling places

There's that moment when your jaw falls on your chest and you almost choke in shock when you watch on the news that 21 children, yes teenagers lost their lives in a tavern in East London recently. Up to 16 people were treated and discharged from hospital, 4 were critical.

As a parent of two, questions pop into your mind relevant to the teenagers, some as young as 13.

As a health and safety practitioners other questions regarding the safety of these taverns pop into your mind.

Then we ask, what happened to these teenagers in that tavern and what happened to the other people attending the "festivities" that fateful night? How safe is it to visit one of these taverns or even any "jol" place for that matter?

In my experience health and safety has never been great or very popular with the majority of businesses in South Africa. Most of them make it clear they cannot afford it and pray that something will not happen.

Other business owners carry on until the inspector of the DEL walks in and starts asking questions. That's when the realisation strikes that they are in trouble because they have not complied with the OSH Act.

THE NIGHT OF THE DISASTER

What we do know about that night at the tavern in East London:

- The place was over crowded.
- The bouncers closed the doors.
- Movement between patrons was limited especially on the deck part upstairs.
- It was very hot inside the establishment.
- One of the survivors said that they experienced difficulty breathing before they lost consciousness.
- Liquor was sold to minors at the tavern
- Minors (under 18s) were allowed into the tavern.
- A generator was running inside the tavern.
- On 27/06/2022 four children are still in critical condition in hospital cause unknown.

FACTORS THAT NEED CONSIDERATION

- The size of the available entertainment space should determine the total of patrons allowed into the establishment. Why was this not monitored?
- Why did the bouncers close the doors when the place was already over crowded?
- Poor ventilation in crowded areas where toxins have no means to escape can be dangerous. In the event of carbon dioxide (CO2) poisoning, the person may experience dizziness, headaches, sweating, increased heart rate, pins and needles,



Herman (Harry) Fourie has a passion for occupational health and safety and has been working in the industry for many years. He has several diplomas and certificates and continues his studies through different organisations. He is a member of several professional organisations throughout Africa and beyond. Herman is a part time consultant creating software systems.



blood pressure elevation. The end result for the affected person may even be a coma or death.

- Poor ventilation also enhances the spread of airborne bacteria and viruses.
- Crowded areas lead to a rise in temperature and heat causes a lack of or shortage of oxygen to flow. And over exposure to heat, can lead to heat stroke. The body naturally produces its own heat, but when moving around or dancing, the body releases additional heat. This additional heat increases the temperature inside the establishment and becomes dangerous if ventilation or cooling is not adequate.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

This is just one case out of many where minors gain access to a tavern, bar, nightclub or any other establishment that is meant for adults.

It is clear that absolutely no health and safety protocols were in place at the tavern and terrifying that South Africa has a poor track record of proper health and safety monitoring and compliance, with dire consequences.

As I write this article, information regarding the tavern setup is not yet known and the investigation still has to be finalised. But until then, the families have to wait for answers. How many people in other taverns will die needlessly or get severely injured before someone realises that the health and safety procedures in their particular establishments are inadequate or non-existent?

TAKING LIABILITY

The bouncers in this particular case should be charged criminally for allowing children into the tavern. The people who sold the liquor should be charged for selling liquor to a minor. The owner of the tavern is responsible for the tragedy that occurred even though she was not present. The training and induction of staff regarding the laws around health and safety lies in the hands of the owner.

Any establishment selling liquor or that is a night club must provide and ensure that the proper health and safety measures are in place before they even consider allowing a crowd of people in to the building.

Establishments who apply for liquor licences should first pass a health and safety check before the licence is issued. But that is not where it must end, all those establishments must be inspected on a regular basis.

Keep our people Safer.

Question & Answer from OSHPC

What disciplines contribute to the occupational health and safety practitioner's capability and competence?

Answer provided by Leighton Bennett, Pr.CHSA, OSHE & Risk Management Consultant



Many occupational health and safety practitioners think that after attending several training courses they are now capable and competent OHS Practitioners, without understanding that Occupational Health and Safety (Risk) Management involves the application and management of the science (facts) and art (skill) of occupational health and safety.

The **science** aspect relates to the application of facts, knowledge and techniques to assure an environment (the working environment) that is free from any form of threat, hazard and/or exposure risks which may impact on the health and safety of people at a workplace.

The **art** aspect is the practice and enhancement of those professional skills which influence and motivate people to act safely.

For a person to be competent in the field of occupational health and safety (risk) management one needs to develop and knowledge of the sciences, the skills and ability of the art and the Plan-Do-Check-Act of managing OHS and the capability to effectively apply this knowledge and skills in any workplace.

The table below highlights the various disciplines and performance accomplishments involved in the management of occupational safety and health. Depending on the industry one is working in, some aspects may not be applicable, while some other fields may need to be added for your industry.

Note: This table content is not considered exhaustive.

The question is how confident are you of your self-evaluation of your competence and capability?

HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT		
SCIENCE (Knowledge)	ART (Skills & Ability))	MANAGEMENT (Plan-Do-Check-Act) or (Plan, Lead, Organise & Control)
Legislation	Communication	Strategy
Engineering	Participation	Objectives / Goals
Mathematics	Influence	Commitment
Physics	Behaviour	Attitude
Chemistry	Advising/Leading	Policies & Standards
Technology	Guidance/Mentoring	Systems
Health & Hygiene	Assessment	Programmes
Psychology	Training	Processes
Ergonomics	Observing & Monitoring	Procedures
Environment	Inspections & Auditing	Practices
Finance	Investigations	Job tasks
Statistics	Experience	Workplaces
COMPETENCY WITH CAPABILITY		

"The Occupational Health & Safety Management Profession covers the widest number of bodies of knowledge disciplines because it manages the health & safety of everybody in their workplaces"

For further information about OSHPC email

Driving changes in workplace safety and health improvement and sustainability

LEAD AND MANAGE CHANGE

Leading and managing change in the workplace safety and health of Singapore is a prolonged process of tremendous and continuous effort by the Ministry of Manpower.

In order to achieve lasting transformation, all stakeholders involved should feel the sense of urgency for change and believe that change is needed for organisational growth and staying sustainable with market competitiveness.

If they don't support the initiative of change, then the momentum will be difficult to maintain not mentioning sustainability, and as such change will not last long to see the effectiveness of desired outcomes or targets set.

SOCIOTECHNICAL SYSTEM

From the socio-technical system point of view, the union leaders and authority are driving change for improvement and sustainability, but the organisation level to the task-specific level have to embrace and execute such improvements.

A sociotechnical system consists of:

- Organisation culture
- Work processes
- Infrastructure
- People

All such system processes within the socio-technical purview have close correlations with incident investigation and designing of accident prevention mitigation strategies.

KEY PITFALLS OF OBSTACLES IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Four key pitfalls of obstacles are often present in change process which we must be aware of and managing them tactfully, which are

1. Frequency bias
2. Dysfunction of a team
3. Optimism bias and
4. Prestige bias.

FREQUENCY BIAS

Frequency illusion, also known as the Baader–Meinhof phenomenon or frequency bias, is a cognitive bias in which, after noticing something for the first time, there is a tendency to notice it more often, leading someone to believe that it has an increased frequency of occurrence.

Frequency bias will cultivate a poor safety culture



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.

through prolonged evolving "risk-taking" taking behaviours which is contagious.

An accident or even a fatality is more likely when the frequency of risk-taking occurrence increases, coupled with low near-miss reporting.

DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM AND ITS LATENCY IMPACT

Lencioni defines the five dysfunctions of a team as being the absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and an inattention to results (Lencioni, 2002).

The book "*The Five Dysfunctions of a team: A Leadership Fable*" authored by Patrick Lencioni, illustrates examples on scenarios demonstrating how each of these dysfunctions compounds into the next one.

Absence of trust was defined by Lencioni when team members are unable to demonstrate weakness or vulnerability in front of their teammates (Lencioni, 2002).

Similarly, the fear of conflict we touted to be created in an environment where trust was lacking, therefore preventing members of the team from openly expressing their opinions, and as such could lead to teams making poor decisions.

Both of these first two dysfunctions can be mapped to the lack of a cohesive team functioning in a collaborative environment. Therefore, a psychologically safe work environment or channels for workers to voice concerns are detrimental.

Lencioni used his story to illustrate how this was true by showing team members and executives who didn't trust one another, or who trust that a differing opinion was a valid one to express, and in tune with his fictitious company struggled to grow or progress.

Strong teams also show a unified commitment to their goals which can be achieved by involving team members in all aspects of the decision making process.

Lencioni's viewpoint supported this approach by looking at a lack of commitment and how it could disable a team's ability to be successful. Lencioni discussed how a team which is not comfortable having a debate or a conflict in opinion, can create an environment where those same team members are unable to commit to the overall process and goal (Lencioni, 2002).

This lack of commitment, is not only devastating to keeping a team doing the things it needs to do to be successful, it's also the stepping stone to creating a culture lacking in accountability.

OPTIMISM BIAS

Optimism bias refers to our tendency to overestimate our likelihood of experiencing positive events too much, and to underestimate our likelihood of experiencing negative events.

When employers are optimistic about workplace safety malpractices, the mindset and organisation culture starts to evolve in an unhealthy way creating cognitive dissonance between minimum legal requirements and site practices.

PRESTIGE BIAS

Prestige bias (also known as Prestige-biased social learning) occurs when individuals predominantly choose to learn from a prestigious member of their group or organisation. For example, if the project director has been taking calculated risks to save costs by taking shortcuts on safety implementation on site, and overriding safety officers on their advices to get contractors to proceed with their work without rectifying an unsafe work condition.

A SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK BEFORE COMMENCEMENT - THE NEEDED MINDSET

A safe system of work is a formal procedure which results from systematic examination of a task in order to identify all the hazards.

It defines safe methods to ensure that hazards are eliminated or risks minimised.

WHAT ARE THE 3 STAGES OF A SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK?

Consider the hazards associated with each step or stage and evaluate the risks;

- Develop a safe working method;
- Implement a safe working method;
- Monitor the safe system of work and working method to ensure that they continue to be implemented and remain effective.

Accidents are induced by a combination of this systematically induced migration in work practices and a triggering event, not by an unusual action or an entirely new, one-time threat to safety.

Threats to safety are usually caused by multiple contributing factors, not just a single catastrophic decision or action.

Threats to safety usually result from a lack of vertical integration (i.e. mismatches) across levels of a complex socio-technical system, not just from deficiencies at any one level alone.

The lack of vertical integration is caused, in part, by a lack of feedback across levels of a complex socio-technical system. Actors at each level cannot see how their decisions interact with those made by actors at other levels, so the threats to safety are far from obvious before an incident occurs.

Work practices in a complex socio-technical system are not static. They will migrate over time under the influence of a cost gradient driven by financial pressures in an aggressive competitive environment and under the influence of an effort gradient driven by the psychological pressure to follow the path of least resistance.

The migration of work practices can occur at multiple levels of a complex socio-technical system, not just one level alone. Migration of work practices causes the system's defences to degrade and erode gradually over time.

ACHIEVING BETTER WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

I would like to share my personal philosophy for years which I had instilled within my workplace safety and health career which is to engage, educate and drive change to induce a safety mindset of "Doing Safety Right First and Everytime". It is not a slogan but a heartfelt intent, passion and conscience of how we could move forward in attaining better workplace safety and health outcomes.

Engagement with stakeholders by adopting the "Seeking to understand first" is one of the day-to-day tasks which I have always utilised in my daily safety walkthroughs.

Understanding the contributory causes is the best remedy to prevent accidents and curb unwanted workplace injuries, dangerous occurrences and fatalities.




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The post-pandemic conundrum - the WFH model and intoxication in the workplace

Many businesses in South Africa are now comfortable with offering a Work from Home (WFH) or hybrid model to employees after the Covid-19 lockdown ended.

As employees now spend more of their working hours at home, this can pose a problem for companies that require regular alcohol and drug testing as part of their health and safety policies.

It has become challenging to physically monitor whether an employee is consuming alcohol or drugs during working hours when they are not present in the office.

Although companies might not be able to breathalyse or test employees for drugs in their home environment, they will need to look at training line managers and HR personnel to be sensitive to any tell-tale warning signs from employees when engaging with them online.

WFH: THE WORKPLACE RULES STILL APPLY

Intoxication in the workplace constitutes misconduct and is a dismissible offense. Employers must have an alcohol and substance abuse policy that is communicated to all employees.

Companies should ensure that their policies now cover not just consumption and intoxication on-premises but extend it to behaviour out of office during working hours in the event that it affects an employee's ability to do their job. These should clearly state that the workplace rules apply, even when working from home.

Policies are not limited to the consumption of alcohol and should be updated to include any substance that impacts an individual's ability to perform their duties, such as cannabis.

MISCONDUCT VS ILLNESS

Although all Covid-19 lockdown measures and restrictions on public gatherings have been removed and daily life is returning to normal, this does not mean that the challenges and problems people were experiencing as a result of the pandemic have disappeared. In fact, life is only getting more difficult for most South Africans, who are faced with rising food and fuel costs and the constant disruption and stress of load shedding.

People tend to turn to alcohol and substances as a crutch to cope during challenging times, and it is important for managers and employers to be sensitive to the fact that alcoholism and substance abuse is an illness.

As such, each case must be treated on its merits and a distinction must be drawn between incapacity as a result of alcoholism and incidents of simple misconduct, where an employee is taking



By Rhys Evans,
Managing Director of
ALCO-Safe



liberties because they think no one is watching. If an employer suspects that an employee may have a dependency problem, the employer is under obligation to assist the worker to access treatment.

WARNING SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

What do managers need to know in order to identify if there is a problem with alcohol or drugs when someone is working from home? This can be particularly tricky, especially when managers are only engaging with workers online, making it easy for workers to switch off their cameras during meetings, or sip alcohol out of a coffee mug.

Here, it is important to be aware of behavioural changes in employees, such as someone who has always been reliable suddenly becoming unreliable with work deadlines, or a drop in performance.

Someone who was always actively involved, now disengaging, or a person who has always met targets, now falling short of expectations.

This alone is insufficient to point to a substance abuse scenario, as this can also indicate that the individual might be experiencing a personal or family issue.

If the change in behaviour is noticeable, managers should investigate immediately, but in a compassionate manner.

CORRECTIVE PROCEDURES

When a manager suspects that an employee is intoxicated during working hours, the next step depends on their workplace policy and whether a first-time offense is legally punishable by dismissal.

Ordinarily, counseling is the most suitable course of action, along with a written warning. Some companies are big enough to offer in-house counseling, while others can only refer the individual to the appropriate healthcare provider while allowing the person sick leave to seek assistance.

If the problem is serious enough, the individual might be required to attend a rehabilitation centre, in which case the employee is often suspended until they have completed rehabilitation. Once they have returned to work, they will be evaluated on a regular basis with the aim of preventing relapse.

It is important to remember, in the case of a substance abuse problem, that disciplinary procedures are not meant to be punitive in nature.

This does not address the root of the problem, nor does it help the individual. While workplace intoxication policies must legally be enforced for the health and safety of all workers, it can still be done with compassion and sensitivity, particularly during tough times.

Tibor Szana - a legend retires

On the 28th February 2022, after serving the South African public for 32 years, Tibor Szana spent his last day at the Department of Employment and Labour. He described the day as "beautiful and a perfect way to leave the organisation".

As a student, Tibor started out as a Pupil Inspector in Cape Town during January 1990. After completing a qualification in Mechanical Engineering and achieving his T4 at the Cape Town Technikon, he was sent to the region known at the time as Gauteng South where he was based in the Johannesburg office in lower Rissik Street.

"For my first inspection I was given a handwritten map and told if I get lost I must aim for the middle of the Brixton and Hillbrow (Telkom) towers, then I should find my way back".

After working in the optical sector for about three years, he spent two years in the army law office.

In February 2015, he was appointed the Chief Inspector for Occupational Health and Safety (non-mining). He was responsible for inspections, investigations of complaints and advocacy.

As the Chief Inspector this shifted to policy development and monitoring the work of inspectors while establishing and growing relationships with various statutory and non statutory bodies through MoUs, where these were agreed to. Over the past couple of years extensive work was done in deepening the relationship with the Compensation Fund who moved to wholly fund the activities of the OHS inspector. The funding for the OHS inspector was welcomed.



He also helped develop a deepening relationship with the NIOH and the Department of Health which was strengthened further while working together towards combating the COVID scourge.

Szana describes himself as competitive and therefore tells how he "thoroughly enjoyed the challenges that were presented. It has been said over time that a single person coming into an organisation or leaving an organisation can have a major impact in how the organisation continues. In saying that, I have seen systems built, systems collapse, people coming and going and that of course is the nature of any business. I believe that this became even more exacerbated during COVID with the working from home model. Here I am referring to the abuse of the model and the technical aspects thereof.

"I had many opportunities over the past 32 years and met many awesome people, some of whom I continue to interact with. There are many lessons I learned. Those who made health and safety their life long journey, keep going strong no matter the circumstances. I have seen some rapacious employers out there who do not care about their employees, hold steadfast and use the tools at your disposal" continued Szana.

"While I am out of the Department, I am not out of occupational health and safety, there is a lot of work that needs to be done on all sides and we all have a role to play. Health and safety is not a one-person game, it needs all of us to play our part," concluded Szana.

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SAFETY POLICIES - EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES
HAZARD CONTROL - DEVELOPING A SAFETY PLAN
EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS - VENTILATION
HYGIENE - HAND TOOLS SELECTION - SKIN CARE
WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS - WORKSTATION DESIGN

Solution to world's GHS chemical safety system

About once in every decade, I see a new product that will make the world a safer, healthier place to live and work, and will prevent such disasters as the City of Beirut, Lebanon chemical explosion, which killed over 220 people and injured over 6500, or the LG Polymers chemical factory in Southern India. Hundreds of people were admitted to hospital and several were dead after gas leak at the chemical plant. In this article, I will share a solution to the complex requirements for compliance, classification, labelling, storage and use of chemicals.

Employers face extensive compliance obligations, including updating the label and safety data sheet for every chemical manufactured, used or imported into their company. Complying with this may be the most time consuming, and difficult element of a Health & Safety Management System.

From the results of over 21000 audits using our proprietary 5 Star Health & Safety Management System™ not one client has ever scored the full 40 points, the average is only 21. The new Canadian made solution MySDS® will help employers meet their obligations, where-ever they are in the world, simply. (go to <https://www.MYSDS.ca>)

DO YOUR SAFETY DATA SHEETS MATCH YOUR CHEMICAL INVENTORY

Let me first remind you that the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) triggers extensive compliance obligations for employers subject to the HCS. Those GHS-related changes require updating the label and safety data sheet (SDS) for every chemical manufactured or imported into your company; updating every written programme; updating every training programme; providing training updates to all employees; and reclassifying many chemicals.

As extensive as those obligations may be, they pale in comparison to the proposed HCS requirements that have nothing to do with recent revisions to the GHS. As this article explains, OSHA has a much larger objective in mind.

The fundamental problem with OSHA stems from the agency's apparent goal of dramatically expanding the scope of the hazard classification required of the chemical manufacturer or importer.

In addition to classifying the exact product as well as for downstream changes in its physical form, the chemical manufacturer or user is required to comply with a whole slew of requirements in order to make a due diligence-based effort to:



Dr. Bill Pomfret brings an unrivaled perspective on risk, regulation and liability from over 50 years of experience as a safety consultant working for leading companies around the world. He also spent nearly a decade in the North Sea exploration and production as a safety manager. Dr. Bill is a passionate advocate for safety training.

- Identify each downstream chemical reaction of its chemical with any substance or mixture that is conducted or naturally occurs in commerce in the world.
- Identify each hazard posed by each of those reactions.
- Identify each product (including by-products and decomposition products) of those reactions.
- Identify and classify each hazard posed by those reaction products.

MySDS® does all of the work for you - searching, updating, uploading, maintaining. Everything needed to keep your company 100% COMPLIANT, and more important, keeping your employees safe. It will also save you both time and money.

The safety features allow you a 'Quickview' of PPE, First Aid and TDG. With this system employees become experienced and trained in all aspects of Safety Data Sheets and GHS.

ARE YOU IN COMPLIANCE?

The MySDS employees attend regular professional development programmes to ensure that they are current in all standards and regulations; saving your company valuable time which enables your employees to focus on what they do best while MySDS takes care of the rest.

In addition to classifying for physical and health hazards, the employer who uses a chemical is required to provide information on: chemical properties (e.g., flammability, lower and upper explosion limit/flammability limit, flash point, auto-ignition temperature, decomposition temperature); stability and reactivity (e.g., hazardous reactions, conditions to avoid, static discharge, shock, vibration, incompatible materials, hazardous decomposition products, combustion products etc). MySDS is cloud-based and all SDSs are available with any iPhone, android, tablet, laptop, or desktop within 15 seconds with Wi-Fi, or downloadable PDFs when offline.

Over the years, I have seen and used many computer programmes designed to help employers comply with the GHS system, but none come close to the MySDS® system for speed of operation, cost savings, coverage, and support, it is the world's first total package. MySDS® is the best due diligence defence that any employer can have.

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The philosophy of Asset Management and control is to develop an Asset Management Policy and Strategy as a start. The policy and strategy covers all aspects of Asset Management from specification and procurement to decommissioning and safe disposal of an asset.

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Technical courses on Asset Management, Risk Assessment Techniques and other customer requests.

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A project is unique and temporary with a defined start and end date. It is a set of operations designed to accomplish a singular goal.

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Technical Risk Assessments using "Top Down" or "Bottom-Up" in accordance to International accepted techniques. HAZOP, SWIFT and FMECA and Risk Based Inspections to name a few. Applicable to large industries such as Power Generation, Manufacturing and Mining houses.

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All resources are valuable to an organization and must be managed optimally. We provide staff in all categories, to satisfy your human capital requirements, specializing in the provision of Safety, Health, Risk, Quality and Environmental Practitioners on a permanent and temporary basis, locally or international.

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- Gap analysis for various audit purposes.
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- SHE Legal Compliance Audits.
- Risk Based Inspection Audits.
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- ISO 9001 – Quality Management System (QMS).
- ISO 14001 – Environmental Management System.
- ISO 45001 – Occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system.

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SAIOH President's Message

Hennie Van Der Westhuizen, SAIOH President



As part of SAIOH's service to our members, we provide feedback on the latest developments within SAIOH, in the following paragraphs. 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 herewith.

Occupational hygiene and academia

In the spirit of growing its own timber, SAIOH recognises the sterling contributions by academic and training institutions that nurture the saplings that are in the process of becoming solid oaks in occupational hygiene and in the community. Their input is instrumental in developing and honing the knowledge, skills, competence, and attitudes of future occupational hygienists. When comparing these attributes to the eight characteristics of professionalism described in Mind Tools,¹ one cannot but acknowledge the invaluable contributions of these tertiary institutions. The characteristics or attributes of a professional, in Mind Tools are competence, knowledge, conscientiousness, integrity, respect, emotional intelligence, appropriateness, and confidence. It is amazing, but not surprising, how the Council on Higher Education's (CHE's) philosophy of knowledge and skills,² and the execution thereof by tertiary institutions, resonate in the attributes of a professional.

Several academic institutions offer formal tertiary courses in occupational hygiene. These courses are aimed at meeting the varying needs of contenders seeking a future in occupational hygiene. Prospective students may find more information about trainers and approved training providers on the SAIOH website.³ SAIOH has a designated forum - the Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) - to which training institutions may apply for recognition of their courses. This is not a complicated process; the basic criterion is that the

curriculum comprises at least 50% occupational hygiene content.

Although details of the academic institutions are available on the website, SAIOH wishes to further strengthen the alliance between itself and these institutions by offering them an opportunity to share relevant information about their curricula in this newsletter. This will be done in a structured manner. Each newsletter will allow the opportunity for one SAIOH approved institution to showcase its courses. This opportunity will be extended to institutions as and when their curricula are approved.

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National council feedback

Hennie van der Westhuizen: SAIOH president, e-mail: president@saioh.co.za
Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH general manager, e-mail: deon.jvuuren@gmail.com
Nico Potgieter: Co-opted member, email: njpotgieter101@gmail.com

Strategic plan

The current SAIOH strategy (five-year plan) is steered by Jaco Pieterse. The strategy is discussed, and progress thereof is evaluated at each monthly SAIOH Management Board meeting, and at the

quarterly Council meetings. Several objectives / targets have already been met. The next five-year strategy plan will be finalised at a special Management Board meeting in July 2022.



Ethics

As previously mentioned, SAIOH entered into an agreement with a well-known legal advisor to represent the Institute when required.

The first task was to develop a memorandum of incorporation (Mol) to replace our current Constitution. SAIOH has already received the second draft of this important document.

Our legal advisor's next task will be to review the SAIOH Ethics Policy and Procedure(s), thus enabling the Ethics Committee to start its work in earnest. The Ethics Plan forms an important part of the SAIOH strategy.

SAIOH Branch activities

Virtual meetings and workshops present numerous opportunities to SAIOH members. All SAIOH members are automatically invited to attend any SAIOH branch meeting (or event), regardless of their branch affiliations. We encourage all our members to support their branches, and to participate in branch activities and earn CPD points.

Members can submit topics for discussion to the various branch chairs for consideration for future webinars / meetings, and / or workshops.

The Western Cape branch hosted its second face-to-face meeting on Friday 10 June 2022, where Rinus Kriel gave an interesting presentation on autotoxins. 42 people attended.

The Gauteng branch(es) held a virtual meeting (their second meeting) on Friday 24 June 2022. Sean Chester gave an excellent presentation on toxicology (Human biology and target organs). 53 persons attended.

The KwaZulu Natal branch held their second meeting via Zoom, on Thursday 23 June 2022. Four KZN branch members presented on the new Hazardous Chemical Agent Regulations. 51 people attended.

IOHA and OHTA feedback

The Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) recently published its May 2022 Global Link Newsletter. SAIOH e-mailed the link to all its members and posted it on the SAIOH website: <https://www.saioh.co.za>

It was also published in Occupational Health Southern Africa. Note that OHTA has a new website: <https://www.ohatrain.org>

SAIOH has a representative (Garth Hunter) on the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) Board and its National Accreditation Recognition Committee (NARC), providing the PCC with valuable feedback from the IOHA and IOHA NARC meetings.



REMINDER

From January 2023, all SAIOH certified members will be required to provide proof that they have completed an acceptable occupational hygiene ethics training course. There will be a one-year phase-in period during 2022.

During 2022, there will be further ethics training sessions organised in conjunction with the SAIOH branches, and again at the 2022 annual conference in Gauteng.

The Botswana branch held a virtual meeting on 14 July 2022. There were two presentations, i.e., *Mine ventilation during COVID-19*, and *The effects on women working in open cast mines*. 50 people attended.

With regard to online events by our stakeholders, the University of Pretoria (UP) held a public health webinar on *Total Worker Health - an integrated, holistic approach to worker safety, health, and well-being* (24 June 2022), and the International Commission on Occupational Health Scientific Committee on Mining Occupational Safety and Health (ICOH SC-MinOSH) hosted an international webinar on an *Update on Silicosis Detection and Relief - sharing experiences* (29 June 2022).

SAIOH would like to revive stagnant branches, starting with the Mpumalanga and Namibian branches. Members who would like to assist with, or contribute ideas towards this initiative are requested to contact Moses Mokone (SAIOH Branch Co-ordinator) at Mokonemoses2@gmail.com

The issue of ISO 17024 accreditation, as a requirement for any national occupational hygiene association to become a member of IOHA, was also discussed in detail at the IOHA and NARC meetings. The overwhelming majority of the IOHA and NARC national associations voted to align their Quality Management Systems (QMS) to the ISO 17024 quality management system.

Annual SAIOH scientific conference



The 2022 SAIOH annual scientific conference is scheduled for 25-28 October 2022, in Gauteng. The Conference will be a hybrid event, i.e., face-to-face and via live streaming, and are hosted by the Gauteng branch(es). The conference organising committee has already met several times and after careful evaluation of the shortlisted venues, entered a Contract with the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre. A subcommittee also met to develop the draft conference programme. The theme will be centred around control (i.e., Occupational hygiene: controlling the future); a conference banner has been designed and is in use.

A call for abstracts was issued to members on 19 July 2022 (oral or poster presentations), with the deadline for submission set at 15 August.

Scientific Committee members will review the abstracts. We are looking forward to receiving informative and value-adding abstracts, in line with our conference sub-themes:

- Green energy technologies and Occupational Hygiene
- Technology advances in Occupational Hygiene monitoring
- Medical surveillance and Occupational Hygiene monitoring programmes trends and adjustments to regulatory changes
- Occupational Hygiene control in Mining
- Management and control of non-ionising radiation / ergonomics/ indoor air quality in the workplace
- Latest advances in HCA control

SAIOH technical committee feedback

The SAIOH Technical Committee is still busy with its research on welding fumes, i.e., the measurement and analysis thereof. We anticipate completing this procedure and finalising a SAIOH technical and position paper in the near future. The next position paper will be on heat stress equations.

Communications

SAIOH publishes its newsletter and Presidents' page in two electronic media, namely Occupational Health Southern Africa (OHSA), and the African OS&H magazine (A-OS&H). These publications are issued every two months; the links are sent to all members via Mailchimp and posted on our website. Three issues of these two publications have already been sent to all the SAIOH members this year.



SAIOH communicates daily with its stakeholders (e.g., the Department of Employment and Labour, MHSC, MVSSA, ESSA, SASOM, SASOHN, WHWB, OHAIA Association, Saioh, SANAS, NIOH, NIOSH, IOHA and the IOHA NARC, OHTA, AIOH, BOHS, AIHA, ICOH, UCT, etc.) i.e., via webinars.

Communications include important news, technical information, legislation changes, new Standards, etc.

New SAIOH website

SAIOH engaged website developers to overhaul the current website - specially to allow integration with our current Member Management System (MySAIOH). The administration teams are progressing well with the implementation and population of the new website.

SAIOH has started the process to implement an

on-line credit card payment system on an accredited international platform, like PayU, to make electronic payments easier for members. As soon as this is finalised, SAIOH will notify all members with a guideline on how to use it.

A special thanks go to Kate Smart for driving this initiative.

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.jvuvuuren@gmail.com
Corlia Peens: PCC chairperson, e-mail: corlia.peens@sasol.com

Certification assessments

A summary of results from the first quarter's assessments for 2022 is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Results for written assessments, 17 May 2022:

CERTIFICATION CATEGORY	Total Assessed n	Passed n	Failed n	Pass Rate %
OH assistant	59	53	6	89.8
OH technologist	20	14	6	70.0
Occupational hygienist	12	8	4	66.7
TOTAL	91	75	25	82.4

The second round of PCC written assessments took place on Friday 24 June 2022, again mostly online.

A total of 63 candidates wrote the assessment.

Results are pending:

- OH assistants:29
- OH technologists:15
- Occupational hygienists:19

On 22 July 2022 the second round of oral assessments will kick-off. 19 persons have registered for this.

A special PCC technical team is hard at work revising the PCC oral assessment format and questions, in line with the occupational hygiene self-assessment tool, ensuring not only that the growing field of occupational hygiene is covered, but that the assessment format and tools continue to improve over time and are not subjective.

Occupational hygiene skills forum (OHSF)

The SAIOH Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) was initiated to co-ordinate all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials (e.g., the AIHA Basic Industrial Hygiene Course at the registered occupational hygiene assistant (ROHA) level, OH training providers and institutions, and the development and management of assessment and examination systems, where required. Another function of the OHSF is to evaluate applications from tertiary institutions for recognition of their occupational hygiene-related qualifications. The OHSF is progressing well with this.

Northwest University's and the Tshwane University of Technology's four-year bachelor's degrees were recognised by the OHSF as meeting

the criteria at the registered occupational hygienist (ROH) level. The OHSF is currently evaluating the University of the Witwatersrand's and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's programmes.

All tertiary institutions that offer OH qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC administrator for information regarding application for recognition (lee@saioh.co.za).

Details of recognised training providers and recognised qualifications will be posted on the SAIOH website (<https://www.saioh.co.za>). This will make it easier for potential students and certification candidates to select suitable occupational hygiene training programmes that meet SAIOH and international requirements.



ACHASM Quarterly Update

From Claire Deacon, Executive Director

Greetings colleagues, winter is well underway and spring is just around the corner. Similarly ACHASM has had to go through some wintry weather, and we have made some hard changes. We hope they will bring some fresh approaches as we move into the latter part of 2022.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

We have been involved in various stakeholder engagements relating to the built environment.

I represent ACHASM on the Built Environment Professionals of South Africa (BEPSA) that is made up of many of the voluntary associations represented at the SACPCMP, across the disciplines. We have had a number of meetings to date this year and through that platform we are the key stakeholders on the CBE.

Issues that are addressed through this committee are our business case. The SACPCMP only deal with our statutory obligations, competency and discipline. So ACHASM has an opportunity to raise issues of importance that relate to H&S at BEPSA and the CBE.

Aspects that are being addressed include transformation, fee scales, the identity of work (IDOW) to name a few.

We also have a presence on the Presidents committee looking at the actions for the floods in KZN, but there hasn't been much activity there.

We attended the 50th VA forum at the SACPCMP recently where we have fought vigorously to have our voices heard. The outcome was to do a presentation of the issues that we as H&S practitioners need to deal with.

We often find that, as many of you will know, appointments and the correct level of practitioner is not appointed at the correct time. We have even found that construction work permits have been issued to projects against a PrCHSAs name without them even knowing about it. Such issues are really serious, and we refuse to allow them to go unnoticed or be addressed.

We also have representation on the Construction Alliance of SA (CASA) who also have the interest of the total built environment including suppliers and manufacturers within the built environment.

We run a WhatsApp group for the professional category, including candidates which is a good learning platform for all of us. We have yet to create one for CHSMs and CHSOs, but hands on deck are needed to manage those.

Prof John Smallwood has been quite prolific on our social media platforms (LinkedIn and Facebook) and regularly posts information there.

WE NEED YOU

ACHASM is a registered non-profit organisation, and as such we rely on our subscriptions to cover any expenses.

COVID hit everyone hard, and our industry no less so. We know many lost their jobs and were not able to pay their annual fees. Hence our need to restructure, given that we believe we have a place and that we have worked very hard to be recognised.

For now, and the remainder of the year, the Directors and a small team are managing ACHASM. We are re-structuring to ensure that all the aspects are met to stay relevant and current. We also know that everyone is busy and life is not the same post COVID, however we need alternates, and we need to grow in membership, diversity and strength. Please think about what you can do to be part of our family.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We won't leave you and we will support any endeavours such as:

- Offering your time to assist in running or being part of a chapter in your province;
- Arranging meetings/speakers (GVK have offered premises across SA);
- Being an alternate to attending meetings;
- Helping with social media.

MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

We are struggling to match payments to members on our financial platform, so if you have not received your certificate of membership it is probably likely that we have not matched your payment to you.

Please make sure you, or your company use the invoice number to reflect and send us the proof of payment. Ms Kelly Landis is currently managing that aspect so expect a call from her or drop her a mail if you have any queries.

All our contact details are the same, the website is currently being updated, and we will communicate to you via mail.

Finally, thanks to the team that have consistently put their hands out to assist, and the drive of the Gqeberha team.

I look forward to a warm summer.

To find out more about ACHASM visit <https://www.achasm.co.za>



Musculoskeletal disorders: one of the silent diseases

Occupational diseases, generally, are silent. They are insidious or slow in onset, and when eventually discovered and diagnosed, almost and sadly, in some cases the disease or damage is irreversible.

The Work Related Upper Limb Disorder (WRULD) Circular Instruction No. 180 was published many years ago to manage the numbers of claims to the Compensation Commissioner (CC) relating to some musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The Circular Instruction is used by many of the other carriers appointed by the CC, namely Federated Employers Mutual (FEM) and Rand Mutual Association (RMA). However, as I and others often note, The CC has not published any statistics since 1999, and then there is the issue of under reporting. Therefore, we don't really know how many cases are reported or accepted and what they cost. The WRULDS also is only related to upper limbs, that is shoulders, upper back, neck, arms, and hands. Many of the available statistics from the available carriers do need scrutiny to find links.

RISK AREAS

Repetitive work with the overuse of tendons and muscles can cause much physical discomfort, and possibly lead to surgery and some disability. However, what about stress? Stress increases the likelihood of injury. What about measuring the environment, noise, dust, lighting etc? If the working conditions are not optimal, stress and the likelihood of injury will be increased. One of the other aspects I consider is absenteeism levels and medical surveillance. Because the onset of discomfort is not necessarily immediate, a worker may visit their doctor, and thus the link is missed.

I have found, on a number of occasions, that absenteeism information is not provided to the occupational health nurse for review. This information is important to us because we are trained to take it further, to investigate potential links. Identifying if an MSD is work related or not is not a straight forward exercise. However, with the Ergonomic Regulations (ERs) now in place the onus is on the employer to identify risks to workers and mitigate appropriately.

Because of the difficulty to link work and an MSD, and under-reporting, many organisations do not have internal systems or information that would identify risk areas. The ERs are simple. Identify risks relative to what is being done and apply the mitigations to limit and address the risk.

An ergonomic committee needs to be set up, must be consulted and is required to advise the organisation in terms of managing such risk.

Workers need to be trained and undergo medical



Claire Deacon PhD (Constr. Mgt), MCur OH, BSc Med (Hons) Ergonomics

surveillance. It is optimum to have a range of skills and competencies in the ergonomic committee, notwithstanding the occupational health practitioner, industrial or mechanical engineer, health and safety officers, management and worker representation. Between them they need to consider the findings of the ergonomic risk assessment and what can be done within budgets.

RESEARCH PAPERS AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

Professor John Smallwood and I have done a number of research papers on how workers experience work and pain, both at work and at home, and we are always surprised at how workers perceive their bodies at work. In most of the findings workers would not note their back at use at all, and yet in terms of pain, that generally indicated as an issue both at home and at work.

I conduct ergonomic risk assessments to assist and bring together all the components of ergonomics. As such I have conducted many baseline ergonomic risk assessments for organisations in manufacturing and the construction sector. In most cases the internal knowledge of ergonomics is very rudimentary. Most organisations do really look at the legal compliance issue as the reason for completion. Fortunately any aspect addressed will improve the working environment, and increase productivity.

Ergonomic interventions do not have to cost a lot, but obviously they can. I have seen over the years at some plants how automation has changed the way work is done. Many are positive, with some glitches that are going to be expensive to change. For example on one production line, the product was manually poured into a hopper that was way above the head of the workers. The product weighed in excess of 8kg per batch, and that activity was repeated approximately 5 times per hour. That is therefore one process that should be automated, but will be dependent upon capital available. In the meantime, a number of aspects such as worker rotation, and reduction of packaging weight are some of the considerations that need to be considered.

There are a good number of aspects that need to be included when looking at an organisation to determine ergonomic risks. It's clearly not just about positional work, but there is a need to include other factors that provide clues to where the issues lie. The ERs are not going to go away, they make work more palliative for many, organisations need to consider the risk to their workers in every way, and addressing ergonomics is one that links many areas of occupational health and occupational safety together to make life easier.

A safer year in SA's gas industry

Comparing registration numbers between March 2021 to March 2022, there has been an increase in registered gas practitioners according to the South African Qualification and Certification Committee for Gas (SAQCC Gas). That is excellent news! For the everyday South African who benefits from gas products as well as the workers maintaining and installing gas systems, it means a safer year with higher levels of competency and compliance.

SAQCC Gas is always striving for more awareness on gas-work competency and safety. By registering as a gas practitioner, you are playing a crucial part in ensuring that every worker goes home safe at the end of each workday.

For SAQCC Gas, part of achieving that goal is by providing members with the opportunity to have the training and competency they need to remain safe on the job and support the safety of those with whom they work. "Involving industry members in advisory roles for the Safety and Technical Advisory Council (STAC) is inspirational and collaborative. STAC ensures a platform for sound debate and advice, resulting in improved safety and best practices across most gas disciplines within industry.

Successes are imminent especially embracing emerging markets," says Roy Lubbe, Chairman of the Southern African Gas Association (SAGA), which established STAC and is also one of the four member associations of SAQCC Gas.

It is equally important for consumers utilising various gas products whether in commercial, industrial or specialised capacities to be vigilant about compliance and make use of registered gas practitioners. For instance, South African homeowners should not view Certificates of Conformity (CoCs) as indefinitely valid. Gas is very well regulated and often updated, therefore making it a safer energy choice. This means responsible homeowners should have their gas appliances inspected on a yearly basis at minimum to avoid being caught by surprise should they need to sell the property or if there is a costly fault due to lack of maintenance.

It's the community of consumers and gas practitioners working together to constantly build and improve the gas industry in South Africa. Each of the four associations emphasise that anyone can report an incident where an installation does not conform to current regulations. Work done by unregistered persons is illegal and potentially extremely dangerous as it can result in serious injury or even death. Registered gas practitioners have the necessary experience, competency, equipment and knowledge to do the work safely the first time. Never settle for quick and cheap installations that compromise on your safety. Insurance companies may not cover fire or public liability claims caused by non-registered persons as the gas installations will be deemed illegal.

Are you insured

Years of faithful insurance premiums can prove valueless in the absence of a Certificate of Conformity (CoC). It is a startling fact that you stand to lose hefty amounts of money that were meant to be an "insurance" on your assets. Insurance companies will not cough-up if you cannot present a valid CoC when making a claim. Can you afford to lose all your assets and have your insurance repudiated?

A vast majority of South African citizens are moving towards the use of Gas Appliances due to the increasing cost of electricity and possible outages. However, most users are unaware of the specific regulations and safety standards with which they must comply when getting gas equipment installed in their households. Overlooking these regulations can be detrimental in many ways.

According to the Pressure Equipment Regulations (PER), all Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas appliances and equipment should meet the specified standards to ensure safety. These regulations set out the requirements regarding the

design, manufacture, operation, repair, modification, maintenance, inspection and testing of pressure equipment. In terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, the PER also requires persons handling the installation of any gas systems to undergo specific training and to be registered with the South African Qualification and Certification Committee – Gas (SAQCC Gas). The Registered Gas Practitioner must issue a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) for any equipment they install.

WHAT IS A CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY?

A Certificate of Conformity (CoC) for Gas installations is a legal document which must be obtained whenever a gas system is installed, modified or repaired and should be retained for possible future requirement. Only Registered Practitioners may issue a CoC and a complete list of these practitioners can be found on:

<https://www.saqccgas.co.za>

COC AND INSURANCE

Most People are oblivious to the importance of

holding a CoC for every Gas installation on their properties, this includes air conditioning and refrigeration units - the importance is generally realised when it is too late. It is usual for people to get insurance cover for their properties and assets, however, it is a staggering truth that owners could be paying insurance premiums for years and end up receiving no cover in the occurrence of an incident or accident involving gas. Should there be no valid Certificate of Conformity, many insurance companies will not accept liability for costs of

damage caused to property or assets. The loss and damage suffered by an owner/user due to a Gas installation for which a valid CoC has not been issued, falls entirely on the owner. Regardless of cost of reparation, the insurance will most likely not cover it.

"The majority of insurance companies would require this certificate to prove that the installation was safe and had been serviced regularly." Lanice Steward- managing director of Knight Frank Anne Porter

Green initiatives at Mogalakwena platinum mine

Global fossil fuel supply and cost remains volatile as the Russian invasion of Ukraine persists. Worldwide supply chains and inflation have been thrown into chaos. These circumstances are adding further pressure on the major sectors, which have the largest influence on global warming, to meet net-zero carbon emissions commitments. Buildings and cities, energy, transport, agriculture and industry sectors produce a combined massive 30.9 gigatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually, according to the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) 2020 edition of the Emissions Gap Report. Ultimately, there is an urgent need and great opportunity to develop greener technology.

In line with this is the South African Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Association's (SARACCA's) focus in this latest case study.

Fifty-Two Engineering, members of SARACCA, recently completed a ventilation project for Anglo American. Mogalakwena platinum mine, located in Limpopo, South Africa, recently added a hydrogen production, storage, and refuelling complex on site to support their addition of a 2MW hydrogen-battery hybrid truck which is of Anglo American's nuGen™ Zero Emission Haulage Solution (ZEHS).

It is currently the world's largest hydrogen-powered mine haul truck! The Fifty-Two Engineering team were appointed to design ventilation systems in the plant where the hydrogen is produced, stored and used for fuelling.

Hydrogen is a greener alternative to fossil fuels

that needs responsible handling due to its flammability when mixed with air. It is crucial to not only avoid leaks but ensure there is an instant plant shutdown in a potentially hazardous situation.

The HVAC objective for this project was to create a ventilation system with an integrated monitoring and warning system for the plant to operate continuously and safely. "We designed a system that keeps the environment clean and forces filtered air into the electrolyser building where the hydrogen is produced and stored," says David Townley at Fifty-Two Engineering.

This building required 6 fan filter units where five run simultaneously to achieve the 12 air changes per hour (ACH). Each unit is fitted with a flow-pressure switch to monitor whether the fan is running. Should it be activated on a running unit, indicating a breakdown, the standby unit is activated, and an alarm will be raised at the HVAC panel in the main control room. Thereby maintaining optimum gas safety in the plant at all times and keeping the chain of production moving.

SARACCA is proud to support their members who are playing their part in a zero emissions future. The fact is that renewables are the way forward, and this hydrogen plant ventilation project is just one example of our industry striving for ambitious targets and spring boarding green development within South Africa. By becoming a SARACCA member, you too can have access to the latest information and training on greener, newer technologies.



New Legislation on workplace harassment

When new legislation is implemented, it is crucial for businesses and employees to understand how it will impact them and influence future practices.

At the beginning of July, John Botha, CEO of Global Business Solutions, led the webinar hosted by the Temporary Employment Services Division (TESD) to unpack the latest placing of harassment in the Employment Equity Amendment Act.

The TESD initiated the webinar to drive awareness on the full scope of harassment in the work place, and encourage a proactive approach to supporting the modern labour force. The webinar highlighted the need to take a proactive approach, be aware of the extended definitions and types of harassment, consider how it applies to race, gender, disability and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual,

Queer and others (LGBTQ+) as well as revising all related company policies.

Businesses should rightfully be spending significant time and energy to ensure compliance with new legislation. It is a priority not only from a legal perspective, but also from a civil one.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Botha stressed that individuals can be held criminally liable if they do not actively avoid behaviours in the workplace that fall under harassment. This means watching not only what employees say and do, but also what is posted and shared on social platforms.

It comes as no surprise that sexual remarks and inappropriate advances fall under harassment. However, many are unaware that constant criticism, abusive language, humiliation, and ostracising actions towards an individual also constitutes harassment and has serious consequences, according to the latest legislation.

Employers should regard all forms of harassment as unfair discrimination that constitute a barrier to equity and equality in their company. "There is no hierarchy between physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse," emphasises Botha.

In the modern workspace, it is no longer business as usual. Employers must utilise emotional intelligence to support a younger and more diverse labour force. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, are currently the largest living generation. The millennial employee will make up 75% of the

workforce by 2025 and has different needs compared to previous generations.

Business owners need to create a culture that makes their workers feel part of a team, accepted, heard and respected.

Psychological safety is an essential as part of management skills and needs to be implemented. The onus is on employers to have a solid harassment procedure and employees need to know about it. It is unacceptable in any workplace for temporary or permanent employees not to know how, and to whom workplace sexual harassment must be reported. Expert advice and counselling must be given, and steps taken to eliminate any form of harassment.

Any unacceptable conduct must immediately be brought to the employer's attention. The complaint must then be confidentially investigated by consulting the relevant parties. Complainants must be formally or informally informed (depending on the gravity of the incident) and the perpetrator must be approached.

If necessary, external recourse must be followed with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), Labour Court and Equality Court (PEPUDA).

Employers must have clear channels implemented where employees can report misconduct.

Companies must have a no-tolerance policy towards harassment, not only to promote a successful business but also to contribute towards bettering our communities.

Why does insurance protect the engineering, manufacturing and construction industries?

Because accidents can happen at anytime, without warning



Written by Derek Simango – Business Development Manager at MUKFIN is an insurance practitioner with more than twelve years' experience. He has spent the larger part of his working career in reinsurance.

When we think of great nations, we think of great infrastructural development. Most of us love traveling or at least the idea of it. If we look at landmarks such as Greece's Valley of the Temples, the pyramids of Egypt, even the Great Zimbabwe ruins, we see a history of skill and architecture engineered to perfection. We cannot question the immense role of engineering and construction in our modern economies and to enable this sector to grow the importance of insurance cannot be ignored.

South Africa is a colossal giant in the African landscape, leading in construction and engineering in several ways. The number of graduates from public higher universities was 203 076 as of 2016¹ and the engineering faculties contribute about 1500 students annually. There are approximately 34 000 registered professionals in the Engineering Council

of South Africa (ECSA) database, of which more than 14 800 are registered professional engineers, i.e., engineering professionals with a degree from a recognised university.²

In 2020, the top one hundred enterprises in the construction industry contributed 28,1% to the total income of the rainbow nation. The number of persons employed in the construction industry as at end of June 2020 was 473 214.³ With that being said, the country needs to retain value through protecting its skilled workforce by providing them with peace of mind, confidence, and a safety net when carrying out their duties at work.

INSURANCE A NECESSARY SAFETY NET

There is no better safety net than insurance when it comes dealing with risk of any form, and all businesses from self-employed to multi-nationals need insurance to help mitigate unexpected costs, and to protect their employees, livelihood and personal property against damage or liability.

Mistakes happen, premises get damaged, employees and visitors get injured and the responsible OSH Practitioner should know and understand the different insurance products on offer. See Table 1.

Appropriate insurance coverage can protect the future of your business from fortuitous events. But lately, we are finding that the top ten skills businesses are struggling to recruit include mechanical, maintenance, chemical and industrial engineers.⁴ Could this be an issue surrounding inadequate insurance cover to boost the engineering and construction industries' special forces?

A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Insurance is vital to every business. It will save time, money and reduce stress. It will protect your business from damage and provide benefits to your employees. It will help create a safe work environment with an increase in productivity.

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Table 1. Insurance products on offer

- **General Liability** insurance covers property damage, injury to and even libel giving protection to the business owner who is accountable for all the acts of negligence.
- **Product Liability** insurance will protect the business if a product manufactured by it causes injury to people or property.
- **Professional Liability** insurance applies to professionals such as occupational hygienists and covers negligence.
- **Commercial Property** and **Building** insurances cover all sized properties and provide protection where there is damage, for example a fire.
- **Commercial Motor** insurance will protect businesses if one of their vehicles is vandalised or stolen, or if an employee is involved in an accident causing damage or injury to others.
- **Business Engineering** insurance addresses own safety, and liability for employees and the public who use their products.
- **Public Liability** insurance is designed for situations where the public may sue for any number of reasons.
- **Electrical Engineering** insurance covers jobs that require tests, design, develop and manufacture of electrical equipment.
- **Equipment Insurance** exists for various tools.
- **Engineering Consultant** insurance covers potential litigations.
- **Civil Engineering** insurance covers Civil Engineering Completed Risks (CECR) solutions.
- **Trade** insurances have been designed specially for the different trades such as Electrician insurance, Handyman insurance Mechanic insurance, Plumber insurance, Outside-Plant Engineer insurance, Carpenters Insurance, even Security Installation insurance.



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Social media in emergencies – the first standard in SA

SABS

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), through its technical committee has adopted the ISO 22329 standard that provides guidance on the use of social media during an emergency or crisis. The standard underwent a public enquiry stage and was adopted and published as a South African National Standard (SANS) 22329 in June 2022.

MISINFORMATION CAN CAUSE HARM

“The need for guidelines in using social media to help South Africans during times of emergencies and crises is critical. With the recent floods in Kwa Zulu-Natal, the July 2021 riots and national state of disaster during Covid-19, the sharing of authentic information can literally save lives.

Social media has the potential to deliver information to large groups of people, quickly – however there is also the risk that if it is not managed correctly, it can cause more harm. SANS/ISO 22329: Security and Resilience – Emergency Management – Guidelines for the use of social media in emergencies, provides the guidelines in using social media when dealing with emergencies, crisis situations or even potential threats to the public,” says Jodi Scholtz, Lead Administrator of SABS.

CORPORATE AWARENESS AND SANS/ISO 22329

Scholtz explained that SANS/ISO 22329 should be implemented by every corporate and public institution in South Africa. The standard sets out the guidelines for organisations to ensure that they have strong strategies, plans and personnel in place to deal effectively with situations as they arise.

SANS/ISO 22329 is the first standard in South Africa that provides a framework for organisations and the public to interact, disseminate information and provide critical information during emergencies

such as security, climate, health or any incidents that has an impact on citizens.

“Coupled with the risk of fake news and misinformation, there has been an increased use of social media channels in the last few years. Organisations and citizens that rely on social media need to be aware that every digital social media channel is ‘owned’ by organisations and impose their own terms of use and privacy guidelines. SANS/ISO 22329 provides practical guidelines that outlines the responsibility of organisations’ to ensure that content is verified, planned and monitored. The benefits and risks of reaching stakeholders via social media is outlined in the national standard and SABS believes that every organisation should refer to this standard in the compiling and implementing communication strategies,” says Scholtz.

UNDERSTANDING SANS/ISO 22329

SANS/ISO 22329 can be implemented very easily as the framework for implementation is provided. The document contains various Annexures that provide information and guidelines. Annexure A of the document provides information on the type of social media and related channels that currently exist; Annexure B provides a quality management checklist for content that is being posted and monitored; Annexure C presents an example of a plan to disseminate content before, during and after an emergency; and Annexure D provides guidelines to citizen’s on using and interacting with social media.

SANS/ISO 22329 (2022): Security and Resilience – Emergency Management – Guidelines for the use of social media in emergencies is available for purchase via the sabs webstore.



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