



Emperors Convention  
Centre  
Johannesburg

## PPE CONFERENCE 2026



10-11  
March  
2026



### SAPEMA

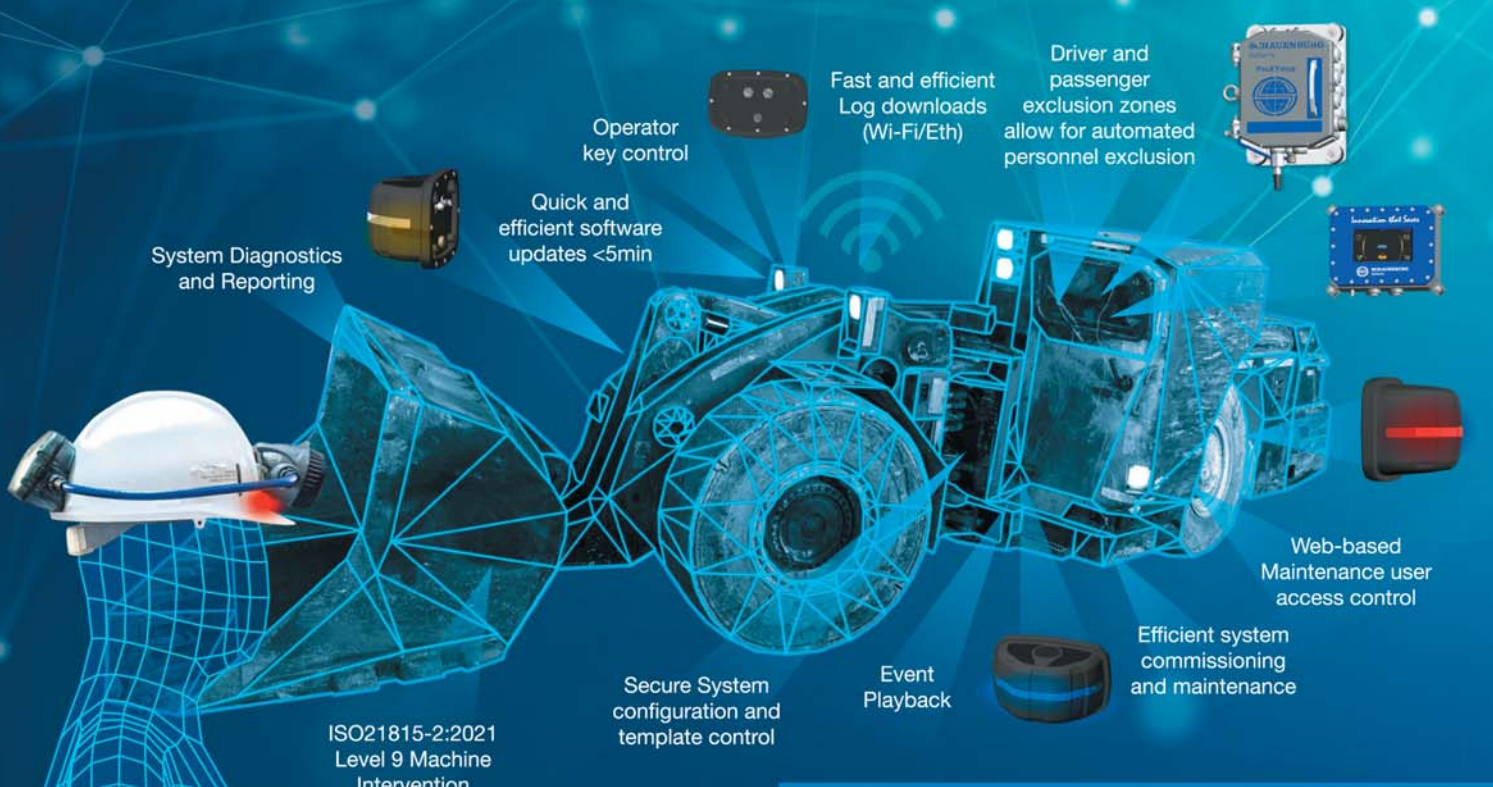
EST. 1961  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROTECTIVE  
EQUIPMENT MARKETING ASSOCIATION



- Whole body vibration (WBV)
- Understanding the role of baseline risk assessments
- Workplace safety and health risk management for major hazard installation
- Women in Mining: Sheq Safety leading the way
- Accountability: Back to basics
- From the '90s to now: Alcohol still drives the crisis on our roads
- What are the implications for you with an addition of 20,000 new inspectors?
- Chop, Slice, and Stay Safe: The (Not-So-Bloody) truth about OHS in butcheries
- Mental health in humanitarian emergencies: The role of the built environment
- Does your organisation's annual profit include protecting employees?
- Driving cultural change: Reflections on an HSSE culture transformation programme
- Collaboration in improving workplace health, safety and system effectiveness
- Real time mercury monitoring for safer workplaces

# TRANSFORMING DATA INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- SmartMine IoT
- Data-Driven Insights
- Smart Gas Detection Solutions
- RTWL - Real-Time Workforce Locator
- Collision Prevention System
- Missing Worker Locator



Schauenburg Systems (Pty) Ltd  
26 Spartan Rd | Kempton Park | Gauteng | South Africa  
T +27 (0) 11 974 0006 | C +27 (0) 66 149 5655



## Contents

### FEATURE ARTICLES

Workplace safety and health risk management for major hazard installation:  
Functional process hazard analysis ..... 4

What are the implications for you with an addition of 20,000 new inspectors? ..... 6

From the '90s to now: Alcohol still drives the crisis on our roads ..... 10

Accountability: Back to basics ..... 14

Whole body vibration (WBV) ..... 20

Driving cultural change: Reflections on an HSSE culture transformation programme ..... 28

Protecting workers from the invisible threat: *Real-time mercury monitoring for safer workplaces* ..... 40

Participating associations / organisations / institutes with AFRICAN OS&H and the Safety First Association



### OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Understanding the role of baseline risk assessments ..... 24

Chop, Slice, and Stay Safe: The (Not-So-Bloody) truth about OHS in butcheries ..... 26

Tribute: Sankie Greyling ..... 38



### CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

Mental health in humanitarian emergencies: The role of the built environment ..... 18



### OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Does your organisation's annual profit include protecting employees? ..... 19

OSHAfrica at the International Vision Zero Conference 2025 - Uganda, Kampala ..... 19



### OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE

President's message ..... 30

National council feedback ..... 30

From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC) ..... 35



### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

In Loving Memory of Ernest John Wallis (Ernie): A life of faith, service, and leadership ..... 22

Women in Mining: Sheq Safety leading the way ..... 23



### ERGONOMICS

ESSA Conference 2025: Collaboration in improving workplace health, safety & system effectiveness ..... 37



African OS&H is published by the Safety First Association and is the official journal of

- Southern African Protective Equipment Marketing Association (SAPEMA)
- Association of Construction Health and Safety Management (ACHASM)

African OS&H is supported by:

- Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH)
- South African Qualification and Certification Committee for Gas (SAQCC GAS)
- Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA)
- Occupational Safety & Health Africa (OSHAfrica)

African OS&H incorporates:

- Occupational Safety and Health
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Corporate Risk Management
- Occupational Hygiene
- Gas Safety
- Ergonomics

Editor:	Debbie Myer
Production Editor:	Lindsay Myer
Chairman:	Leighton Bennett
Vice Chairman:	Herman (Harry) Fourie
Administration:	Vanesse Levitt
Membership:	Debbie Myer
Committee members:	Wensley Misrole Wellington Mudenha Steward Shapiro Fabian Buckley Warren Manning Delene Sheasby George Browse

Telephone:	+ 27 11 886-5985
Mobile:	+ 27 83-266-6662
E-mail:	delinds@mweb.co.za debbie@safety1st.co.za
Postal address:	PO Box 41822 Craighall 2024

Copyright: 2025 Material appearing in this issue may not be reproduced without the permission of the editor or publishers in any form whatsoever.

The Safety First Association is a non-profit making, privately supported, public service organisation which aims to prevent accidents by promoting an awareness of accident situations in day-to-day living amongst members of the community.

The Publishers and Editors are not liable for any damages or loss incurred as a result of any statement contained in this magazine. Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy in this publication, neither the Publishers nor Editors accept any responsibility for errors or omissions in the content and reserve the right to edit all contributions. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Publishers or Editors.

## Editor's Comment

### DEL PROJECT 20,000

During February of this year, the Department of Employment and Labour launched Project 20,000 to increase its inspectorate from 2,000 to 20,000 by hiring 18,000 new inspectors and enforcement interns. Through a significant increase in workplace inspections, this initiative aims to improve organisational adherence to the law, by clamping down on non-compliance and illegal labour practices.

In his article, Tibor Szana unpacks this initiative in more detail. These inspectors, he explains, will be employed by the DEL over the next two years and will undergo training to familiarise themselves with various Regulations, Acts and Standards.

Szana discusses the nature of what they will do and/or be allowed to do. He also clarifies the education requirements that should be required for the post—such as mechanical, electrical or chemical engineering, as well as various other identified qualifications. However, those that do not have a tertiary qualification and only a matric or a grade 12 certificate, may only be able to use this as a springboard opportunity.

Szana also queries the types of inspections they will be allowed to carry out—the serious types of incident or low-level incident investigations. Diverse levels of training will probably allow for different levels of inspections.

Szana concludes that whatever the outcomes, this project will have a positive aspect to take away as there will be about 20,000 new trained persons in South Africa. In the long run, it will be of benefit not only to organisations, but to individuals as well. Those who leave the employment of the DEL will be able to join organisations with a certain level of experience and competence that can only be of benefit to the employer, the employee and the country.

Tibor Szana authored the information booklet “*Inspections by DEL OHS Inspectors*” published by the Safety First Association to provide an insight into the way inspections are carried out by inspectors from the Department of Employment and Labour: Occupational Health and Safety. This book results from his personal observations of the number of non-compliances and incidents (fatal and non-fatal) experienced during his time as an inspector, and then later as the Chief Inspector for Occupational Health and Safety (non-mining).

The information in this booklet will prepare companies expecting an inspection by the DEL, guide them on how to engage with the inspectors at an appropriate level and manage the inspection outcomes.

He explains the difference between blitz inspections vs routine inspections, what the employer can expect to happen, how an inspection unfolds, the obligations of the employer and what items must be made available to the inspector.

The chapter “*Notices served on the employer*” outlines the various notices, such as improvement, prohibition and/or contravention notices that inspectors may serve on the employer for non-compliances.

The final chapter of the information booklet guides employers how to lodge an appeal and request an exemption.



**REBEL**  
SAFETY GEAR

**BUILT TO  
WORK**

[www.rebelsafetygear.com](http://www.rebelsafetygear.com)

**WW-TRREBKPRO  
RAVEN BLACK  
PRO TROUSERS**

**Built to perform. Styled to stand out.**

The REBEL Raven Black Pro trousers bring a sleek, modern edge to the REBEL Tech Gear range. Engineered for demanding environments, they combine rugged construction with contemporary styling and innovative features to keep you performing at your best. The Raven Black Pro takes worksite practicality to the next level with diagonal line design reflective tape below the knee for enhanced visibility, a zip-on/zip-off tool pouch for adaptable storage, and dedicated pouches for knee pad inserts for added protection. Designed for durability, comfort, and versatility, these trousers are ideal for professionals who need workwear that works as hard as they do.

# Workplace safety and health risk management for major hazard installation:

## Functional process hazard analysis



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.

A functional process hazard refers to a potential danger or risk associated with the failure or improper functioning of a system or process within an industrial setting. It involves identifying, analysing, and mitigating hazards that arise from deviations from normal operating conditions or equipment failures.

This type of risk management tools aids in analysing foreseeable potential hazards, and is detrimental for preventing accidents, ensuring safety, and maintaining operational integrity.

### THE KEY ASPECTS OF FUNCTIONAL PROCESS HAZARDS

#### Identification stage:

Functional process hazards are identified through various methods, including Functional Hazard Assessment (FHA), Process Hazard Analysis (PHA), and techniques like HAZOP (Hazard and Operability Study) and What-If analysis.

#### Analysis stage:

Once identified, these hazards are analysed to understand their potential causes, consequences, and the safeguards in place to prevent or mitigate them.

#### Mitigation stage:

The analysis leads to the development of control measures and corrective actions to reduce the likelihood or severity of the identified hazards.

#### Focus stage:

Functional process hazards analysis often focuses on identifying hazards related to equipment failure, human error, natural disasters, and deviations from normal operating parameters.

#### Goal / objective / target:

The primary goal is to prevent catastrophic events like fires, explosions, and toxic releases that can result from process failures.

### EXAMPLES OF FUNCTIONAL PROCESS HAZARDS

#### Equipment failure:

This could include issues with pumps, valves, reactors, or other critical components, leading to leaks, spills, or uncontrolled reactions.

#### Human error:

Mistakes made by operators, technicians, or engineers due to lack of training, fatigue, or inadequate procedures.

#### Natural disasters:

Events like earthquakes, floods, or extreme weather conditions that can disrupt processes and cause damage.

#### Deviation from normal operating conditions:

Exceeding temperature, pressure, or flow rate limits, leading to instability and potential hazards.

### IMPORTANCE OF FUNCTIONAL PROCESS HAZARD ANALYSIS

#### Safety aspects:

Functional process hazard analysis is essential for protecting workers, the public, and the environment.

### COMPLIANCE TO LEGAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Many regulatory bodies, like OSHA and EU-OSHA, and local governing authority like Ministry of Manpower of Singapore requiring PHA for processes involving hazardous chemicals (an indication in its Singapore Standard 651 :2019 - Safety and Health Management System for the Chemical Industry) is specifically developed for the:

- Factory that processes or manufactures petroleum, petroleum products, petrochemicals or petrochemical products;
- Premises that store toxic or flammable liquids at a storage capacity of 5,000 or more cubic metres;
- Factory manufacturing fluorine, chlorine, hydrogen fluoride, carbon monoxide and synthetic polymers;
- Factory manufacturing pharmaceutical products or their intermediates;
- Factory manufacturing semiconductor wafers.

### OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

By identifying and mitigating hazards, organisations can reduce downtime, prevent accidents, and improve overall operational efficiency.

### FINANCIAL SAVINGS

Preventing accidents can save significant costs associated with property damage, environmental remediation, and potential legal liabilities.



# CUSTOM-MADE

## NOISE-BAN IS CUSTOM-MADE TO FIT YOUR EARS.

Since 1992



SCAN FOR VIDEO



## NOISE-BAN is a measurable and controllable hearing protection device.

Optimum protection and communication in noise  
Value added on-site monitoring programme  
Seal fitment and training guarantees effectiveness  
Comfortable to wear the whole day

## CONTACT US

Tel: (012) 403-8740

Email: [sales@noiseban.co.za](mailto:sales@noiseban.co.za)

[www.noiseban.co.za](http://www.noiseban.co.za)

# What are the implications for you with an addition of 20,000 new inspectors?

The following is an opinion piece regarding the articles published related to the “new inspectors” joining DEL.



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

Since the inception of inspectors to conduct inspections into compliance with labour laws, including occupational health and safety, there has been a cry by workers for greater compliance by non law abiding employers.

The number of non-compliances and the number of incidents (fatal and non-fatal) observed by myself during my time as an inspector and then later as the Chief Inspector for Occupational Health and Safety (non-mining) spoke volumes. Compliance levels across the board for general sectors hovered around 60% as an average (higher or lower per sector) and very different for public sector.

My take on the matter has always been that to make an impact you need to place a well trained OHS Inspector or OHS professional at every single workplace to make some impact and even then, while you would make a serious dent, you would not entirely stop incidents from taking place or prevent non-compliance by employers and their employees.

Note for the wise among you, not even the existence and application of robots in all its various forms in the work environment will prevent incidents/accidents. Of course, even the application of AI in the work environment will also have its own limitations.

That said, the Minister of Employment and Labour, Ms. Nomakhosazana Meth, announced on Monday, 10 February 2025, the massive enforcement internship programme set to recruit a total of 20,000 interns within its Inspection and Enforcement Services Branch (IES) over the next two years.<sup>1</sup>

Now let's be clear, these interns will be divided up into various programmes within IES and not all of the new interns will be employed for two years in the Occupational Health and Safety component within IES. A certain number will be allocated to the following disciplines in varying percentages to the extent required:

- Basic Conditions of Employment Act,
- Employment Equity Act,
- Compensation for Occupational Injury and Diseases Act,
- Employment Services Act,
- Occupational Health and Safety Act,
- Unemployment Insurance Act

You will recall that about 5 years ago, there were 500 additional OHS inspectors employed full time by the DEL in their OHS component country-wide, increasing the number of OHS inspectors to about 670.

I do believe that an additional 20,000 new interns/inspectors over the next 3 plus years starting this year, should rattle your cages somewhat, or will they?

Let me briefly explain what could possibly take place in employing the 20,000. It is most likely going to be broken up into two groups to make it more manageable for DEL and their provinces / Labour Centres. So employing 10,000 new interns this year, given the logistics required to employ such a big number, and then to ensure there is ample space available, should further place a strain on DEL resources (within IES and HR), even if the new staff are allowed to work from home after 6 months training—probably in-house for the general labour law group and internal and external training for the OHS group.

The second crop of new interns should be employed in the second year, while the first group gains further experience and at some stage assists with the training and/or induction of the second group.

Now this is an exciting phase in the life of the inspectorate as this level of employment of interns has never taken place before until now.

In OHS, I would imagine the pressure will be on the Chief Inspector to ensure that the team of interns allocated to OHS will be trained and ready to meet the many challenges that exist. The level of training becomes crucial and those of you who operate in the OHS space know that it is a humongous task that lies ahead.

Of course it is not only the Act (OHSA) and its various Regulations that they must familiarise themselves with, there are also numerous Standards (SANS) that they may need to familiarise themselves with. The DEL moved to specialisation some years ago which effectively means that a person with a mechanical qualification will operate in that space while a person with an electrical or chemical qualification will operate in that space, respectively.

In addition to this, according to its ILO commitments, it will also have several focus areas on which to concentrate its functions viz. the informal sector vs the formal sector.

## WHAT CAN THE NEW CROP DO?

The new crop of inspectors therefore, will more than likely be used to conduct low level inspections and possibly, under the watchful eye of a supervisor, serve notices such as a Contravention Notice. I do not see them serving Prohibition Notices. If they do, however, good luck!

These new “inspectors” will be interns, the exact nature of what they may or may not do will more than likely still be determined by the Department as there are legal implications for the Department should any of these inspectors operate outside of their legal ambit which will include the level of training they receive.

I take it the DEL will communicate this to its clients / stakeholders / partners.

The involvement of the Advisory Council is not clear in this matter and I take it they are fully involved or fully informed at the very least.

## WILL THEY BE TRAINED?

Well of course they must be trained before being sent out to do inspections. But I would imagine that every single intern that has been employed or will be employed has some qualification in either mechanical engineering, electrical or chemical engineering or one of the identified qualifications required for the post.

This however does not mean anything until further training takes place in regard to their Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the OHSA together with the relevant Regulations.

SANS, I would imagine, would not be a factor now as understanding and applying the legislation will keep each one of them busy for some time.

It would be inconceivable to even consider sending out “new recruits” without them being trained. So let's take a step back then and look at this a little closer.

No employer, according to OHSA, may allow any employee to do any work unless they have been trained according to Section 8 and various other specific Regulations. This is no different for the inspectorate. You can hold them and the DEL to the same standards that you are held to, as they too are “an employer in their own right”!

At this stage, they may have no experience related to soft skills training, and the training requirements mentioned above may take anything from three (3) to six (6) months even if they try to fast-track the training.

I cannot see them doing any complex incident investigations, and any training they receive may only focus on the less serious type of incidents that have been reported.

They may of course even decide to train up a group of intern inspectors to do only low level incident investigations to deal with any backlogs

they may have in any of their provinces. If the interns will be doing any incident investigations in the first twelve months (12), will it be up to the senior management of the DEL?

## MUST THEY HAVE A CERTIFICATE?

By now, all employers and users are clear on what to expect from the DEL inspectors when they visit their workplaces.

Inspectors must have a formal identification, which, if not produced, means that the employer or user does not need to allow the inspector or any person accompanying him/her, onto their premises.

Yes, an inspector may allow someone to accompany him/her and anything they do can only be done while the inspector is in their presence.

Take note however, that if the new inspector is in possession of an inspector's identification as indicated by the OHSA (Act 85 of 1993), then such person has the authority to operate on their own with the full might of OHSA behind him/her and may make decisions for which that inspector and the DEL will be held liable and possibly accountable.

You may phone the DEL local, provincial or national offices to confirm the veracity of the identity of the person in front of you in relation to their identification provided.

Should no immediate confirmation be made available, it is up to the employer to decide what action to take.

Impostors are real and so is crime. Not only is it a matter that a robbery could take place, but it could also be a matter of life and death. It is well within your rights to do what you feel necessary.

Do remember however that the inspector will be in communication with the employer a week or more before the actual inspection or investigation and such issues can also be resolved at that stage.

## WILL THEY BE FULL INSPECTORS?

This remains to be seen and as indicated, a full inspector will be trained in all aspects but may in many respects lack the actual practical experience if they were employed directly from a tertiary institution.

If they do not have a tertiary qualification and only have a matric or a grade 12, well then that changes the equation somewhat and this may just be a springboard opportunity for each of them.

Nevertheless, as indicated, an inspector must be able to produce evidence in terms of the OHSA. OHSA Section 28(2) and (3) says:

(2) Each inspector designated under subsection (1) shall be **furnished with a certificate** signed by or on behalf of the Minister and stating that he has been designated as an inspector:

**\*\*Provided that if his designation as inspector is limited to any particular function or functions, his certificate shall state such limitation.**

(3) "Whenever an inspector performs a function under this Act in the presence of any person affected thereby **the inspector shall on demand** by such person produce to him the certificate."

They will have serious limitations while performing their functions and will only get better with experience over time. They will be on a steep learning curve.

You should however be aware that if they carry proof that they are operating as inspectors, their "decisions" carry the full weight of the law. In this case, failure to comply will have repercussions for your company.

Similarly, as noted in Sections 29, 30, 31 they may perform certain functions that they may be required to provide a rationale (reason) for at a later stage by way of Section 35, should you decide to appeal any decision of the inspector.

#### **CAN THEY SERVE PROHIBITION NOTICES OR ANY NOTICE FOR THAT MATTER?**

They may do so if they carry proof that they are inspectors, and where that proof does not show any limitations. However, that said, I would be very surprised if they were allowed to serve a Prohibition Notice. In this case, the ramifications for the DEL could be very serious if, for example, processes are interfered with that requires the employer to do a staged shutdown, and where the inspector demands an immediate shutdown, or even where the inspector him/herself decides to press stop buttons or the like.

The golden rule is that the inspector allows the employer to do the required shutdown and touches absolutely nothing on site.

The Prohibition Notice applies immediately and the Prohibition Notice remains relevant even if there is an Appeal. In other words, what has been prohibited remains prohibited until the Appeal has been processed.

Time is of the essence and that is exactly where the problem will be for an employer who loses money on any equipment standing idle, while they attempt to get the matter resolved. If the employer feels that the inspector was not justified, or made

an unreasonable decision in serving a Prohibition Notice for something raised in Section 30, the Chief Inspector will need to attend to the Appeal from the employer as a priority, despite the timeframe given.

Regarding other Notices such as the Contravention Notice and the Improvement Notice, I would imagine that the new Inspector would be allowed to serve them after extensive training and under mentorship/supervision until satisfactory progress is made by the intern.

These Notices will also be subject to Appeal should the employer feel that the "decision" of the inspector was not justified.

#### **WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS AN EMPLOYER?**

As long as you as an employer complies with the requirements of OHS, its Regulations and where required, SANS, then the employer should not be concerned.

There is possibly one additional area to factor in. If an employer is not able to comply for whatever reason with any Regulation, then the employer / user can apply for an exemption by following the processes indicated.

As indicated earlier, any decision of an inspector can be appealed, should the employer feel the decision of the inspector was not justified.

#### **THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE**

Positive aspect or take away? There will be about 20,000 new trained persons, who will become inspectors on successful completion of their training.

These inspectors (the majority of them) on leaving the DEL eventually after their two years, will be able to join organisations in South Africa with a certain level of experience and competence that in the long run can only benefit the employer, employees and citizens of the country.

#### **REFERENCES:**

1. <https://www.bing.com/search?q=minister+of+employment+and+labour+introduces+20+000+new+inspectors+that+will+join+her+department+&form=ANNT1&refid=68e78d4654074b2b95a7ecb368dd8dcb&pc=LCTS#:~:text=announces%20internship%20pr o%2%80%A6-www.labour.gov.za/the%2Dminister %2Dof%2Demployment%2Dand%2Dlabour%2Dannounces%2Dinternshi%2%80%A6,-Was%20 this%20helpful.>

## **INSPECTIONS BY DEL INSPECTORS**

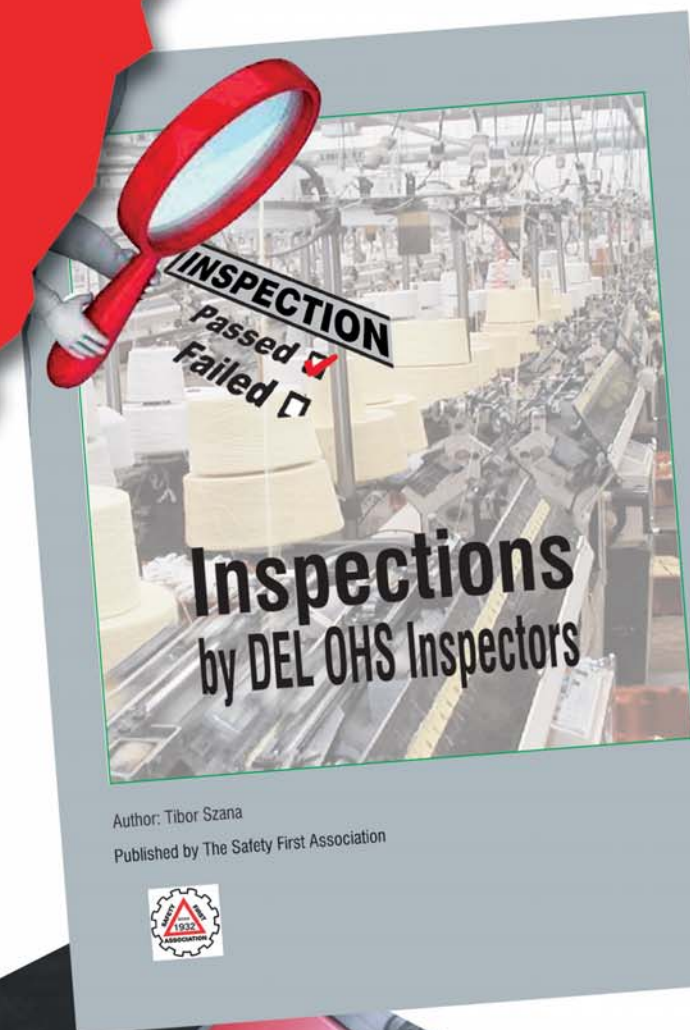
Does your company have a pending inspection by the Department of Employment and Labour?

Do you want to know how to prepare for such an inspection?

If your answer is YES to any of the above you will need this book to guide you through the process.

Published by the  
Safety First Association

To order a copy:  
Telephone/WhatsApp: +27 83 266 6662  
Email: [debbie@safety1st.co.za](mailto:debbie@safety1st.co.za)  
[www.safety1st.co.za/publications](http://www.safety1st.co.za/publications)





**Personal Protective Equipment  
PPE Conference 2026  
10-11 March 2026  
Emperors Conference Centre, Johannesburg**



## From the '90s to now: Alcohol still drives the crisis on our roads



Rhys Evans, Managing Director of ALCO-Safe

Drinking and driving has been one of South Africa's most persistent and deadly public health and safety challenges. While we have made some legislative strides over the past three decades, the cultural acceptance of alcohol — and its devastating impact on road safety — continues to claim thousands of lives each year.

In the 1990s, it wasn't uncommon to see people getting behind the wheel, with seemingly little concern, after enjoying drinks over lunch. Today, we have stricter drink-driving laws, better knowledge of alcohol's effects, and more vehicles on the road. And yet, fatal alcohol-related crashes remain alarmingly high. South Africa still has one of the highest rates of road fatalities in the world.

So, what has changed, and what hasn't? The answer lies in the complex relationship between social norms, economic pressures, mental health struggles, and enforcement failures.

To understand where we're going, we need to look back — and acknowledge how far we still have to go.

### THEN VS NOW - A SHIFTING CULTURE OF ALCOHOL USE

In the 1990s, alcohol was widely accepted in public and professional life. Drinking during the day was considered normal, even at business meetings, and few questioned the health risks or safety implications. The legal Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limit for drivers was 0.35mg per litre, significantly higher than today's thresholds.

Since then, regulations have become stricter. Today, the BAC limit is 0.24mg/l for general drivers and just 0.10mg/l for professional drivers such as taxi, bus, and truck drivers. This means more than one or two 300ml beers at 5% alcohol or one to two glasses of wine at 120ml in an hour can put general drivers over the limit, while even a single drink might be too much for professional drivers.

Public knowledge about the dangers of alcohol has increased but paradoxically, so has consumption. South Africa now ranks fifth globally for alcohol use among drinkers, with the average drinker consuming 28.9 litres of pure alcohol per year. Even more concerning is the 59% of drinkers who binge drink, consuming more than 60 grams of pure alcohol in one sitting at least once a month.

While legislation has evolved, the enforcement and cultural mindset haven't kept up — and that's where the real problem lies.

### LAWS WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT FALL FLAT

South Africa's drink-driving crisis illustrates that laws without enforcement are largely ineffective.

Despite lowered BAC limits, 27.1% of fatal crashes still involve alcohol. In many of these incidents, drivers are found to have BAC levels up to three times the legal limit.

Why? Because without consistent roadside checks, visible policing, and meaningful consequences, the law loses its power to deter. Meanwhile, rising unemployment, poverty, and untreated mental health conditions have created an environment where alcohol becomes a form of escape, often at the expense of public safety.

Stricter rules cannot compensate for systemic failures, and without a firm foundation of enforcement and education, lowering the legal limit does little more than look good on paper.

### CHANGING CULTURAL NORMS TAKES TIME

Shifting cultural norms doesn't happen overnight. Experts agree that a long-term approach is needed, one that combines short-term enforcement with long-term public education, starting with schools. Teaching children from the age of 12 about road safety, the effects of alcohol, and the social unacceptability of drink-driving plants seeds that grow into lasting change.

In time, these youth become adult drivers who carry that awareness with them. But that's a 20- to 30-year journey, requiring consistent investment in school programmes, national awareness campaigns, and public reinforcement. In the meantime, consistent enforcement ensures that the dangers of drink-driving are taken seriously today — not just tomorrow.

### CLAMPING DOWN WITH CONSISTENCY

Stricter enforcement of drink-driving laws in South Africa could benefit from approaches used in countries with proven road safety records. For example, Australia's random breath testing programme, where police conduct breathalyser checks without prior warning, has been successful in cutting down alcohol-related crashes. South Africa needs to introduce a nationwide alcohol testing programme built on three core foundations. First, proper training and integrity in law enforcement are essential. Officers must be taught not only how to operate breathalysers accurately and consistently but also to understand the human cost of drink-driving. Measures like body cameras and AI-backed monitoring systems can help reinforce transparency and reduce opportunities for bribery.

Second, roadblocks need to be strategically deployed in high-risk areas—such as near nightlife hotspots during peak hours—and remain visible and

consistent to serve as an effective deterrent. Clear testing targets per location can help ensure accountability and maximise impact.

Finally, reliable equipment and ongoing maintenance are critical. Without regularly calibrated and serviced breathalysers, the credibility of testing collapses, and the deterrent effect quickly fades.

In terms of penalties, South Africa already imposes significant fines and punishments for drink-driving offences. Drivers with a BAC above 0.05% face fines ranging from R2 000 to R120 000, with repeat offenders risking up to six years in prison.

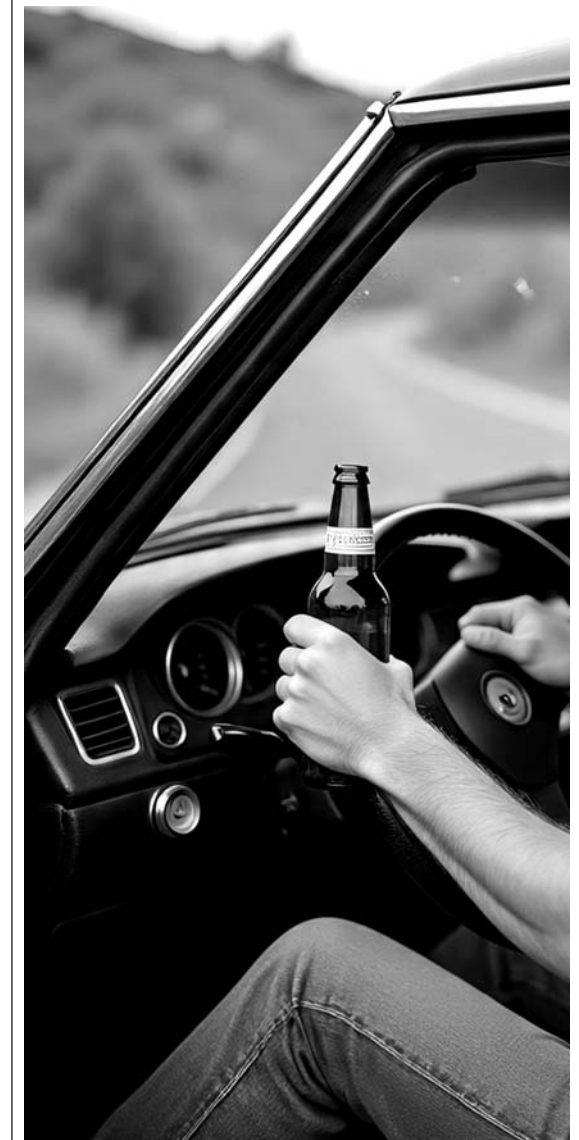
First-time offenders could face licence suspension for up to one year, while repeat offenders could face longer suspensions or even permanent revocation. If the offence leads to injury or death, the charges can escalate to culpable homicide or murder, leading to harsher penalties.

In an effort to help curb this, introducing mandatory post-offence education measures could effectively reduce drink-driving fatalities and make South Africa's roads safer.

### FROM CIGARETTES TO STEERING WHEELS - CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS

South Africa has done it before. In 2001, smoking in public spaces was banned under the Tobacco Products Control Act, a change that, at the time, was met with resistance. But with steady enforcement, education, and shifting public attitudes, smoking in restaurants, malls, and offices became not just illegal but socially unacceptable.

The same transformation is possible with drink-driving. It's not enough to change the laws. We need to change the culture. It needs to become not just illegal to drink and drive but unthinkable.



## ARE YOU MEETING ALL OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES?



*Occutech is an inspection authority for the work and business environment surrounds approved by the Department of Employment and Labour*

Occutech is able to recognise, evaluate and recommend cost-effective controls of occupational and environmental hazards

• Indoor air quality assessment • Risk assessors • Occupational hygiene • Environmental consultants

**PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!**

<http://www.occutech.co.za>  
Email: [occutech@occutech.co.za](mailto:occutech@occutech.co.za)  
Tel: (031) 206-1244



# TEST BEFORE ENTRY

to ensure **safer** working environments

*trust the*  
alcohol & drug testing specialists



## LION ALCONTROL® SMART CONNECT UNMANNED BREATHALYSER

Can be used as a simple voluntary test breathalyser or fitted to an entrance controlled gate or door to test persons before entering a site

## ALCOBLOW® RAPID TEST CONTACT-FREE BREATHALYSER

**The strongest and fastest breath alcohol tester on the market**

AlcoBLOW® Rapid Test requires the smallest breath sample and ensures accurate results first time, every time. Results are obtained within seconds. Very economical operation, no disposable mouthpieces are required.



## URINE TESTING

Test accurately for up to 10 drug types. Test results are available within 5 minutes



## JUSCHECK

A simple to use screen device for the detection of drug abuse in saliva. Test accurately for 6 drugs in 5 minutes



## SOTOXA™ MOBILE TEST SYSTEM

A portable system designed for rapid screening for drug abuse

- ✓ Easy to use - just 3 steps
- ✓ Rapid oral fluid collection
- ✓ THC sensitivity of 25 ng/mL
- ✓ Compact, portable & lightweight



## LION ALCOMETER® 700

Developed to exceed the latest EN 15964 standards for police breathalysers. This ensures superior accuracy and trouble free CCMA & disciplinary cases. Multiple modes of operation: mouthpiece test, cup test or sniffer mode



- Products you can trust
- Expert support
- Legal advice
- Excellent after-sales service

**PROVEN TO BRING ABOUT A RAPID & CONSIDERABLE REDUCTION IN ACCIDENTS, INJURIES & LOSSES**

Find out why over **5000 businesses** trust our products & expert support & service

➤ Call +27 12 343 8114 or visit [www.alcosafe.co.za](http://www.alcosafe.co.za) for more information

# Accountability: Back to basics



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

Such a basic concept shouldn't be so complex. Many years ago, while giving a presentation to representatives of the Chinese Finance Ministry my translator hit a bump as she attempted to translate something I was saying about accountability. I was a young consultant, fresh from a chemical industry career, and like all my fellow practitioners, I spoke accountability as a first language. I found it fascinating that a concept so basic and fundamental could seem so complex and difficult to understand in this foreign land and culture.

But that was long ago, and I am much wiser now. I now understand that it was never basic, never simple, and never easy to understand. Not in China and not anywhere. But darn it, it should be!

A recent article about five factors affecting accountability triggered a search of what resources are available on the internet about accountability.

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

A search of images on Google yields even more mind-numbing visual representations. There are deming cycles, pyramids, wheels, triangles, question marks. It looks incredibly complex. None of these materials, however, clarify what accountability is or what it takes to establish it.

## WHAT IT IS, OR SHOULD BE

### The very definition can undermine accountability

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

The negativity underlying this definition is disheartening. If this is what accountability is, who on earth would want to accept it?

After all, these are just synonyms for blame. Blame is the single biggest force driving efforts to duck, avoid, evade, divert, or subvert accountability.

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

A healthier definition might be Webster's, which defines accountability as, '... an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions ...'

This is a little better, but still smacks of blame.

### A positive perspective change everything

The preferred definition that I have used over the

years is, '... the act of determining responsibility for the results of actions – as a foundation for ensuring future success ...'

The differences should not be too subtle:

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

This definition can be assigned to an individual, a group or an organisation. It can be assigned by a second party, or it can be embraced by those performing the actions themselves.

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

## THE BASIC ELEMENTS ARE IN FACT VERY SIMPLE

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

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

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

Responsibility + Authority = Accountability (see Figure 1)

It is indeed that simple. But even in this there are layers that make it more complicated.

## RESPONSIBILITY

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

The complicating factors are: Responsibility for results must be unique in that more than one individual:

- Who is responsible for doing something means neither will be accountable.



Table 1

- Each job requires clearly defined performance metrics for each responsibility.
- Processes are required for setting reasonable, mutually agreed targets for those metrics.
- Mechanisms for capturing and reporting timely, accurate and relevant actual results against those targets within responsibility centres are essential.
- Most of all, responsibility needs to be aligned with skills and competencies.

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

## COMMON 'RESPONSIBILITY' GAPS IN ACCOUNTABILITY EFFORTS

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

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

- Responsibility is ad hoc, anecdotal, and casual, a

result of long outdated (sometimes decades old) job descriptions. There is no time for stuff like job descriptions. Managers just assume the employee knows what the job is today. More importantly, they assume that the employee sees it the same way, which is rarely the case, especially when something goes wrong.

- Responsibility is shared, or worse, usurped by the very manager who would look for accountability. Often the manager intervenes and takes on part of the role themselves, or directs closely on what to do, when and how that the manager effectively assumes responsibility for the actions, and by extension accountability for the results.

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

Performance measurement might just be the fastest growing dimension of government management thinking today, but it is still in early stages and most government jobs have few metrics, and fewer still relevant.

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

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

- Performance reporting in municipal government is still in embryonic stages compared to the private sector, with only the most basic level of responsibility accounting in many government organisations.
- Many still have the “I don’t need financial reports until September because I have lots of budget for the year” attitude, but even with monthly reporting it is just dollars against dollars, with only very rare ability to match spending with service performance.
- The competency gap is a factor, not because staff are incompetent but because the world is changing so much and so fast that it is hard to find people with exactly the right skills for the current tasks, technologies, service expectations and resources.

It can be harder still to take the time to pull workers out of the daily whirlwind to make sure they are properly trained as the changes constantly shift what work is done and how.

How many of these might apply in your organisation today?

#### AUTHORITY

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

- I must have sufficient resources for the tasks.
- I must have appropriate resources.

#### COMMON ‘AUTHORITY’ GAPS IN ACCOUNTABILITY EFFORTS

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

It is not just a simple case of not giving enough money or people. It too can become more complex, with the most common situations described below.

- Cutting my staff but not adjusting expectations for results.
- Moving up my deadlines without recognising that there is a trade-off - without additional resources, something won’t get done.

- Giving me additional tasks or pulling my staff off on other jobs without recognising the impact on outcomes.
- Giving me outdated, ineffective or inappropriate resources and expecting them to do the job.
- Expecting me to deliver but not letting me hire/train/develop the right competencies in my team (or myself) essential to the work; and
- Setting goals that require 2015 technologies but give me 1990 systems to achieve them. Any of these looks familiar?

#### WHO IS MOST OFTEN ACCOUNTABLE BUT LEAST OFTEN HELD ACCOUNTABLE?

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

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

All these things, which all relate to the details above for the two dimensions of responsibility and authority, are ultimately the responsibility of management.

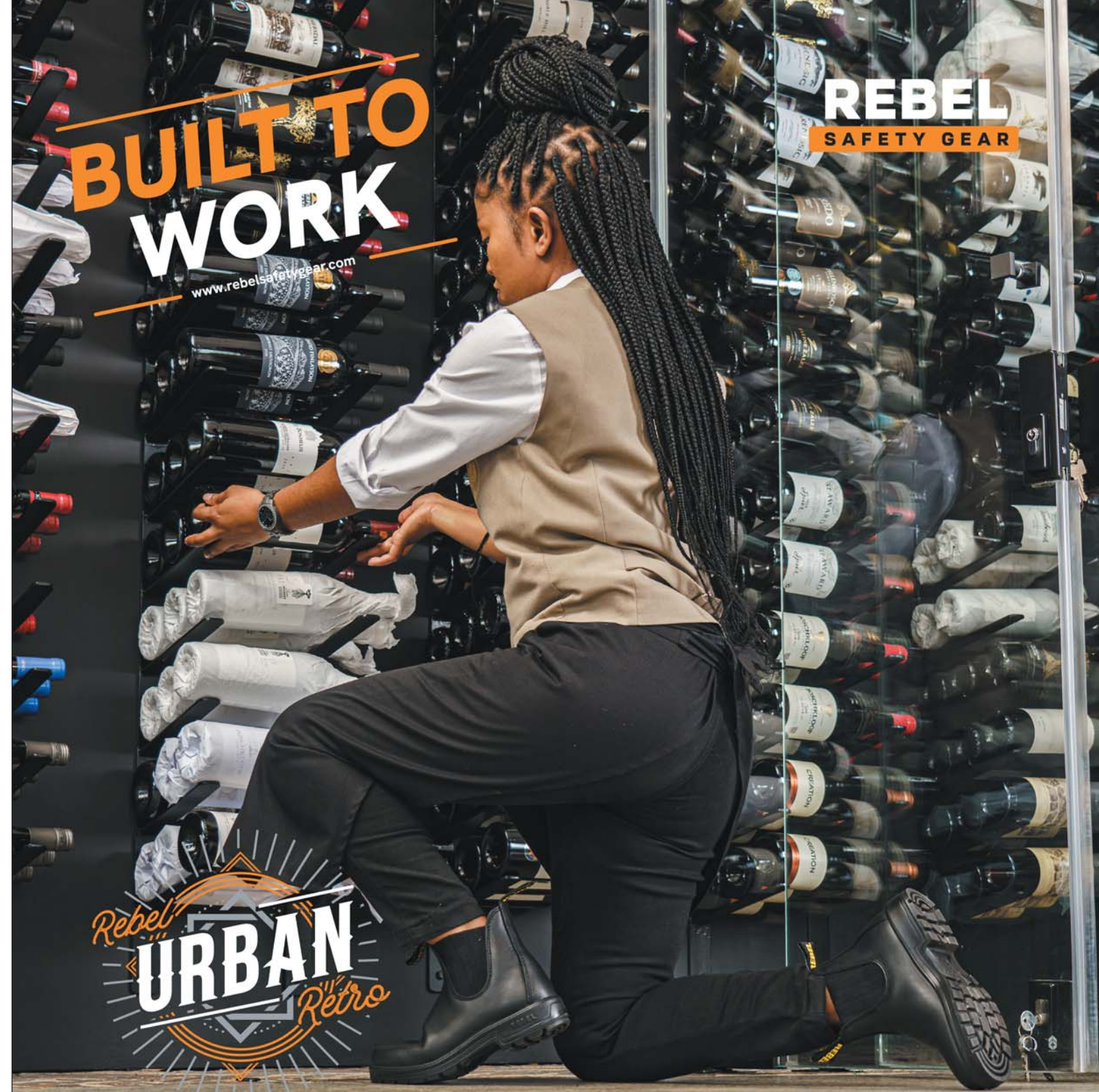
That doesn’t mean employees can blame it all on their bosses and not be accountable for results at all. It just means that they can only be accountable when their bosses have done their jobs properly in the first place.

(Sounds like management heresy, doesn’t it? But I think it lines up perfectly with what Drucker said so long ago and so much better.)

#### RECAP

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

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



**REBEL**  
SAFETY GEAR

Rebel  
**URBAN**  
Retro

Not all boots need a steel toe cap and when you find a boot that is as comfortable and capable outdoors as it is indoors, you will never want to take them off.

Our URBAN Retro Chelsea and Vellie are designed for the modern professional who needs to look sharp and stay comfortable on the move. Both styles are occupational boots that combine timeless craftsmanship with rugged performance.

Both are suited to someone who spends all day on their feet, especially in hospitality-type environments, outdoor environments such as farming as well as light industrial environments.

With a dual density outsole, it ensures comfort, durability and a specially designed tread system for maximum traction and minimal foot fatigue.

Engineered to go anywhere with a premium 2,5mm water resistant leather upper, ensuring that your feet are protected from the elements.



Classic  
**CHELSEA**



Urban  
**VELLIES**



**Personal Protective Equipment**  
**PPE Conference 2026**  
10-11 March 2026  
Emperors Conference Centre, Johannesburg





# Mental health in humanitarian emergencies: *The role of the built environment*

Dr Mohlomi Raiiile  
Department of  
Construction Management  
Nelson Mandela  
University

The World Federation for Mental Health commemorated World Mental Health Day, an international day for raising mental health awareness and advocacy against social stigma on 10 October. This year's campaign emphasised the urgent need to support the mental health and psychosocial needs of individuals affected by humanitarian emergencies, such as natural disasters, conflicts, and public health emergencies.

Humanitarian emergencies are usually unforeseen and occur suddenly, undermining environmental, social, and economic systems. They disrupt components of the built environment, such as buildings, transport systems, food systems, bridges, water, energy networks, and telecommunication networks. During these heightened risks, both non-human and human life are affected, resulting in the displacement of families, loss of homes, social fragmentation, and often causing thousands of deaths and injuries. These events are inherently stressful, and the distress creates a continuum of trauma that begins immediately after disasters and persists for extended periods during and after emergencies, subsequently evolving into chronic mental-health conditions for most individuals.

Addressing mental-health issues during emergencies demands multidisciplinary interventions extending beyond food aid or medical relief. Some interventions can be preventative and, to a greater extent, controlled through human efforts to protect and to curb the impacts of humanitarian emergencies.

It is against this backdrop that the role of the built environment becomes an important intervention to ensure the sustainability and well-being of individuals during emergencies. The built environment, which includes all human-made surroundings, plays a pivotal role in restoring dignity and stability through the design of resilient infrastructure.

Building resilient infrastructure enables societies to adapt positively following humanitarian emergencies caused by disasters. Resilient infrastructure systems combine solid infrastructure, governance and institutional frameworks, and community values that promote recovery and empower communities.

Resilient infrastructure is both a physical shield and a psychosocial support system. Therefore, the built environment must prioritise long-term sustainability to safeguard communities against future crises. Integrating resilience, sustainability, and mental-health awareness into humanitarian reconstruction offers a pathway to healing both the built environment and the human spirit.

The approach to building resilience considers that the built environment can catalyse some

humanitarian emergencies, particularly those caused by climate-induced natural disasters. The building and construction sector accounts for roughly 30–40% energy consumption, about 37% of global carbon emissions, and an estimated 20–30% of global fresh-water use. These figures underscore the sector's central role in climate change and resource depletion, positioning the built environment as both a major contributor to and a potential mitigator of the planet's environmental crisis. The built environment also occupies a paradoxical position. Infrastructure can facilitate humanitarian relief and environmental protection but can also sustain inequality or even enable human-induced conflicts by paving the way to conflict-induced humanitarian emergencies such as wars. The responsibility of the built environment, therefore, extends beyond construction; it demands ethical responsibility as both an enabler of human activity and an advocate for environmental stewardship. However, the focus of this article is on designing resilient infrastructure to retard the impacts of humanitarian emergencies and to also curb current occurring disasters.

Designing resilient infrastructure that can withstand disasters caused by floods and droughts is achievable. By integrating low-carbon technologies, optimising resource efficiency, and adopting a whole life cycle approach, the built environment can significantly reduce its carbon footprint and resource consumption. Resilient, climate-adaptive design not only mitigates disaster risks but also ensures user comfort and well-being even during emergencies. Incorporating renewable energy systems, passive design, nature-based solutions, emergency alert systems, and digital life-cycle assessment tools complements sustainability goals and enhances both environmental and human resilience. Properly designed environments can mitigate psychosocial stressors, whereas neglecting them undermines the fundamental human right to safety, health and provision of basic needs. Community-based psychosocial support interventions complemented by the built environment enhance safety, health, social support systems, and livelihoods, thereby fostering recovery and reducing the risk of long-term mental disorders.

Disaster exposure interacts with displacement, income loss, unemployment, bereavement, and financial instability, which intensify psychological distress. These factors yield both immediate and long-term effects on mental well-being through socioeconomic disruption and social dislocation.

Therefore, the role of the built environment, which includes all human-made surroundings, is to protect and serve its users through designing for resilience.

# Does your organisation's annual profit include protecting employees?



Ehi Iden  
an Occupational Health  
and Safety Management  
Consultant in Africa,  
President of OSHAfrica

Every organisation was set up to make a profit, but responsible organisations were set up to make profit and protect their employees' safety, health and wellbeing throughout the entire journey towards profitability.

Duty-of-Care refers to employers responsibility to create a safe and healthy workplace for employees to thrive. Once the Duty-of-Care is established, employers must move onto establishing "employees involvement". Yes, it is about employees' safety, health and wellbeing. Both employers and employees must be involved in ensuring safe work processes, policies and more are adhered to. This social partnership will both deliver profit and protect employees in the workplace.

Sadly, what we see mostly and of recent is contrary to the picture I just painted above. Organisations want to profit without making adequate provisions for the safety, health and wellbeing of employees. Such systems are never sustainable because you have placed profit in direct competition with safety, health and wellbeing which will surely yield you very adverse results. Profits should be enabled by the safety health and wellbeing of employees, this is where we find long lasting and sustainable business processes. Organisations can only make profit at the presence of a healthy and safe work population irrespective of the demography.

While we are all quick to declare annual profits which I have nothing against, it is important to first take cognisance of the following questions, and of course find the answers:

- How many people spilt their blood through workplace accidents and injuries within the year under review
- What is the cost of these accidents or injuries to the employees, the employees' families and colleagues who witnessed the accidents?
- What are the possible claims? Has compensation been paid for this? Are the employees satisfied? Are they still able to work? Or the accident has finally incapacitated them. If yes, what is the cost of such incapacitation? Has it been paid completely?
- What is the mental health cost to the employee who is the primary victim? Has it been computed and adequately paid for?
- What is the mental cost to the employees' immediate family? Who are the secondary victims of this accident? Has it been costed and family members adequately engaged on how to cope with this occurrence in going forward?

Most times what we see are the injuries and perhaps amputations. We are not always able to see the mental health injuries that come with such amputation and its resulting costs. This is where the burden lies.

There is an urgent need to rethink, not just compensation but a humanistic template for computing the cost of accidents and workplace illness. It is only when we rightly calculate these costs that we can get the exact organisation's annual profit.

Does it look like something you may want to consider before your next annual profit?

## OSHAfrica at the International Vision Zero Conference 2025 - Uganda, Kampala



Uganda hosted the International Vision Zero Conference, 27-29 August 2025: "From Commitment to Action: Realising Vision Zero in Africa".

There many insightful sessions which aimed to contribute to the global effort of enhancing safety and health standards.



# Whole body vibration (WBV)



Dr Shaun Ramroop is the Head of the Department of Environmental Health at Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth), South Africa. He also operates an independent practice as a registered Occupational Hygienist and Environmental Health Practitioner. With more than three decades of multidisciplinary experience across both the public and private sectors, Dr Ramroop has made substantial contributions to the advancement of occupational and environmental health and safety primarily in the domain of Occupational Hygiene and Human Factors and Ergonomics (HFE).

## KEY MESSAGE:

When workers use machinery or tools that produce WBV, they may be exposed to harmful levels of WBV. Reducing either the vibration exposure or the duration of use can help lower the risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs associated with WBV).

## WHAT IS WHOLE-BODY VIBRATION?

WBV is vibration transmitted to the whole body by the surface supporting it, for example, through a seat or the floor.

WBV is commonly experienced by drivers, operators and passengers in vehicles and machines when travelling over uneven surfaces.

WBV is not restricted to seated work like driving and may be experienced while standing, for example, standing on platforms attached to a concrete crushing plant.

WBV includes sharp impacts like shocks and jolts.

The effects of vibration are complex. How vibration passes through the body depends on posture.

Exposure to WBV may:

- cause discomfort
- reduce performance
- cause health effects, and
- aggravate pre-existing conditions.

## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO WHOLE-BODY VIBRATION?

The longer a worker is exposed to WBV, the greater the risk of health effects and musculoskeletal disorders.

The most commonly reported disorder is lower-back pain.

- neck and shoulder problems
- herniated discs, and
- early degeneration of the spine.

Exposure to WBV may contribute to other health effects, including:

- cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, endocrine and metabolic changes
- digestive problems
- reproductive organ damage in both men and women, and
- impairment of vision, balance or both.

Exposure to WBV may cause discomfort, fatigue and other problems when work activities are being carried out. This could lead to workplace incidents.



There is some evidence that workers who are exposed to WBV and noise at the same time are more likely to suffer hearing loss than workers exposed to the same level of noise alone. Exposure to both vibration and noise is also understood to increase musculoskeletal problems.

## FACTORS THAT CAN INCREASE HEALTH EFFECTS

Working posture, size and proportions of the body, muscle tone, physical workload, and individual factors like age, pre-existing disorders and muscle force can make the health effects of WBV worse.

Operating mobile plant can also strain the back, shoulders and neck, which can be caused by:

- prolonged sitting in constrained or poor postures
- frequent twisting of the spine
- adopting twisted head postures
- frequent lifting and material handling e.g. delivery drivers
- traumatic injuries
- unexpected movements
- cold work temperatures, and stress.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO WHOLE-BODY VIBRATION

Factors that can impact on WBV exposure include:

- seat design, suspension and maintenance

- cab layout, design and orientation
- task design and work organisation, and
- lighting and visibility.

The main factors influencing WBV exposure in vehicles and mobile plant include:

- resistance forces, rough roads and surface conditions, e.g. mobile plant with scraper blades
- road construction and maintenance
- vehicle type and design
- age and condition of vehicle
- maintenance of vehicle suspension systems
- vehicle speed, driver skills and awareness
- vehicle activity, and
- engine vibration.

## ELIMINATING AND MINIMISING VIBRATION EXPOSURE

Exposure to WBV may be controlled:

- at the source
- along the paths of the vibration, and
- at the position of the worker.

Minimising WBV exposure usually requires a combination of control measures. Control measures, listed in order of the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest (hierarchy of control), include:

- modifying the process to eliminate the task or the risk

- redesigning the task, vehicles or machines
- buying machines or vehicles designed to minimise vibration transmitted to the operator
- improving and maintaining road surfaces
- implementing a seat maintenance programme to ensure vibration-damped seats are maintained in good condition
- implementing speed limits
- implementing regular work breaks, posture changes or job rotation
- providing training, information and supervision on adjusting and using equipment, e.g. seats, and
- implementing safe work procedure

## DO YOU NEED TO MEASURE VIBRATION?

Measuring WBV can be difficult and complex. If workers feel WBV is uncomfortable, it is likely their exposure to vibration is reaching levels which could affect their health.

It can also indicate a WBV problem requiring controls to be put in place.

## ARE THERE MANDATORY EXPOSURE LEVELS?

Yes, South Africa has adopted European Union levels, which are contained in Table 1, of the Physical Agents Regulations, as contained in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act no 85 of 1993).

## REFERENCES

Safe Work Australia [www.swa.gov.au](http://www.swa.gov.au)

Table 1, of the Physical Agents Regulations, as contained in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act no 85 of 1993)

Physical agent	Action level	Time weighted average OEL	Unit	Duration
Cold stress equivalent chill temperature or ECT	-	10	degrees Celsius °C	4-hours
Heat stress wet-bulb globe temperature index	27	30	degrees Celsius °C	1-hour
Hand-arm vibration	2,5	5	metres per square second m/s <sup>2</sup>	8-hours
Whole-body vibration	0,5	1,15	metres per square second m/s <sup>2</sup>	8-hours
Ultraviolet radiation	-	0,1	microwatt per square centimetre μW/cm <sup>2</sup>	8-hours
Infrared radiation	-	10	milliwatt per square centimetre mW/cm <sup>2</sup>	1000 seconds

## In Loving Memory of Ernest John Wallis (Ernie)

*A life of faith, service, and leadership*

Ernest John Wallis, known to many simply as Ernie, lived a life defined by faith, service, and commitment. Born in Durban to Arthur and Rita Wallis, one of four brothers, Ernie believed deeply in the importance of living a life guided by God. Though humble about his own imperfections, he strove to set an example of strength, love, and faithfulness in all areas of life.

Ernie began his career as a police constable and later married his first wife, Lynne, with whom he had two children, Michelle and Justin. Alongside family life, he excelled on the soccer field, captaining Durban City and the Umtata Bush Bucks, and leading Natal in the Currie Cup. His skills were recognised internationally with a trial offer from Tottenham Hotspur in England, yet he chose to remain in South Africa, placing family first.

Professionally, Ernie's impact was equally remarkable. After serving as Financial Manager at Illovo Sugar, he founded Spartan Workwear, earning a reputation for integrity, vision, and excellence. Life brought new joy when he met Elma, and together they later married and built a thriving



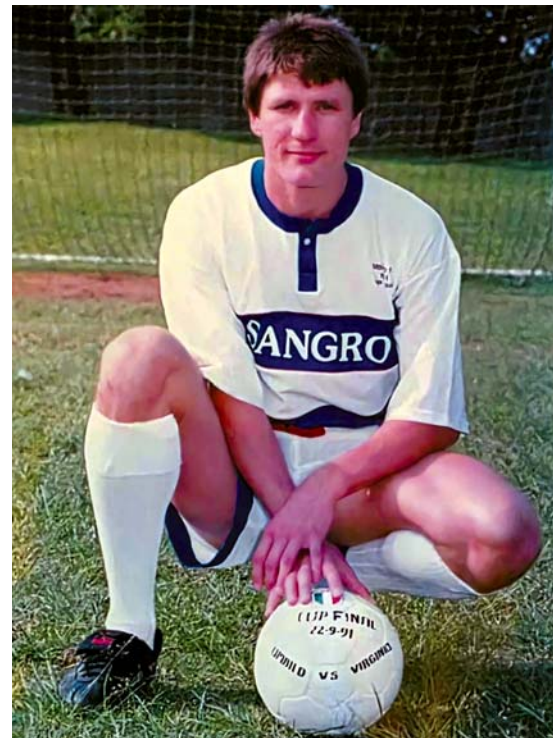
business — Sheq Safety — with the support of long-time colleague Lindiwe Kubheka. Their partnership was one of shared vision, determination, and purpose. Under their leadership, the company became a trusted name in the PPE industry, and those who knew Ernie remember him as a mentor, advisor, and “other father” to many. His guidance was always rooted in honesty, care, and generosity.

Under their joint leadership and shared vision, Ernie and

Elma guided Sheq Safety to become a trusted supplier of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across both local and international markets. Committed to quality and growth, they also launched another SABS-approved manufacturing facility within the Sheq Safety group, led by Lindiwe Kubheka, further expanding the company's capabilities and impact.

Ernie's leadership was never about the spotlight. He believed in consistency, hard work, and treating people well. He was a steady hand to his colleagues, a mentor to his staff, and a pillar of strength to his family. Above all, he lived by example. He passed away still doing what he loved, among those he trusted, in service of something greater than himself. While his presence will be deeply missed, his legacy will be felt for generations to come.

Rest in peace, Ernie. You led with courage, lived with purpose, and loved with quiet strength.



## Women in Mining:

*Sheq Safety leading the way*



Safety Council (MHSC) highlighted the urgent need for gender-appropriate PPE. This led to the first Guideline for a Mandatory Code of Practice for PPE for Women in Mining in 2015, updated in 2023, setting standards for safety equipment designed specifically for women.

Sheq Safety has been at the forefront of this movement where, even before the regulations became official, SHEQ Safety had partnered with Glencore Mining West, pioneering solutions that catered to Women in Mining.

Setting Sheq Safety apart from the rest is its leadership: co-founders and owners Lindiwe Khubeka and Elma Wallis bring not just expertise, but lived experience and understanding of the challenges women face in a male-dominated industry, where their personal insight has driven the creation of a comprehensive PPE catalogue, tailored for women—from head to toe.

Sheq Safety is more than just a supplier; they are a vertically, integrated and innovating company, delivering bespoke solutions that ensure women feel not only safe and comfortable, but also empowered within the workplace.

By engaging directly with Women in Mining committees and industry forums, Sheq Safety continually refines its designs and expands its offerings. The result? PPE that isn't just functional—but designed with women in mind.

At its core, Sheq Safety's success story is about vision, empathy, and action. The two women co-owners have made it their mission to understand and meet the needs of their customers, keeping them not just ahead of the curve, but setting the curve for the future of women in mining.



Women officially began working underground in South African mines in 1996, following the repeal of the Mines and Works Act and the introduction of the Mine Health and Safety Act.

This historic shift opened doors for women in all aspects of the mining industry and over the years, initiatives like the Mining Charter set targets for female participation, leading to a steadily growing increase in the presence and participation of Women in Mining, since the early 2000s.

A critical milestone in creating a safer, more inclusive mining environment came in 2012, when the Mine Health and

## Understanding the role of baseline risk assessments



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

The term a “Baseline Risk Assessment” is arising frequently in recent times, but few understand what it is and its growing role in the risk management field.

The Baseline Risk Assessment term is not defined in the SANS/ISO 31000 Risk Management Standards documentation. But it is an undefined legal requirement for clients wanting construction work to be performed, to prepare such a project risk assessment for their construction work contractors under the Occupational Health & Safety Act’s Construction Regulation 5(1)(a) requirements.

Essentially, a Baseline Risk Assessment (BRA) is performed to establish the risks related to the high or strategic levels of a business, a project, or an operation, to identify, establish and benchmark the types and sizes of potential risks, which do or could have a significant impact on the whole business, project, or operation. The Baseline Risk Assessment could be approached on a site, regional, national, or enterprise-wide basis concerning any facet of the business operations or processes or activities.

Currently, the well-known “PESTLE” acronym is used for global and international high-level risk assessment purposes, but it tends to be context use-unfriendly for performing risk assessments at national and local enterprise business level and especially at project level. A SWOT analysis does not identify risk exposures but just business weaknesses and strengths. So what is a contextually easy to apply and workable risk assessment option?

The Baseline Risk Assessment process should be performed considering both the internal and external context risks impacting on the business or project. For any business or project to effectively operate some 7 critical resources are required to be acquired and used. But each of these 7 resources used are also “At Risk.” So assessing the 7 resources “at risk”, using the acronym “PEPMELF”, is a universally applicable and user-friendly brainstorming method for identifying the possible risks (hazards and/or exposures) related to each “PEPMELF” element, for example:

- **People:** The employees, clients, contractors, suppliers, agents, visitors, public, authorities, etc risks.
- **Equipment:** The plant, machinery, equipment, PPE, IT hardware, racking, tools, PCs, furniture, etc risks.
- **Process/Procedure/Practices/Policies:** Employment and placement practices, smoking and vaping policies, labour relations and equality procedures, manual handling procedures, risk assessment and risk management processes, safe

working procedures, incident investigation procedures, design, demolition, excavation, construction, height work, stacking, commissioning, hazardous substances procedures, disciplinary and grievance procedures, etc risks.

- **Materials:** Stationary, IT software, groceries and food, articles and products, chemicals and hazardous substances, refuse and wastes, all utilities, design drawings, steel, concrete, consumables, etc risks.
- **Environment:** The site, location, layout, workplaces, elevated and confined workplaces, macro/micro-environment, the weather, fauna and flora, etc risks.
- **Legal (and liability):** The compliance (Acts/standards), contracts, OHS, reputation, etc risks.
- **Financial:** The funding, income, expenditure, cash flow, cost controls, debit and credit, interest rate, currency, incident losses, risk financing, financial instruments, training and equipment funding cost, site and services costs, etc risks.

From the example above, this format of Baseline Risk Assessment provides the opportunity to brainstorm and identify a very broad scope of actual and potential risks that can and do impact on business operations or projects.

Each risk Identified can then be risk score analysed and then by the prioritisation of the identified risk ranking scores, a risk profile may be established to simplify the risk’s evaluation against the accepted risk and appetite levels, as described in the Risk Assessment Process of the SANS/ISO 31000 Risk Management Standard document.

Following this, one can apply risk mitigation / treatment measures to reduce the risk to the desired acceptable risk and appetite level by applying the “4Ts and E” risk response principal elements, namely, to Tolerate, Treat, Terminate, Transfer or to possibly Exploit the risk for some desired benefit or reward opportunity. Furthermore, the risk analysis step can be repeated considering the impact of the risk mitigation measures selected to provide a residual risk scores outcome and its residual risk profile.

This “PEPMELF” method of Baseline Risk Assessment is published as “*Risk Assessments: guide to understanding the basics*” by the Safety First Association of South Africa ([www.safety1st.co.za](http://www.safety1st.co.za)) back in 2006 and an updated 2nd edition in 2022, fully comply with the process steps of the 2009/2018 Risk Management Process framework published in the SANS/ISO 31000 Risk Management standard.

This “PEPMELF” Baseline Risk Assessment for-

mat is a simple-to-apply higher-level risk assessment than what is used to establish issue-based or job-task-based risk assessments often called Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRAs) as performed in terms of the risk assessment definitions of both the Mine Health & Safety Act section 11 and the Occupational Health & Safety Act and its Construction Regulation section 9.1 requirement.

To provide some Baseline Risk Assessment insight, here is my BRA definition:

*A Baseline Risk Assessment:*

- *Is a high-level comprehensive risk assessment performed to identify, analyse and evaluate a wide range of and current status of risks impacting on the enterprise, project or process being assessed*
- *Is used to establish a prioritised Risk Profile, and ...*
- *On evaluation, permit the implementation of suitable risk management measures to mitigate the assessed risks to an acceptable risk appetite level.*

Leighton Bennett

So the role of a Baseline Risk Assessment is to permit, by brainstorming, using the “PEPMELF” process to identify most to all the actual and potential high-level, internal and/or external context risks that can

impact on the enterprise, business or project being assessed. This risk assessment process is simple to use and to apply to any risk situation as it uses the various critical resources “at risk” as the focus for identifying the risks.

In closing, although this described Baseline Risk Assessment process may not be well-known, it has been in use since 2006 and has been successfully used to perform “PEPMELF” Baseline Risk Assessments on these projects:

- The Eskom Medupi Boilers construction
- Shopping malls
- Road Construction and Road Rehabilitation (SANRAL)
- Road Transportation (Low-beds to abnormal load vehicles)
- Metal fabrication operations
- Construction projects (including excavation, roof work, soil environmental rehabilitation)
- Water pipeline design and route risks
- Housing development construction projects
- Design and operation of mining vehicles
- DHET Educational Institutions and Colleges and enterprise-wide in finance, marketing and sales, production and maintenance departments.

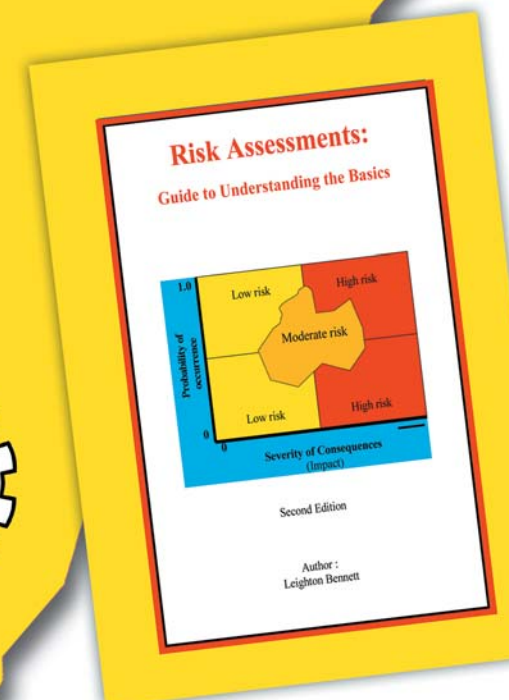
## RISK ASSESSMENTS:

### A Guide to Understanding the Basics

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

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

To order a copy: WhatsApp: +27 83 266 6662  
Email: [debbie@safety1st.co.za](mailto:debbie@safety1st.co.za) / [www.safety1st.co.za/publications](http://www.safety1st.co.za/publications)



# Chop, Slice, and Stay Safe:

## The (Not-So-Bloody) truth about OHS in butcheries



Herman "Harry" Fourie  
Occupational Health and Safety Consultant,  
OSHPro Pty Ltd.  
Vice-Chairman of the  
Safety First  
Association.  
Professional worrier  
and certified "Safety  
Nerd"

### EVEN SAUSAGES DESERVE A SAFE WORKPLACE

Let's be honest: running a butchery in South Africa isn't just about knowing your rump from your ribeye. It's also about making sure your staff don't end up needing first aid faster than you can say "medium-rare."

While your cleaver skills might be legendary, the Department of Employment and Labour doesn't hand out compliance points for flair—it wants real, legal Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). And no, hanging a fire extinguisher next to the biltong display doesn't count as "full compliance" (sorry, braai master).

So grab a boerewors roll, sit back, and let's slice through the myths—safely!

### WHY OHS IN BUTCHERIES?

*Hint: It's not just about avoiding "meat sweats"* Butcheries are high-risk workplaces—and not just because your customers argue over the last sosatie. Think about it:

- Sharp knives (like, really sharp).
- Heavy carcasses swinging from hooks.
- Slippery floors (water + blood + fat = ice rink).
- Cold rooms that could double as walk-in freezers for penguins.
- Machinery that could turn a finger into mince faster than you can yell "Hold the mustard!"

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), you're legally required to keep your team safe.

### THE BUTCHER'S OHS CHECKLIST

*No, it's not just "Don't cut yourself"*

Here's what real compliance looks like in your meaty kingdom:

#### 1. Slip-proof floors

*Because gravity is not your friend*

Wet floors? Blood spills? Ice patches near the freezer? You need non-slip flooring and a strict clean-as-you-go policy.

#### 2. Knife safety and proper storage

Knives should be sharp (dull ones slip more!). Knives must be stored safely in racks—not left lying around like props from a horror movie. Gloves must be cut-resistant.

#### 3. Cold room safety

That walk-in freezer is handy—but what if the door jams? You need an internal release mechanism so that no one gets locked in.

There must be clear signage with time limits for

staff inside (frostbite isn't a workplace perk).

#### 4. Machinery guarding

Slicers, grinders, band saws—these aren't kitchen toys. All moving parts must have proper guards, emergency stops, and only trained staff should operate them. (Uncle Joe from the back room doesn't count as "trained" just because he's been slicing boerewors since 1987.)

#### 5. First aid

*But you need PPE that's actually useful.*

Your first aid kit shouldn't just contain a single plaster and a used teabag. You need:

- A qualified first aider on-site (especially if you have 10+ employees).
- A fully stocked kit (including burn cream—those grills get hot!).
- An incident register (because "I'll remember it" isn't a system).

#### 6. PPE

*PPE is not just an apron with blood stains.*

You need to supply your staff with:

- Cut-resistant gloves.
- Steel-toed boots (dropping a leg of lamb hurts more than you think).
- Waterproof aprons and sleeves.
- Eye protection (when deboning or using high-pressure hoses).

#### 7. OHS documentation

*Yes, paperwork does exist.*

You'll need:

- An OHS policy (signed by management).
- Risk assessments (for knives, lifting, cold exposure, etc.).
- Appointment letters (e.g., for your safety rep).
- Training records.

Don't worry—you don't have to write it all on butcher paper. We can help!

### COMMON BUTCHERY "COMPLIANCE" MYTHS (BUSTED!)

1. "My dog guards the shop—so we're safe!" Adorable, but Fido doesn't count as a safety officer.
2. "We've never had an accident, so we're fine!" Famous last words ... right before someone slips on a rogue droplet of fat.
3. "The fire extinguisher's there—check!" Great! But is it serviced? Tagged? And do your staff know how to use it—or just how to point at it dramatically?



### THE REAL PERK OF COMPLIANCE

*Peace of mind (and winning tenders!).*

Being OHS-compliant isn't just about avoiding fines, it also:

- Helps you win supply contracts (Pick n Pay, Woolworths, and municipalities all ask for proof!).
- Keeps your team healthy and on the job.
- Lowers insurance premiums.
- Makes your butchery look professional—not like a scene from Saw IV.

### READY TO GO FROM "MEAT MARKET" TO "SAFETY CHAMPION"?

There are certified consultants to help you:

- Conduct a butchery-specific risk assessment.
- Set up your legal OHS file.
- Train your team (in plain English—or Afrikaans, Zulu, or Xhosa!).
- Service and certify your fire equipment.
- Issue your OHS Compliance Certificate.
- No jargon. No stress. Just practical, meat-friendly safety solutions.

**Remember:** A safe butchery isn't just about perfect cuts—it's about keeping your team whole, healthy, and ready to serve the next customer. The only thing that should be minced is the meat—not your fingers!

## A PRACTITIONER'S JOURNEY

### Aiming for zero harm



Creating a zero-harm environment is not only possible, but also crucial for every workplace.

Achieving zero-harm is about nurturing a safety culture where accidents and incidents are systematically reduced and risks are managed effectively. It's about making sure every employee goes home in the same condition they arrived.

But the road to zero-harm is riddled with challenges. This book offers practical tools and guides you how to navigate the complexities to success.

Published by the Safety First Association

Telephone/WhatsApp: +27 83 266 6662

Email: [debbie@safety1st.co.za](mailto:debbie@safety1st.co.za)

[www.safety1st.co.za/publications](http://www.safety1st.co.za/publications)

### A Practitioner's Journey: aiming for Zero Harm



Published by The Safety First Association  
Author: Herman Fourie

# Driving cultural change:

## How we structured a HSSE culture transformation programme



Fabian Buckley, IDIP  
NEBOSH  
WIB Construction and  
Safety CEO & HSSE  
Director

We were recently contacted by a major EPC contractor in South Africa who had been informed that their project was suffering from a poor safety culture. In response, WIB Construction and Safety developed and shared a detailed proposal outlining a structured HSSE Culture Transformation Programme, incorporating cold-eye reviews, leadership interviews, assessments, employee surveys, field inspections, and engagement sessions. All of these were designed to uncover the organisation's true cultural standing.

Our approach was not merely diagnostic; it was collaborative. We issued several practical recommendations to management and placed them on formal action trackers for follow-up, and implementation.

This article provides a reflection on our first week on site and the early outcomes of this initiative.

### LAYING THE FOUNDATION

This engagement marked a valuable partnership between WIB Construction and Safety and a leading foreign EPC construction company, focusing on cultivating a safety culture rooted in Respect, Benevolence, Care, and Trust at every operational level.

The first phase focused on baseline assessments, evaluating leadership visibility, communication, and collaboration across departments.

We found a technically strong and capable team, genuinely committed to improvement, yet facing challenges common to large-scale projects:

- Fragmented communication;
- Inconsistent supervision;
- Departmental silos;
- Ego-driven conflicts;
- Differing interpretations of risk management practices;
- Amongst various other aspects were unearthed.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommended strengthening coordination between the construction, HSSE, HR, and quality teams through daily interdepartmental briefings led by department heads.

Improved documentation flow and accountability were also emphasised.

In addition, we proposed a digital transformation strategy to modernise HSSE processes, including QR-coded risk assessments, QR tagging of plant and machinery, digital safety passports, mobile safety booklets, an HSE mobile application, and

multilingual online induction systems.

These are all digital solutions offered as part of WIB Construction and Safety's service portfolio.

### OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

As the week progressed, our cold-eye observations provided deeper insight into day-to-day realities across the project.

### POSITIVE FINDINGS

- Noticeable improvements in housekeeping and worksite organisation, particularly in key operational blocks, where general site conditions were exceptional.
- Supervisors showing greater appreciation and recognition toward their teams—a positive shift toward a culture of respect and gratitude.
- Increased workforce engagement during Toolbox Talks (TBTs) and Daily Safe Task Instructions (DSTIs), with workers demonstrating a clear understanding of safety topics.
- Several subcontractors displaying excellent teamwork and camaraderie, executing their work both efficiently and safely—a benchmark for others to follow.

### RECURRING CHALLENGES

Despite the progress, a number of challenges remain:

- Supervisory presence is still inconsistent, particularly during high-risk activities in EPC-controlled areas.
- Flagmen communication and coordination with mobile equipment operators require refresher training to enhance safety during plant movement.
- Heat exhaustion has become a growing concern, with limited monitoring and prevention measures currently in place.
- PPE compliance continues to vary between contractors due to inconsistent enforcement.

### LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Beyond operational gaps, the most pressing issues lie in leadership communication and behavioural consistency. Many supervisors and managers expressed frustration about unclear expectations, last-minute scope changes, and limited involvement in planning discussions.

In some cases, two-week look-ahead schedules

and scope updates were not shared with HSSE teams, leaving them in the dark causing them to be reactive instead of proactive. We observed defensiveness, ego clashes, and unprofessional language that weakened trust and collaboration between departments.

Certain individuals regard themselves as untouchable. It is a huge challenge to correct these individuals even with HSSE trying to ensure that everyone toes the same line. These interpersonal barriers are critical indicators of cultural strain which shows through such behaviours by certain individuals. To address this, WIB Construction and Safety has recommended emotional intelligence, safety coaching and behavioural leadership training for senior and middle management. The goal is to shift focus from authority and compliance toward empathy, accountability, and coaching.

A highlight was witnessing the project manager publicly thanking a worker for her contribution—a simple but powerful gesture—leadership behaviour that we aim to cultivate across the project.

### PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

#### Define supervisory responsibilities:

Ensure that all high- and medium-risk activities are conducted under the direct supervision of competent personnel. Appointing additional CR8.8: These additional appointees are required to support the supervisors who are already feeling overwhelmed to an extent.

#### Rebuild communication channels:

Reinstate the regular sharing of scope of work documents and two-week look-ahead schedules with HSSE teams to allow for proactive planning.

#### Support contractors:

Develop and distribute sample risk assessment and method statement packs to standardise submissions and reduce confusion among contractors.

#### Define expectations clearly:

Set clear and transparent expectations—company-wide and individually, so that everyone understands what needs to be done and how. Simplified process flow diagrams can assist with this.

#### Standardise PPE and safety procedures:

Enforce consistent PPE standards and implement

a uniform system for open-hole closures and barricading.

#### Enhance management walkthroughs:

Introduce structured, purpose-driven walkthroughs with smaller focused groups and weekly feedback sessions to ensure effective engagement.

#### Leadership & emotional intelligence coaching:

Provide ongoing leadership and behavioural coaching to improve emotional awareness, communication tone, and professionalism.

#### Implement heat stress management controls:

Establish hydration points, more shaded rest areas, electrolyte hydration packs, and rotational work schedules to mitigate heat-related illnesses.

### THE HUMAN ELEMENT

At the heart of every transformation lies people. Systems and policies only succeed when they are embraced and lived by those at the front line. We encountered a workforce eager to learn and a management team opening up to honest feedback.

The challenge is to turn observation into action, policy into practice, and authority into authentic leadership that genuinely cares about people's well-being and professional growth.

We also introduced a QR Code that anyone can scan to report a grievance, share suggestions etc—a digital platform which is highly confidential. This will also route out any abuse, poor language etc.

### LOOKING AHEAD

This five-day assessment marks only the beginning of a long term transformational journey. Cultural change does not happen overnight, it requires persistence, reflection, and continuous reinforcement. It reminds me of a woodpecker: keep pecking steadily at the process until progress becomes permanent. WIB Construction and Safety remains committed to guiding this client through the next phases of their HSSE journey, empowering leaders, supervisors, and workers to move from compliance to commitment, and from control to care.

By focusing on Respect, Care, Trust, and Benevolence, this organisation has the opportunity not only to improve its safety performance but to redefine its legacy, proving that true safety leadership is built on people, purpose, and partnerships.

Personal Protective Equipment  
PPE Conference 2026  
10-11 March 2026  
Emperors Conference Centre, Johannesburg

## SAIOH President's Message

Karen du Preez: SAIOH President, e-mail: [president@saioh.co.za](mailto:president@saioh.co.za)

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) remains deeply committed to supporting its members and advancing the occupational hygiene profession. Through regular updates and shared insights, we aim to keep our community informed, inspired, and connected.

SAIOH thrives on the active involvement and ethical contributions of its members, your engagement continues to shape the future of our field. As we build momentum together, we warmly invite your feedback on the topics featured in this publication. Your voice helps guide our collective progress.

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



South Africa is sharpening its focus on occupational hygiene, embracing a rigorous framework to identify, assess, and control workplace hazards that impact worker health. At the heart of this initiative lies a structured process, anchored by occupational hygiene surveys, risk assessments, and ongoing monitoring, designed to uncover hazardous conditions and guide corrective action. SAIOH's Annual Scientific Conference 2025 keynote speakers will reveal the hygiene journey is not just technical; it is legal, strategic, and deeply human.

Mr George Khan's keynote reframes the legal landscape, challenging the myth of employer and hygienist immunity. South African law, long shaped by outdated frameworks, is evolving towards strict liability and reverse onus provisions. Occupational hygienists are no longer shielded by proximity to employers, they are accountable to workers, communities, and the law. This shift underscores the importance of competent, certified professionals such as Approved Inspection Authorities (AIAs), whose role in conducting surveys and verifying controls is now more critical than ever.

Dr Vanessa Govender will urge hygienists to look beyond measurement and into prevention. Her work on occupational lung diseases (OLDs) in the mining sector revealed that while all OLDs are preventable, not all are curable. Prevention, therefore, is the highest duty. Her keynote will emphasise the power of high-fidelity data and AI-driven surveillance models that link exposure, medical outcomes, and workforce records, tools that elevate hygiene into strategic leadership conversations.

Ms Constance Titi Kekana will build on this theme,

showcasing how real time monitoring and intelligent control systems are reshaping exposure management. From predictive analytics to ventilation on demand, these innovations support both regulatory compliance and proactive risk reduction. However, gaps remain, in technology integration, regulatory readiness, and future skillsets, calling for accelerated progress to achieve zero harm.

Millysind Ebygale Ruiters will introduce the newly launched Occupational Health and Safety Strategy of the National Department of Employment and Labour, aligned with the ILO's global framework. With its three pillars, strengthening OSH systems, enhancing coordination, and improving workplace management, the strategy reinforces the hygiene process as a national priority. Its five strategic result areas and commitment to monitoring and evaluation mirror the hygiene framework's emphasis on continuous improvement.

Prof Stefan Linde will remind us that sampling is not one size fits all. Whether assessing chemical, noise, skin, or biological exposures, the strategy must match the investigation's purpose. His keynote will echo the hygiene framework's call for precision, highlighting how sampling methods, timing, and analysis must be tailored to yield meaningful, actionable results.

Together, these insights affirm that occupational hygiene is more than a regulatory obligation, it is an initiative-taking, multidisciplinary strategy to protect health, ensure accountability, and embed resilience. By integrating legal clarity, data intelligence, and structured processes, South African employers and professionals can build safer, smarter workplaces for all.

## National council feedback

Karen du Preez: SAIOH president, e-mail: [president@saioh.co.za](mailto:president@saioh.co.za)

Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH general manager, e-mail: [deon.jvuuren@gmail.com](mailto:deon.jvuuren@gmail.com)

### SAIOH Management Activities: 24 July to 26 September 2025

Throughout the reporting period, SAIOH Management remained actively involved in a range of strategic meetings and sector related events.

These engagements served to continue expanding occupational hygiene initiatives and reinforce internal governance, reflecting our ongoing commitment to professional institutional growth.



## General Manager Position

SAIOH is delighted to announce the appointment of Claudina Nogueira as Assistant General Manager, effective 1 October 2025. Claudina will work alongside current General Manager Deon Jansen van Vuuren in a structured handover process, ahead of assuming the role of General

Manager on 1 April 2026. A respected Occupational Health Consultant and active leader in the profession, Claudina brings experience, deep institutional knowledge, and a fresh perspective to the role.

We warmly welcome her and look forward to this exciting new chapter.

## Board Meetings

Two formal Management Board meetings were held:

- 30 July 2025 – Third meeting of the year
- 19 September 2025 – Fourth meeting of the year

## Sector Engagements

- SAIOH hosted four impromptu Zoom and MS Teams sessions with the 2025 Conference Organising Committee to support planning efforts.
- In response to a request from the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), SAIOH issued a call for member nominations to serve on the Noise Technical Committee (TC) regarding the new Noise Exposure Regulations (NER) of March 2025.
- SAIOH participated in the DEL / SAIOH / Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authority (OH AIA) Liaison Committee online meeting on 20 August 2025.
- Several SAIOH Management members attended the OH AIA Association meeting on 22 August 2025.
- On 27 August 2025, SAIOH joined the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) OH Standing Technical Committee (STC) special

technical meeting. The new DEL Occupational Hygiene Report template and the types of conformity bodies were discussed. Final decisions taken: all OH AIAs must adhere to the DEL format for all their OH reports, and the difference between A and C conformity bodies was clarified. Most, if not all OH AIA's will revert back to Type A.

- SAIOH President Karen du Preez attended the South African Qualification Authority's online workshop on 27 August 2025 which focused on micro-credentialing and its implications for professional bodies.
- Karen du Preez also delivered a SAIOH presentation to the University of Pretoria Physiology students on 24 July 2025, strengthening SAIOH's outreach and awareness.
- The SAIOH Administration team convened two internal staff meetings on 4 August and 10 September 2025.

## Looking ahead

The next SAIOH Council Meeting is scheduled for 21 October 2025, to be held as a hybrid session during the annual conference.

## SECTOR ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- **23 May 2025:** SAIOH Management members attended the OH AIA Association's meeting, where SAIOH updates were presented.
- **30 May 2025:** A Mailchimp call for nominations to the DEL Noise Technical Committee (TC) was circulated to SAIOH members.
- **On 2 June 2025:** SAIOH members Ms. Bulelwa Huna and Mr. Deon Swanepoel represented the DEL at the ILO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. SAIOH circulated ILO Recommendation No. 209 on 13 June 2025,

concerning prevention and protection against biological hazards in the workplace (available at: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/record-decisions/recommendation-concerning-prevention-and-protection-against-biological>)

- **On 26 June 2025:** The DEL, in partnership with SAIOH and the OH AIA Association, hosted an online webinar on the newly promulgated Noise Exposure Regulations (NER) and Physical Agents Regulations (PAR). The event drew over 280 online participants.



## EVENT ATTENDANCE

- SAIOH leadership, including the President and General Manager, attended the official book launch of “In a Rain of Dust”—a compelling narrative of crocidolite and amosite asbestos mining in South Africa and related legal proceedings in the United Kingdom, on 12 June 2025. The National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) hosted this insightful event featuring the author and legal counsel, both of

whom engaged attendees with personal stories and book signings.

## ACCREDITATION & INDUSTRY DISCUSSIONS

- SAIOH Management participated in the SANAS OH STC special assessors meeting on 19 June 2025. Topics included updates to the DEL Occupational Hygiene Report template and conformity body classifications.

## SAIOH Strategic Plan

SAIOH’s five-year strategic plan (2023–2027), led by Jaco Pieterse, continues to guide institutional priorities and is reviewed regularly at Management Board and Council meetings.

SAIOH also participated in the Department of

Health’s Occupational Health and Safety Operational Planning workshop, held from 29 to 30 July 2025 at OR Tambo International Airport. Claudina Nogueira represented SAIOH at this two-day engagement.

## Ethics

SAIOH Ethics Framework finalised and Ethics Training Strategy advanced

- SAIOH Management have successfully concluded a rigorous two-year process to develop, review, and finalise the SAIOH Code of Practice and its associated Disciplinary Procedure.
- SAIOH is pleased to announce a new partnership with North-West University (NWU) to develop a

bespoke Ethics course tailored to occupational hygiene practice within the southern African working environment. Following a series of online meetings, the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was formally signed by both parties in early July 2025. With the agreement now in place, NWU will begin developing this important training resource. Stay tuned for updates as this initiative progresses.

## SAIOH Branch activities and other engagements

### Western Cape Branch

The Western Cape Branch hosted a phenomenally successful in-person Mini-Conference on 29 August 2025 at Milnerton Golf Club. The programme featured six 45-minute plenary presentations, beginning with Dale Kennedy (Ergomax) on ergonomics and vibration, followed by contributions from leading occupational hygiene specialists, including representatives from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Sponsor and exhibitor presentations (5 x 10 minutes) were interspersed throughout the day.

Congratulations to Yvette Greeff and the entire Western Cape Branch Organising Committee for a well-executed event.

### KwaZulu-Natal Branch

The KwaZulu-Natal Branch Committee held an informal meeting on 12 August 2025 to discuss logistics for the upcoming SAIOH 2025 Conference in Umhlanga.

### Gauteng Branch

The Gauteng Branch convened its third meeting of the year online on 12 September 2025. Highlights included an insightful presentation by Dr Oliver

Henschel (BASF International) on exposure modelling and chemical risk assessments. Mr Harold Gaze, Chair of the KwaZulu-Natal Branch, also provided an update on the SAIOH 2025 Conference.

### North-West Branch

The North-West Branch, in collaboration with NWU Occupational Hygiene and Health Research Initiative (OH HRI), is preparing a one-day training course for 15 October 2025 titled “*Application of ISO 23875 in Operator Cab Filtration, Pressurization, and Certification*”, presented by Jeff Moredock of the International Society of Environmental Enclosure Engineers (ISEEE).

### Eastern Cape Branch (under development)

Efforts to establish an Eastern Cape Branch are ongoing, led by Council Branch Coordinator Yvette Greeff and Dr Shaun Ramroop (Nelson Mandela University). No further updates are available at this time.

### Inactive Branches

The Central (Free State), Northern Cape, and Mpumalanga Branches, along with the Zululand Discussion Group, remain inactive.



## Planning of the SAIOH 2026 Annual Scientific Conference

Development is already underway for the SAIOH 2026 Conference in collaboration with the NIOH. Initial planning meetings have been held with the NIOH Executive Director, Dr Spo Kgalamono.

## International Liaison - IOHA and OHTA Feedback

SAIOH continues to support and promote global occupational hygiene initiatives through active participation, resource sharing, and representation.

## Global Newsletters

The Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) and International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) regularly publish newsletters featuring global updates, training opportunities, and technical insights. These are shared with SAIOH

members via email and are also available on the SAIOH website: [www.saioh.co.za](http://www.saioh.co.za).

Visit OHTA’s website for more information: [www.ohtatraining.org](http://www.ohtatraining.org)

## Recent International Activities

- Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB) Webinar No. 03 on Workplace Heat Stress was held online on 25 August 2025.
- A new African initiative was launched by IOHA Vice President Matthew Alota, bringing together SAIOH, the Nigerian Occupational Hygiene Association, and the Tanzanian Occupational Hygiene Association to form the Network of Occupational Hygienists in Africa (NOHA). Originally named ANOCH, the network was officially launched on 22 September 2025, with presentations from the IOHA President and Asian Industrial Hygiene Network Chair. NOHA aims to expand access to information and support for occupational hygiene practitioners across the continent. Their WhatsApp group is growing

rapidly, with one to three new CIH certified members joining daily.

- SAIOH promoted The Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists (AIOH) webinar on ISO respiratory protection standards and the impact of work rates on RPD evaluation, held on 29 August 2025.
- SAIOH distributed the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) Guidance Document on respiratory protection standards in the UK healthcare sector.
- SAIOH has been invited to present at the Zambian Chamber of Mines Annual Conference, scheduled for late October in Ndola.

## Representation on IOHA

Corlia Peens continues to represent SAIOH on the IOHA Board and the National Accreditation Recognition (NAR) Committee, providing regular feedback to the Executive Committee of the Professional Certification Committee (PCC). IOHA now comprises 53 member associations globally.

## SAIOH Technical Committee feedback

SAIOH’s Technical Committee continues to advance key research and guidance initiatives aimed at strengthening occupational hygiene practice and regulatory alignment.

### Welding Fumes Research & Position Paper

Led by Dr Ivan Niranjana and Technical Portfolio Coordinator Dr Goitsemang Keretsetse, the Committee has completed a comprehensive position paper on the measurement and analysis of welding fumes. Developed in collaboration with the OH AIA Association, the paper is currently undergoing final review and will soon

be circulated to SAIOH members, the DEL and published on the SAIOH website.

### Heat Stress Management

A second technical initiative is underway to develop procedures and a SAIOH position paper on heat stress management. SAIOH is working with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Dr Johan Kielblock to support the research. The dual focus remains: to produce a robust technical paper and to inform SAIOH’s recommendations for strengthening the Physical Agents Regulations (PAR).



### • Ergonomic Risk Assessment

Under the leadership of Naadiya Mundy, a new sub-committee has been formed to develop procedures and/or guidelines to support SAIOH occupational hygiene professionals in conducting ergonomic risk assessments. Initial meetings have already taken place, marking a promising start to this important initiative.

### New SAIOH Website

The SAIOH Administration team, led by Naadiya Mundy and Kate Smart, is actively working on populating the new SAIOH website, ensuring that it is a comprehensive resource for members. We look forward to launching the new website soon and delivering an improved and streamlined platform

### Publications & Media Presence

SAIOH continues to engage members through a variety of communication platforms, ensuring timely access to news, resources, and professional development opportunities.

SAIOH's Newsletter and President's Page are published in two electronic media formats:

- *Occupational Health Southern Africa (OHSA) Journal*

### Global Newsletters

The OHTA Global Link (July 2025) and IOHA Global Exposure Manager (GEM, September 2025) newsletters were posted on the SAIOH website and distributed to members via Mailchimp upon release.

### Member Engagement Channels

SAIOH maintains daily communication with members through direct emails, Mailchimp notifications, phone calls, and virtual meetings. These updates include:

- Legislative and regulatory developments

### Recent Training and Event Notifications

SAIOH has shared details of several upcoming and recent events, including:

- NWU Workshop (Potchefstroom): Support for occupational hygiene practitioners' knowledge and experience of the skin as an exposure route
- South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM) national and chapter webinars on occupational health
- CSIR & Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) Stakeholder Engagement Workshop: Impact of overexertion on women's health and safety in

### • Real Time Monitoring

Prof Stefan Linde (NWU) has taken on the lead in the development of a position paper on real time monitoring in occupational hygiene. This work is ongoing and will contribute to future technical guidance.

for the SAIOH community.

Chapter 2 of the PCC's Quality Management System, which outlines the PCC Assessment Rules and Procedures, is available on the SAIOH website and offers essential guidance and supporting documentation.

### • *African Occupational Safety and Health (A-OS&H) Magazine*

Issues are released every two to three months, with the latest editions published in July and August 2025. These were shared via Mailchimp and are available on the SAIOH website: [www.saioh.co.za](http://www.saioh.co.za).

The OHSA Journal Editorial Board meeting originally scheduled for 17 July 2025 has been postponed.

- Industry news and technical insights
- Professional opportunities in occupational hygiene
- Training courses, webinars, and product updates in occupational health and environmental safety

mining, hybrid event on 3 October 2025 at CSIR Convention Centre, Pretoria

- Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA) Annual Conference: Scheduled for 15–16 October 2025 at Wits University
- Safety First / PPE Conference: Early notice for the rescheduled event on 10–11 March 2026
- ICOH 2026 Conference: History of Occupational and Environmental Health, taking place in April 2026 in Belgium



# From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC)

Lee Doolan: SAIOH PCC administrator, e-mail: [lee@saioh.co.za](mailto:lee@saioh.co.za)

Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH General Manager, e-mail: [deon.jvuuuren@gmail.com](mailto:deon.jvuuuren@gmail.com)

Ivan Nirajan: PCC chairperson, e-mail: [ivann@dut.ac.za](mailto:ivann@dut.ac.za)

## PCC Updates: Assessments, Tools & Training

The PCC Executive Committee (ExCo) held its third meeting online on 26 August 2025. The next PCC meeting is scheduled for 7 November 2025, following a busy season of assessments and technical progress.

## Upcoming Assessments

- Written Assessments: Scheduled for Friday 3 October 2025, invigilated by PCC members.
- Oral Assessments: Will take place online during the period 7 to 14 November 2025. Sessions will be

recorded by assessors for verification and quality assurance. In-person assessments remain an option where preferred.

## Policy & Procedure Updates

- After several review rounds, the SAIOH QMS Chapter 2: PCC Assessment Rules and Procedures were amended and approved by the PCC ExCo. These are now available on the SAIOH website.

- A milestone achievement: The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has updated the SAIOH registration requirements on its website to align with PCC standards. A process successfully led by Lee Doolan over the past two years.

## OHTA Engagement

The PCC hosted an OHTA feedback session for South African Approved Training Providers (ATPs) on 28 August 2025.

## Self-Assessment Tool & Skills Development

A resolute sub-committee continues to refine the Occupational Hygiene Skill Set and Self-Assessment Tool.

- The first draft was completed earlier this year and is now undergoing final review.
- The team is also developing oral question scenarios and updating the PCC Oral Assessment Guidelines.
- Bi-monthly sessions were held in July, August, and September, with the next session scheduled for October 2025.
- On 21 October, the Professional Certification Committee (PCC) hosted a dynamic hybrid Professional Development Course (PDC 04) as part of the SAIOH 2025 Conference programme.

- The opening hour, open to all SAIOH members introduced the official launch of the new Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis (SA-GA) Tool, designed to support members in evaluating their professional readiness and identifying growth opportunities.

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

The PCC extends its appreciation to all participants for their engagement and commitment to continuous professional development.

## Assessment Platform Review

Efforts to replace the current LMS-based written assessment system with an Excel-based or Moodle platform have faced challenges, including security concerns and AI related risks.

- The PCC has reverted to hard copy assessments, couriered to and from venues, with invigilation by at least two PCC Assessors to ensure integrity.



### Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Management & Compliance

- SAIOH members can now upload CPD activities throughout the year via their MySAIOH profiles.
- Effective 1 February 2025, all CPD returns will be audited before certificates are issued. Requirements include:
  - Paid annual membership fees
  - Valid ethics certificate
  - Supporting documentation for CPD claims
  - Correct category and point allocation
- CPD points must now be earned annually (no longer on a 5-year rolling cycle):
  - ROH: 12 points per year
  - ROHT: 10 points per year
  - ROHA: 9 points per year
  - Retired/Fellows: 4 points per year
- Requests for amnesty or extensions must be submitted in writing to the PCC ExCo via the PCC Administrator.

### Certification assessments

A summary of results for the assessments that took place from February to August 2025 is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.** SAIOH PCC certification assessment results as August 2025

Certification Categories	Written Assessments				Oral Assessments			
	Assessed n	Passed n	Failed n	Pass Rate %	Assessed n	Passed n	Failed n	Pass Rate %
OH Assistants	71	69	2	97.2	0	-	-	-
OH Technologists	36	31	5	86.1	47	28	19	59.6
Occ. Hygienists	31	14	17	45.2	21	13	8	61.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>60.3</b>

### Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum

The Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening the quality and recognition of occupational hygiene education and training across Southern Africa.

### Recognition of Qualifications

One of the OHSF's core functions is to evaluate applications from tertiary institutions seeking formal recognition for their occupational hygiene related qualifications. The Chair has recently engaged with institutions in Botswana, as well as University of Pretoria (UP), Durban University of Technology (DUT), University of Johannesburg (UJ), and University of Limpopo (UL) regarding their SAIOH OHSF recognition status.

Institutions offering occupational hygiene qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC Administrator for guidance on the recognition process: [lee@saioh.co.za](mailto:lee@saioh.co.za)

A full list of recognised training providers and qualifications will be published on the SAIOH website: [www.saioh.co.za](http://www.saioh.co.za), helping students and certification candidates identify programmes aligned with SAIOH and international standards.

### Mandate & New Developments

The OHSF was established to coordinate all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials, including asbestos courses, and to support the development and management of assessment and examination systems where needed.

In line with this mandate, the OHSF has initiated the development of a SAIOH specific Occupational Hygiene Legislation course, to be delivered in-house and tailored to meet the requirements for non-AIA members.

### CPD Engagement through OHSA Journal

To encourage deeper engagement with the OHSA Journal, Dr Hennie van der Westhuizen assisted the OHSF in developing CPD linked questions based on published articles. Please watch this space for round two!



### ESSA Conference 2025

## Collaboration in improving workplace health, safety and system effectiveness

The 15th Conference of the Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA) took place in Johannesburg on 15 and 16 October 2025, bringing together approximately 50 attendees from a wide range of industries.

Participants represented sectors such as automotive, construction, railway, banking, and healthcare, as well as numerous Human Factors and Ergonomics (HFE) students. While most delegates were ergonomists, the conference also drew professionals from cognate disciplines, including health and safety, occupational hygiene, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy, highlighting the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of the field.

The conference was preceded by two successful pre-conference workshops. The first, "From Compliance to Culture – Implementing an Ergonomics Programme Using the DoEL Framework," focused on practical strategies for organisations to move beyond minimum compliance and foster a sustainable ergonomics culture. The second workshop, "Introduction to Accident Investigations," provided attendees with a foundational understanding of how human factors principles can be applied to incident analysis and prevention.

Keynote presentations set the tone for an engaging and thought-provoking event. Mrs Claudina Nogueira, with her strong background in occupational health and extensive national and international experience, as well as Mr Andrew Todd, former ESSA Chair and past member of the International Ergonomics Association Council, reflected on the evolution of ergonomics practice in South Africa and globally, urging continued collaboration and mentorship within the profession but also between allied professions. Another highlight was the special session by Mr Simphiwe Mabhele, Technical Advisor to the International Labour Organization, who highlighted the topic of bullying and harassment in the workplace as a significant psychosocial factor influencing decent work. Furthermore, a dynamic panel discussion consisting of ESSA, SAIOH and Department of Employment and Labour panellists explored "The Future of Human Factors and Ergonomics in South Africa", where

experts debated the challenges and opportunities the discipline faces in an increasingly complex world and its so-called "wicked problems". A recurring theme echoed by all speakers and panellists was that the growing complexity of work systems demands greater collaboration between allied disciplines. Breaking down professional silos and adopting participatory, embedded approaches (both vertically and horizontally) were emphasised as crucial approaches for improving worker safety, health, well-being, and overall system performance.

Finally, the scientific programme of the conference successfully demonstrated the breadth and depth of contemporary HFE practice – extending well beyond traditional office ergonomics and musculoskeletal risk assessments. Presentations ranged from examining the effects of climate change on work conditions, analysing water management systems in small Eastern Cape towns, and optimising record-keeping processes in healthcare clinics, to exploring safety behaviour in drivers, safety culture in the rail sector, and fatigue management among aviation personnel, including helicopter emergency medical services.

Other contributions highlighted the importance of mentorship among academics, the application of human factors principles across diverse industries, as well as ergonomics methods and approaches.

In conclusion, the 15th ESSA Conference reaffirmed the growing impact and relevance of Human Factors and Ergonomics in addressing South Africa's complex work challenges. It calls for improved collaborations of stakeholders to make our workplaces safer, healthier, more satisfying and more effective.

Individuals interested in learning more about ergonomics and the Society's activities can visit the Ergonomics Society of South Africa's website at <https://ergonomicsssa.com/>



Claudina Nogueira (keynote speaker) with Sma Ngcamu-Tukulula (ESSA President)



Simphiwe Mabhele (Technical Advisor to ILO) with Sma Ngcamu-Tukulula

## Tribute: Sankie Greyling



The Safety First Association's Chairperson, George Browse introduced Sankie's Full Circle Accounting business to the health and safety community back in late 2016. At the time, she was George's personal business accountant and was appointed Safety First Association's accountant.

Soon after that, Sankie became fully involved in the health and safety profession in early 2017, when she was appointed as the external accountant for the Institute of Safety Management (IOSM), and later took over from RAYSAF as the IOSM office administrator at the IOSM office in the Silver Lakes area of Pretoria.

She provided a great and diligently performed administrative and financial advice service to IOSM, until unfortunately IOSM closed in November 2019, due to the health and safety practitioner member reluctance, and reduced support over the professional capacity registration assessments being required for achieving the SAQA related IOSM professional registrations.

Sankie also took over the Safety First Association's administration services from the Schwegman's to present the 2017 financials at the 2017 SFA's AGM. She continued in this function until the February 2024 year-end financials. Due to the Covid pandemic many of the SFA's African-OS&H magazine advertising clients moved to their own digital advertising platforms which dramatically impacted on the SFA's income position and so also impacted on our contracted staff, including Sankie as the SFA administration provider. We thank Sankie for her competent and excellent services to Safety First over those years.

Sankie became a SFA Director and proved to be a master at dealing with compliance matters, like the out-dated director changes with the CIPC, the Non-Profit Company classification with SARS, migrating bank accounts between banks, and effectively keeping us informed of the ongoing financial legal changes. For this Sankie, our thanks and sincere appreciation for all the work you performed for us.

Your passing was a shock to us and your family, but we understand a relief from suffering your medical condition for a long period. We will miss you, your "dry" humour, friendship, your inputs and professional advice over the many years of knowing you and your cats.

# SAVE THE DATE

10-11 March 2026

# PPE CONFERENCE 2026



South Africa's first ever conference for the Personal Protective Industry

*Protecting people and enhancing performance through elevating PPE Standards, Practices and Technologies*

**PPE isn't optional, it's essential!**

This conference will be of benefit to the industry at large: For companies caring for the wellness and safety of their employees and wanting to keep inline with the law; For employees wanting an improved knowledge of PPE and to know and understand their rights.

**Venue:**

Emperors Convention Centre  
Kempton Park, Johannesburg

For more information contact Debbie on

+27 83 266 6662

debbie@safety1st.co.za



This important event is proudly brought to you by:



# Protecting workers from the invisible threat:

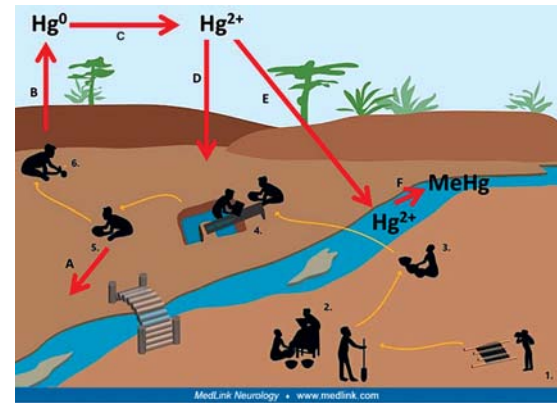
## Real-time mercury monitoring for safer workplaces



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

Across Africa, from small-scale gold mining, waste recycling, cement and metal industries, laboratories, or coal mining industries, thousands of workers handle materials that may unknowingly expose them to mercury.

Mercury exposure rarely gives warning because this chemical pollutant has no colour, no smell, and no taste. Yet it silently affects the nervous system, kidneys, and brain, causing long-term irreversible damage that is often mistaken for fatigue or stress<sup>[1,2]</sup>. For occupational health and safety professionals, protecting workers from such invisible hazards is one of the toughest challenges. You cannot manage what you cannot measure and until recently, detecting mercury vapour in real time was nearly impossible outside a laboratory.



Mercury cycle in a typical Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining process

### MERCURY EXPOSURE IN AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL

Studies across Africa reveal that mercury exposure remains a widespread problem, particularly within artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) operations.

In Ghana's Talensi-Nabdam District, more than one fifth of participants recruited from mining community had urinary mercury levels exceeding 10µg/L, while 5% surpassed the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline value of 50 µg/L<sup>[1]</sup>. Even individuals not directly involved in mining have shown elevated mercury concentrations.

This phenomenon is recorded in South Africa's Mpumalanga province where 8 of the country's 10 coal fired power plant operate—a community living near gold mining areas recorded mercury concentrations exceeding recommended biological limits—50% of urine samples were above 5µg/g creatinine and 15% of blood samples exceeded 10µg/L, despite participants reporting no formal mining employment<sup>2</sup>.



Mercury used to form gold amalgam during artisanal mining

Investigators suggested unregulated small-scale amalgamation and contaminated environmental sources such as air and water as likely sources of mercury exposure.

### HEALTH EFFECTS AND EXPOSURE LIMITS

Mercury's health effects are well-documented. Chronic inhalation of mercury vapor can lead to neurological and renal damage even at relatively low concentrations. A global systematic review covering 19 studies between 1980 and 2020 found consistent evidence of neuropsychological disorders among exposed workers, including tremors, coordination deficits, and memory loss.

Renal impairment, manifested through proteinuria and reduced glomerular filtration rate, was also frequently reported<sup>[3]</sup>. Importantly, several studies found symptoms even in individuals with urinary mercury levels below WHO thresholds, suggesting that chronic low-dose exposure can still produce measurable harm.

According to international occupational health guidelines, mercury vapour exposure should not exceed extremely low thresholds. The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) recommends a Threshold Limit Value–Time Weighted Average (TLV-TWA) of 0.025mg/m<sup>3</sup>. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) establishes a Recommended Exposure Limit (REL) of 0.050mg/m<sup>3</sup> and a Ceiling Limit of 0.100mg/m<sup>3</sup>, while the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets a Ceiling Limit of 0.100mg/m<sup>3</sup><sup>[6,7]</sup>.

In South Africa, biological exposure indices under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993) recommend that occupational urine mercury levels remain below 35µg/g creatinine (pre-shift) and blood below 15 µg/L<sup>[4,5]</sup>. These figures highlight how even trace quantities of mercury can exceed safe limits—reinforcing the importance of real-time, field-based measurement.

### CHALLENGES IN REAL-TIME MERCURY MONITORING IN WORKPLACES

Despite these strict limits, most routine mercury monitoring still relies heavily on laboratory analysis which is labor intensive, time-consuming, and often impractical as no instant value can be provided for on the spot corrective action. Samples must be shipped to distant laboratories, which then often takes long turnaround time (TAT) for the result to be known. The ability to measure airborne mercury on site and in real time is essential to close this gap for prompt or on the spot rectification.



Checking mercury levels during oil & gas processing associated activities



### EMP-3 BRIDGING THE GAP FOR REAL-TIME MERCURY MONITORING

Nippon Instruments Corporation (NIC) developed the EMP-3 Portable Mercury Survey Meter to address these field challenges. The instrument contains a laboratory-grade cold-vapour atomic absorption spectrometry (CVAAS) detector with true portability. It means true mercury measurements on site without sending samples back to the laboratory!

The EMP-3 features a standard detection range of up to 2mg/m<sup>3</sup>, which can be extended to 20mg/m<sup>3</sup> when equipped with the Hi-Lutor attachment, enabling accurate measurements across both routine and high-exposure environments.

Weighing only 1.8kg and battery-powered, it can be worn with a shoulder strap, enabling occupational hygienists to conduct hands-free inspections in confined or remote locations.

Each measurement can be geotagged using the integrated GPS system, creating a precise exposure map of mercury distribution within a facility or field site.

An integrated audible and visual alarm alerts users when mercury concentrations exceed preset thresholds, allowing immediate evacuation or corrective action. In Africa's diverse industrial settings, the EMP-3 has proven useful for detecting leaks, confirming ventilation performance, and verifying cleanup effectiveness. It enables health and safety professionals to make decisions on the spot rather than waiting for laboratory reports.

Its rechargeable battery system allows fieldwork in areas without access to electricity, and its onboard data logging ensures all readings, timestamps, and GPS coordinates are securely stored for documentation. This feature aligns directly with South Africa's Mine Health and Safety Act (Act 29 of 1996) and the Sampling and Monitoring of Hazardous Chemical Substances (SAMOHP) guidelines, which require exposure assessment frequencies ranging from three months to annually depending on concentration levels<sup>[5]</sup>.

### TRANSFORM AWARENESS INTO PREVENTION; AND PREVENTION INTO PROTECTION

Mercury exposure remains both an occupational and community health issue. The persistence of elevated mercury levels in African mining and coal power generation regions stresses the need for real-time, accessible monitoring. Instruments like the EMP-3 bridge the gap between regulation and field implementation by giving professionals immediate, actionable data.



By translating invisible mercury vapour into measurable data, the EMP-3 empowers industries and policy makers to uphold the vision and objectives of Minamata Convention which is to protect humans from mercury and mercury compounds.

Portable, accurate, and designed for real-world conditions, it embodies the practical step to transform awareness into prevention and prevention into protection.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Paruchuri Y, Siuniak A, Johnson N, Levin E, Mitchell K, Goodrich J, et al. Occupational and environmental mercury exposure among small-scale gold miners in Ghana's Upper East region. *Sci Total Environ.* 2010;408(24):6079–6085.
- [2] Oosthuizen MA, John J, Somerset V. Mercury exposure in a low-income community in South Africa. *S Afr Med J.* 2010;100(6):366–371.
- [3] Taux K, Kraus T, Kaifie A. Mercury exposure and its health effects in workers in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector—A systematic review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2022;19(4):2081.
- [4] Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa. Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act No. 85 of 1993): Regulations for Hazardous Chemical Agents. Pretoria; 2021.
- [5] Mine Health and Safety Council. Handbook on Occupational Health Practice in the South African Mining Industry. Johannesburg; 2018.
- [6] American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH). Threshold Limit Values for Chemical Substances and Physical Agents. Cincinnati; 2024.
- [7] National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards: Mercury. Washington DC; 2023.



**Protecting people and enhancing performance through elevating PPE Standards, Practices and Technology**

**Dates:** 10-11 March 2026

**Venue:** Emperors, Convention Centre, Kempton Park Johannesburg

**For further information on the programme, speakers, presentations, sponsorship opportunities and exhibition stands, contact:**

Email: debbie@safety1st.co.za

Mobile/WhatsApp: +27 83 266 6662

**Benefits of attending the conference**

This conference will be a unique opportunity for attendees to develop their expertise and knowledge in PPE. They will gain valuable knowledge and practical skills when applying PPE in the workplace ultimately creating a more productive and safe work environment including:

- ◆ Enhanced knowledge of PPE, its uses, limitations and proper use
- ◆ Improved understanding of workplace hazards and risks
- ◆ Increased confidence in PPE, through proper application
- ◆ Networking opportunities with colleagues, industry experts, vendors and suppliers
- ◆ Access to resources for future concerns
- ◆ Improved awareness of industry trends and innovations
- ◆ Better understanding of emergency procedures and responses
- ◆ Learn about new technologies and innovations
- ◆ Training and education on correct PPE use and maintenance
- ◆ Increased knowledge of compliance and understanding the law
- ◆ Opportunities to learn from case studies
- ◆ Improved supply chain management and procurement processes
- ◆ Future innovations
- ◆ Understand the importance of using the correct PPE.



**Some of our exciting PRESENTERS**



**Ms Bulelwa Huna**  
Senior Specialist: Occupational Health & Hygiene. MPH: Occupational Hygiene. Department of Employment and Labour  
*Presentation title: The Role of PPE in Workplace Prevention Programmes*



**Dr Jeanneth Manganyi**  
Head: Occupational Hygiene Section, Honorary Lecturer: Wits School of Public Health National Institute for Occupational Health Division of the National Health Laboratory  
*Presentation title: A new bivariate respirator fit test panel representing Black South African respirator users in Gauteng*



**Deleane Luzzatto**  
Past Chairman SAPEMA.  
*Presentation title: SAPEMA: Past Present and Future*



**Prof Cas Badenhorst.**  
Associate Professor, Occupational Hygiene and Health Research Initiative (OHRI), North West University  
*Presentation title: Diesel particulate matter and welding fume protection through PPE*



**Loren Pearson**  
Sales and Marketing Manager Chemical Industrial SSA, DuPont  
*Presentation title: Selecting the correct protective clothing for a hazardous chemical environment*



**Mziwakhe Nhlapo**  
CEO of MMAT SHEC & ESG Training & Consulting Services, specialising in compensation matters. Past team leader NUM.  
*Presentation title: Ignore the law at your peril*



**Dharmesh Lakmidas**  
Sales Manager Thermal Apparel, SSA, DuPont.  
*Presentation title: Protecting workers from the effects of an electric arc*



**Leighton Bennett**  
Chairman Safety First Association  
*Presentation title: The OSH Practitioner's role in purchasing of PPE*



**David Selepe**  
High Voltage Technician at a power utility  
*Presentation title: Misuse of hand protection: A case study*



**Advocate Raynard Looch.**  
Managing Member Klass Looch Associates  
*Presentation title: PPE and the law*



**Wynand Englebrecht**  
CEO and Founder Fire Ops SA  
*Presentation title: Lessons learned from buying cheap PPE instead of correct PPE*



**Dr Anette Thompson**  
Podiatrist. *Presentation title: Safety footwear selection and foot health in the workplace*



**JW Eggink**  
Sector Sales Specialist BBF Safety Group.  
*Presentation title: A hard hat ... is a hard hat ... or is it?*

**DON'T DELAY**

- **REGISTER to attend** and qualify for early bird rates until 15 November 2025
- **BOOK your exhibition stand**



**Don't leave compliance to chance!**

## Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993 and Regulations



**Available as an e-book or portable A5 hard copy**

Legislation is constantly evolving, making it essential to keep informed about the latest developments in occupational health and safety law. However, staying compliant can be challenging without the right legal resource partner.

### **CUSTOMISE YOUR BULK ORDERS**

Customized branding is available for bulk purchases of LexisNexis pocketbooks and posters, allowing you to feature your logo, imagery, or tailored content. Simply select your preferred customisation and we will bring your vision to life.

Custom orders start at a minimum of 50 units per title



**Direct enquiries:**

**Michelle Baker**

(Sales Agent In Association  
with LexisNexis | Saiosh)

MediaMarx Advertising Brokers

**Tel: (031) 764 6725 | Cell: (073) 137 1231**

**[michelle.baker@mediamarx.co.za](mailto:michelle.baker@mediamarx.co.za) | [www.mediamarx.co.za](http://www.mediamarx.co.za)**