



ISO 45003: Risk Assessments for Psychological Hazards in the Workplace
The deskless workforce: an eye opener needing collective action
The dangers behind spreading fake news
NASA's look at risk management

KARAM Africa **AFRICA'S LEADERS** In Fall Arrest

Specialist in the field of Safety Harnesses & Belts, Hooks and Karabiners, Lanyards, Rescue and Descent Equipment, Protective Eyewear and Gloves. Committed to protecting the lives of workers in Africa by delivering a range of Personal Protective Equipment that Exceeds International Standards. Truly a global brand to reckon with.



uvex



uvex safety + uvex sports.
One brand. One mission.

uvex products protect people at work in sport and for leisure. As a partner of international top-level sport, uvex equips over 1000 professional athletes worldwide, e.g. with ski goggles, equestrian riding helmets and cycling helmets

The transfer of knowledge between uvex safety and uvex sports makes our products even safer, more functional and more comfortable - both product divisions benefit mutually from the collaboration.

This is evident in our supravision coating technology, for example, which is used equally by both uvex safety and uvex sports. This unique coating ensures maximum anti-fogging properties on sports goggles and safety spectacles, enabling the wearer to put in their very best performance at work or at play.

protecting people

uvex.co.za

African OS&H



Formerly known as National Safety

July/August 2021 - Volume 81 Number 4

CONTENTS

FEATURE ARTICLES

- ISO 45003: Risk Assessments for Psychological Hazards in the Workplace6
- The dangers behind spreading fake news10
- Company vaccination policies - what you can and can't do12
- A NASA look at risk management16
- SABS updates national standard on fire detection and alarm systems18
- Obituary: Hendrik "Vaattjie" Heyneke19

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY



- Ten principles of employee empowerment on construction health and safety30

GAS SAFETY



- Natural gas for cleaner, more efficient production28
- Why a price war will hurt the customer28
- Reports of deaths due to non-compliance ...29

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT



- DuPont employees open their hearts14
- KARAM protects every worker-at-height20
- The future of uvex safety eyewear - lens coatings and shapes22

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



- The deskless workforce: an eye opener needing collective action4

OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE



- SAIOH President's Message24
- Introducing our council members24
- Council activities24
- Branch activities25
- From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC)25

Cover story: See pages 20-21 **KARAM**

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





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)
- HSE Connection Point (HCESP)

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)

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: George Browse
Vice Chairman: Leighton Bennett
Administration & Membership: Sankie Greyling
Committee members: Leighton Bennett, George Browse, Sankie Greyling, Wensley Misrole, Wellington Mudenha, Debbie Myer, Steward Shapiro, Fabian Buckley, Herman Fourie

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

Advertising & Editorial:
 Delinds Publications cc
 12 Delta Road, Blairgowrie, Randburg, PO Box 72366 Parkview 2122
 Tel: +27 11 886-5985 / Cell: +27 83-266-6662
 E-mail: delinds@mweb.co.za

Copyright: 2021 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

THE FORGOTTEN DESKLESS WORKER

Deskless workers make up a staggering 80% of the global workforce, and yet in his article Ehi Iden describes them as the "forgotten workforce, undeserved with technology and poorly managed by their employers". This sector which plays a vital role in any organisation, includes amongst others, healthcare workers, delivery drivers, security personnel, janitors, hospitality employees as well as workers from the manufacturing retail, construction and mining sectors.

Once the pandemic was declared and countries went into lock-down, office workers stayed safely at home behind their computers, whereas many of the deskless workers went into overdrive, to keep world economies going and global populations safe.

Due to the nature of their work, deskless employees are often at higher risk of injury or disease than office workers. During COVID-19, the chances of them suffering from ill health increased, with the urgency to keep them safe and healthy even more critical.

Proper workplace communication is now more important than ever before, but many deskless workers feel cut-off and neglected. Whereas office workers have their own email addresses, computers and cell phones, deskless workers often don't.

Ehi Iden quotes some worrying statistics, and cautions thought leaders, captains of industries, policy makers, labour administrators, technology inventors and many others to consider the deskless workers in their designs, policy formulation processes, management systems and business processes.

RISK MANAGEMENT AT NASA

Leighton Bennett gives us some interesting insights into the risk management of NASA's space mission projects. He explains that the methodology introduced by NASA is part of a systems engineering process which emphasises the proper use of risk analysis in its broadest sense to make risk-informed decisions that impact the mission execution domains of safety, technical, cost, and schedule for the NASA projects.

VACCINATION POLICIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Louise Woodburn discusses the guidelines published by the Department of Labour on 11 June 2021. She explains that although employers can make vaccinations mandatory, this is not a blanket policy and cannot be applied unilaterally.

FAKE NEWS AND ITS IMPACT ON VACCINATIONS

With the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out now in full-swing in South Africa, problems are arising in the workplace amongst the vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees, with the vaccinated refusing to work close to those shunning vaccinations.


Within months of the virus being declared a pandemic, the first vaccines were ready to be administered resulting in a variety of conspiracy theories doing the rounds.. Most of these have been spread by fake news through social media, instilling fear in the misinformed, who instead of listening to the professionals, become influenced by unjustified and ill-informed fake stories. In this article Kiara Sunder shares some insights into the psychology behind spreading fake news.

VERISHIELD™ 100 SERIES

THE  **VeriShield 100 Series**
Passive Earmuffs
are designed
for optimum
comfort
MAKING COMFORT PERSONAL

Honeywell
HOWARD
LEIGHT


FEATURES



17%
MORE ADJUSTMENT
Comfortably fits a wider range of head sizes

16%
WIDER
CUP
OPENING
Ideal for workers with larger ears, or who wear hearing aids

INTERNAL Baffle DESIGN (PATENTED)

Reduces weight of earcup and improves attenuation


MEMORY FOAM
EAR CUSHIONS
Denser and softer for greater comfort/attenuation


PPE INTEGRATION
7 seconds to assemble to a hard hat


VISIBLE ATTENUATION RATINGS
Marked on the earmuff cup


LIGHTWEIGHT Cushioned Headband
Just the right fit around the ear

ROBUST CONSTRUCTION 
Steel wire framework, ABS molded, durable markings, oil-resistant cup surface



For more information visit
www.honeywellsafety.com

Hearing protection devices are only effective
WHEN THEY ARE WORN 

The deskless workforce: *an eye opener needing collective action*

I have worked within the field of occupational health and safety for over two decades, the most interesting part of this profession is the dynamism and quick unearthing of new subject areas. I find this most exciting above everything else.

A short while ago, I came across a report titled “The State of Deskless Workforce 2021”, the word “Deskless” caught my attention and made me read the entire report which opened my mind to a new dimension of knowledge.

To a great extent, I have lived with the knowledge that some people work in spaces where they do not necessarily sit behind a system or have the luxury of a desk, but I never knew they are an already categorised population of global workforce that falls within this bracket.

WHO ARE THE DESKLESS WORKERS?

According to the 2021 report from Quinyx, 2.7 billion workforce are deskless which is nearly 80% of the global workforce. These are the vital workers, the heroes that keep our lives and economies running, they are the frontline workers found in healthcare systems, delivery drivers, bartenders, grocery store workers, security personnel, janitorial service workers and workers from manufacturing companies etc.

A deskless worker can be defined as anyone who does not sit behind a desk or computer to perform their job. These workers played a very crucial role during the pandemic when many countries were on lockdown.

A survey shows that 22% of them do not feel safe at work because of COVID-19. They did not have the luxury of working from home, instead they were on the roads daily serving us all and ensuring life goes on. They have been described in some studies as the forgotten workforce, undeserved with technology and poorly managed by their employers.

The deskless workforce deserve to be better managed, have fair work schedules and a better work-life balance.

As documented in the 2021 report, 51% of deskless workers go to work sick because they cannot afford to take time off, 21% do not feel appreciated at work, 57% said their personal care time suffers due to work schedule, while 50% reported understaffing issues.

Covering for staff who are absent from work, being forced to work longer hours without extra pay can have detrimental results. This can also be linked to the high staff turnover amongst this set of employees.

As stated in this report, 29% said they left their jobs because of a lack of notice in scheduling



Ehi Iden President
OSHAfrica

The vital deskless workers held the countries together during the lockdowns



OSHAfrica

changes. I personally saw this happen several times during the years I spent managing hospitals. We must not forget that workers feel more comfortable and secure in places where they feel appreciated and cared for.

DESKLESS WORKERS AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

One key question that should be asked, is this set of workers given any consideration in the future of work?

Modern technology often does not cater for the deskless worker, often causing a breakdown in communications between managers, staff and colleagues.

While we make apps, cloud platforms and SaaS offerings for desk based workers, only 1% of business spending currently focuses on deskless technologies.

This was again confirmed with the 43% who said managers do not have a tool or mobile app that makes it easy to swap shifts with colleagues.

More investments should be made in this direction to alleviate most of the threats currently faced by the deskless work population.

Only 23% of deskless workers get paid sick time while 51% go to work sick because they cannot afford to take sick time. Because of this, the majority of them hardly recover from ill health which has a high possibility of triggering burnout and increased stress.

BETTER MANAGEMENT AND CARE IS NEEDED

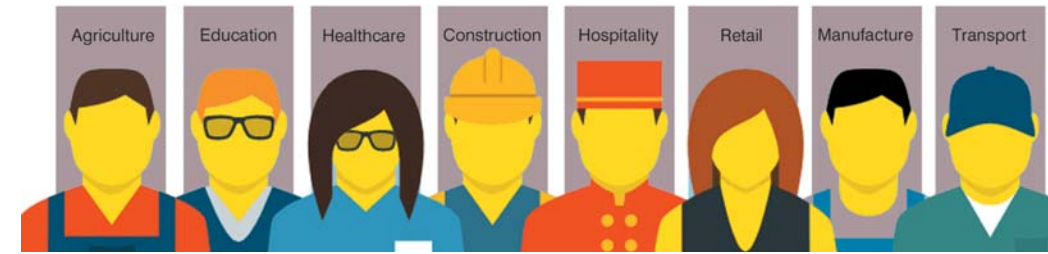
It is high time that opinion leaders and wellbeing policy experts start lending their voices to the plight of this category of workers in terms of fair labour policies and flexibility of work.

As documented in the 2021 report, 35% of the workers said they would rather have flexible schedule than higher pay. This is the extent of these concerns.

Allowing employees to have control over their jobs is a strong ingredient towards mitigating psychosocial risks. Human beings are not robots, they need that freedom to be expressive, and if this does not happen, their creativity will be dampened and it will not be in anyone’s best interest.

While 37% of deskless workers from the study feel pressured to take shifts that they do not want, 32% are unable to swap shifts with co-workers and 55% first have to call their managers. I believe that this contributes towards a high degree of presenteeism and rate of accidents among workers.

Optimal performance in the workplace has a lot to do with the psychological readiness of employees



makers, labour administrators, technology inventors and many others must sit back for once and consider the deskless workers in their designs, policy formulation processes, management systems and

business processes.

It is better to consider their plights now and find ways around mitigating them, than ending up having to deal with an aged retired population of over 2 billion people characterised with work related illnesses.

We can be good leaders if we consider empathy in our management systems, and this will go a long way in reducing the prevalence of most workplace conditions such as stress, burnout, poor work-life balance, understaffing and non-flexible work schedules as highlighted in this report.

A safe and decent workplace culture is necessary to place value on humanity above everything else.

The deskless workforce are people we see daily around us. It is important for employers to fix their issues. By not fixing these issues, their conditions will become ever more difficult and they will feel like they are being treated as less than human.

Empathy is placing yourself in another person’s shoes, apathy is showing a lack of interest or concern in another person’s condition. To fix this growing concern, we must all show honesty and agree that this is a workplace problem.

REFERENCES

Quinyx, The State of the Deskless Workforce 2021. Available from: <https://www.quinyx.com/en-us/deskless-workforce> (accessed 2 Aug 2021).

Laroui, F. (2019). The Rise of Deskless Workers. <https://www.exoplatform.com/blog/2019/08/20/the-rise-of-deskless-workers/> (accessed 2 Aug 2021)

Xuezhao, L. (2019) The Billion-Dollar Ideas That Transform The Deskless Workforce. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lanxuezhao/2019/06/17/the-billion-dollar-ideas-that-could-transform-the-deskless-workforce/?sh=38fa2be0a4fa> (accessed 2 Aug 2021)

Morris, D. (2017). New French Law Bars Work Emails after Hours <https://fortune.com/2017/01/01/french-right-to-disconnect-law/> (accesses 2 Aug 2021)

Ornstein, D, Collins E and Glassberg, J. ((2019) More Countries Consider Implementing a “Right to Disconnect” <https://www.internationallaborlaw.com/2019/01/29/more-countries-consider-implementing-a-right-to-disconnect/> (accessed 2 Aug 2021)

and this must be clearly understood by both employers and line managers.

Motivation and incentive programmes are found lacking in most workplace management systems where profits are prioritised over the safety, health and wellbeing of employees.

It is important to keep in mind that employees flourish and make sacrifices in systems where they feel cared for. This is clearly obvious with 21% of the workers reporting that they do not feel appreciated at work, and of this percentage, 58% further indicated that their employers see them as disposable which is probably the cause of them contacting workers during off hours for scheduling issues as reported by 79%.

This has a negative impact on employees’ morale and self-esteem leading to high staff turnover.

EXEMPTION FROM RESPONDING TO EMAILS AFTER HOURS

I am happy to see some countries are legislating that employees do not have to respond to official emails after work hours.

France was documented in 2017 as the first country to sign into law the “Right to Disconnect”. Under this law, the employee is not obligated to respond to emails from employers after work hours.

Philippines, Spain and a few others have also implemented this law, while countries like Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, India, Quebec and the Federal Government of Canada have all proposed laws considering adopting this right for workers.

We need to draw a clear line between personal time and work time. It is disrespectful to encroach on employees’ personal time which most times may be done unintentionally but without any consideration.

GOING FORWARD WITH THE DESKLESS WORKER IN MIND

The truth is, when we read the entire Deskless Workforce Report 2021, you will agree with me that these are indeed the undeserved majority who are not considered when technological investments are made by organisations.

They are poorly covered by legislation in most countries, yet they are a central nerve towards growth of global economies.

Thought leaders, captains of industries, policy



ISO 45003: Risk Assessments for Psychological Hazards in the Workplace

It is important to remember what needs to be included in a risk assessment for psychological hazards in the workplace?

Dr. Bill Pomfret examines the guidelines in the new ISO 45003 standard on managing psychological risks may help in identifying these types of hazards. ISO 45003 Occupational health and safety management - Psychological health and safety in the workplace Guidelines - is currently being developed as outlined in a previous blog and provides guidance on managing psychological risks. Organisations need to understand the underlying sources of harm before control measures are considered in order to improve the effectiveness of activities to manage psychosocial risk. The standard provides guidelines for psychosocial risk assessment in Clause 6.1.2 hazard identification and assessment of risks and opportunities, of ISO 45003.

Organisations are required to maintain processes for hazard identification that are ongoing and proactive.

The organisation should identify hazards of a psychosocial nature mainly under the following 3 headings:

- Aspects of how work is organised
- Social factors at work
- Work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks

1) ASPECTS OF HOW WORK IS ORGANISED

Roles and expectations

Examples of where roles and expectations could be a risk include:



Dr. Bill Pomfret brings an unrivaled perspective on risk, regulation and liability from over 50 years of experience as a safety consultant working for leading companies around the world.

He also spent nearly a decade in the North Sea exploration and production as a safety manager. Dr Bill is a passionate advocate for safety training.

Role ambiguity:

- role conflict
- duty of care for other people
- scenarios where workers do not have clear guidelines on the tasks they are expected to do (and not do)
- expectations within a role that undermine one another (e.g. being expected to provide good customer service, but also to not spend a long time with customers)
- uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks and work standards

Job control or autonomy:

- limited opportunity to participate in decision-making.
- lack of control over workload
- low levels of influence and independence (e.g., not being able to influence the speed, order or schedule of work tasks and workload)

Job Demands:

- underuse of skills
- continuous work exposure to interaction with people (e.g., the public, customers, students, patients)
- having too much to do within a certain time or with a set number of workers
- conflicting demands and deadlines
- unrealistic expectations of a worker's competence or responsibilities
- lack of task variety or performing highly repetitive or meaningless tasks
- requirements for excessive periods of alertness

- and concentration
- working with aggressive or distressed people

Organisational change management:

- lack of practical support provided to assist workers during transition periods
- prolonged restructuring
- consultation and communication about workplace changes is lacking, of poor quality, untimely or not meaningful

Remote and isolated work:

- working in locations that are far from home, family, friends and usual support networks (e.g., isolated working or 'fly-in-fly-out' work arrangements)
- working alone in non-remote locations without social/human interaction at work (e.g., working at home)
- working in private homes (e.g., providing care or domestic roles in other people's homes)

Workload and work pace:

- work overload or underload
- high levels of time pressure, continually subject to deadlines
- machine pacing

Working hours and schedule:

- lack of variety of work
- shift work
- inflexible work schedules
- unpredictable hours
- long or unsociable hours
- fragmented work or work that is not meaningful.

Job security and precarious work:

- uncertainty regarding work availability
- non-standard employment that is low paid and/or insecure
- working in situations that are not properly covered or protected by labour law or social protection

2) SOCIAL FACTORS AT WORK

This can include issues such as the following:

Interpersonal relationships:

- poor communication
- poor relationships between managers, supervisors, coworkers, and clients or others that workers interact with
- interpersonal conflict
- harassment, bullying
- third party violence

Leadership:

- lack of clear vision and objectives
- management style unsuited to the nature of the work and its demand
- failing to listen or only casually listening to complaints and suggestions
- withholding information

- providing inadequate communication and support
- lack of accountability
- lack of fairness
- inconsistent and poor decision-making practices

Organisational/workgroup culture:

- poor communication
- low levels of support for problem-solving and personal development
- lack of definition of, or agreement on, organisational objectives
- inconsistent and untimely application of policies and procedures, unfair decision making

Recognition and reward:

- an imbalance between workers' effort and formal and informal recognition and reward
- lack of appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of workers' efforts in a fair and timely manner

Career development:

- career stagnation and uncertainty, under-promotion or over-promotion, lack of opportunity for skill development

Support:

- lack of support from supervisors and co-workers, lack of access to support services, lack of information/training, to support work performance

Supervision:

- lack of constructive performance feedback and evaluation processes
- lack of encouragement/acknowledgement
- lack of communication
- lack of shared organisational vision and clear objectives
- lack of support and/or resources to facilitate improvements in performance
- lack of fairness

Civility and respect:

- lack of trust, honesty, respect, civility, and fairness, lack of respect and consideration in interactions among workers as well as with customers, clients, and the public

Work/life balance:

- work tasks, roles, schedules or expectations that cause workers to continue working in their own time

Violence at work:

Incidents involving an explicit or implicit challenge to health, safety or well-being at work. Violence can be internal, external or client initiated, e.g. abuse, threats, assault (physical or verbal), gender-based violence

Harassment:

This includes unwanted, offensive, intimidating

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

How to apply controls

Eliminate	Completely remove the hazard from the worksite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove a hazardous chemical from the farm or Prompt repair of equipment eliminates hazards
Substitute	Replace the hazard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a less toxic chemical instead of a more toxic chemical or Make use of automation to protect people
Engineered Solutions	Isolate people from the hazard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use guards to keep people away from moving parts or Provide appropriate ventilation to remove airborne dangers
Administrative	Change the way people work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use written instructions, training and signage
Personal Protective Equipment	Use Personal Protective Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-vis vest, gloves or workboots

behaviours (sexual or non-sexual in nature) which relate to one or more specific characteristic of the targeted individual, (e.g. based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age)

Bullying:

Repeated (more than once) unreasonable behaviours which can present a risk to health, safety and well-being at work.

Behaviours can be overt or covert, e.g.:

- social or physical isolation
- assigning meaningless or unfavourable tasks
- name-calling, insults and intimidation
- undermining behaviour
- undue public criticism
- withholding information or resources critical for one's job
- malicious rumours or gossiping
- assigning impossible deadline

3) WORK ENVIRONMENT, EQUIPMENT AND HAZARDOUS TASKS

Work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks include:

- inadequate equipment availability, suitability or maintenance
- poor workplace conditions such as lack of space, poor lighting, excessive noise
- lack of the necessary tools, equipment or other resources to complete work tasks
- working in extreme conditions or situations, such as very high or low temperatures, or at height
- working in unstable environments such as conflict zones

An organisation can identify psychosocial hazards in several ways for example by:

- reviewing job descriptions;
- analysing work tasks, schedules and locations;
- consulting with workers, clients and other interested parties at regular intervals, including verbally or through documented information;
- analysing performance evaluations, worker surveys, standardised questionnaires, audits, etc.;
- holding interviews, group discussions or using checklists;
- carrying out workplace inspections and observations which help to understand how work is carried out, and how workers interact with one another; or
- reviewing relevant documented information such as incident reports, hazard and risk reports, grouped occupational health statistics, workers' compensation claims, worker surveys, absenteeism and worker turnover data.

Psychosocial hazards often interact with each other and with other types of hazards in the work environment. Human factors also need to be considered and, in some cases, specialised advice or knowledge may be required to identify these hazards.

The ISO 45003 draft international standard (DIS) is currently undergoing the public consultation stage of development and the final version of the standard has just been published in July 2021.

REGISTER NOW!

INTERNATIONAL VISION ZERO
IN SAFETY, HEALTH & WELL-BEING
CONFERENCE 2021

BOOK YOUR EXHIBITION STAND NOW!
LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

Theme FROM SAFETY AND HEALTH PROBLEMS TO PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN CONSTRUCTION AND RELATED INDUSTRIES

FEATURING: CONFERENCE, TECHNICAL/BREAKOUT SESSION, EXHIBITION, NETWORKING/AWARD DINNER

23RD - 25TH NOVEMBER, 2021 **BALMORAL HALL**
FEDERAL PALACE HOTEL, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS, NIGERIA

CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

TRANSPORTATION

INFORMATION

MINING

TRADE, GOODS LOGISTIC & PORTS HANDLING

ELECTRICITY, GAS & WATER

CONSTRUCTION

EXHIBITION

Showcase the latest technologies, product innovation, and best practices. Visitors to the Exhibition can look forward to top solution providers and industry partners' stands and presentations from all over the world.

TECHNICAL & BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Choose different sessions - the vast areas of focus from Safety & Health Problems to Practical Solutions

CONFERENCE

This conference will feature an interactive session on understanding human error and health and safety behaviors.

NETWORKING

encourage networking & to create unique business & educational opportunities for all attendees. Networking opportunities with the authorities, etc

FOR MORE ENQUIRIES

+234 802 305 0678, +234 802 491 8800, +234 803 561 8669 **+49 0202 398-8200**

info@ivzconference.com **www.ivzconference.com**

The dangers behind spreading fake news

With COVID-19 vaccine roll-out now in full-swing in South Africa, problems are arising in the workplace amongst the vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees, with the vaccinated refusing to work close to those shunning vaccinations.

Within months of the virus being declared a pandemic, the first vaccines were ready to be administered resulting in a variety of conspiracy theories doing the rounds, from governments tracking their citizens with microchips, to the body's DNA being altered, to big pharma only manufacturing for sinister purposes, to the vaccine actually giving COVID-19. And most of these have been spread by fake news through social media, instilling fear in the misinformed who instead of listening to bodies like the WHO, or scientists and the medical fraternity, become influenced by unjustified fake stories.

In this article Kiara Sunder shares some insights into the psychology behind spreading fake news.

Spreading fake news is generally acknowledged as being disruptive and potentially harmful. So much so that our nation's president has on several occasions cautioned the public against sharing false information, with particular reference to the COVID-19 pandemic. So, what drives people to create and circulate fake news?

Kiara Sunder, a clinical psychologist highlights that many individuals are naively unaware that they are sharing misinformation. "There are also those who do it knowingly as a means of satisfying underlying social needs or political agendas. These motives are multi-layered and can be quite complex to unpack," she says. "However, there is a common factor that leads to fake news doing harm and that is a strong societal trust in online sources."

MISPLACED TRUST

Sunder points out that historically, news was received in print or broadcast format via official news channels, which the public trusted as having been researched and verified.

Yet now, in a relatively short space of time, obtaining news online on social media platforms and communication apps from various, often unofficial, sources including from individuals has become the norm for many people.

"The internet has given a voice to anyone and everyone. While this has its benefits, it also means that a great deal of information is shared unchecked.

"Digital illiteracy is of growing concern, and is particularly prevalent amongst older generations. Younger people who have grown up with technology have high levels of digital literacy built into their schema, or cognitive framework for organising information. This gives them a certain level of built-in understanding about what is and is not 'real' online. Conversely, older



Kiara Sunder, clinical psychologist practising at Netcare Akeso Umhlanga

People spread misinformation with often harmful consequences

individuals who have had to learn technology later in life tend to be more trusting.

"There are many internet users who mistakenly believe that anything published online must be true. The same goes for information received in a text message or voice note via a trusted contact," she says.

THE SPECTRUM OF MOTIVES BEHIND FAKE NEWS

Sunder notes that there is a broad spectrum of what drives people to create and share misinformation. "Some of these factors are less obvious and while it is multi-layered, there are some clear psychological motivations that can be observed.

SOCIAL STATUS SEEKING

Sunder says while these users may not be aware of the motives behind their behaviour, they are in fact seeking status and self-promotion, indicating that some emotional needs are not being met in real life.

- **Being relevant** – Many individuals feel constantly bombarded by social media posts of friends and influencers who appear to be highly successful and this can lead to feelings of inadequacy amongst those who do not have the same type of content to share online. They therefore turn to sharing other types of information, regardless of factual accuracy, to present themselves as having something to say.
- **Being the first** – Some individuals feel ongoing pressure to become the first to post or share any new piece of information, true or false. This can also be a type of social gratification to be seen as a 'protector' of one's online community.

ANXIETY OUTLET

There are people suffering from anxiety and mental health conditions who use social media as an escape or as a channel for processing their own feelings, explains Sunder.

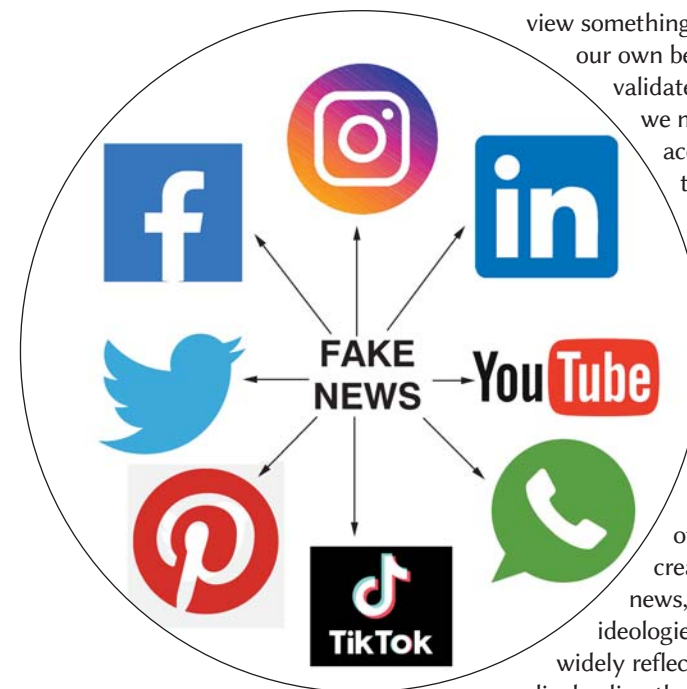
- **Escape** – Many individuals experience anxiety from daily news about events taking place in the world and they may choose to switch off from that and consume social media instead. However, this can lead to people engaging in intrusive and factually baseless content without realising it.
- **Expression** – Some individuals find a sense of validation in being able to share a post or message that reflects their own feelings or fears, even if the information shared may not necessarily be true.

- **Group mentality** – Needing to feel that you are not alone and connecting via social media and communication apps can be harmful when misinformation, which speaks to the common fears of groups of people who already feel nervous or threatened, is spread thereby fuelling panic and confusion.

CONFIRMATION BIAS

Needing to feel validated is also a motivating factor amongst those who spread fake news on a more regular basis, according to Sunder, particularly those who buy into alternative views, or conspiracy theories.

- **Lack of objectivity** – It is a natural human reaction that when we read, hear or view something that confirms our own beliefs, we feel validated by it and we may then accept it as being true. People who place their own beliefs above verified, factual information are therefore highly susceptible to spreading, and often even creating, fake news, as their ideologies are not widely reflected in the media, leading them to feel unsupported in their thoughts. The motivation here is not malice but a lack of objectivity.



People who place their own beliefs above verified, factual information are therefore highly susceptible to spreading, and often even creating, fake news, as their ideologies are not widely reflected in the media, leading them to feel unsupported in their thoughts. The motivation here is not malice but a lack of objectivity.

- **Technology overlap** – There is an overlap with technology here, as the algorithms in search engines and social media platforms track the content that we consume and push similar content towards us, which informs much of what we see, again confirming belief or preference rather than fact.

SELF-SERVING INTENTIONS

Persons who create and knowingly spread fake news intentionally will often have a political or psychological agenda, which they are trying to advance or serve.

Sunder says these individuals may have the intent to do harm or are so single minded in their pursuit that they have no regard for any damage they may cause.

- **Politically motivated** – This includes those

working for a specific cause that is not receiving the attention they feel it deserves, or who may have intent to do damage to another person or group. These individuals will create or spread fake news to achieve such ends.

- **Histrionics** – Someone with a histrionic personality trait, who craves attention and drama, may create or share a sensational piece of information, sometimes using a lot of capital letters, exclamation marks or emojis to make it appear more dramatic. They may relate it to themselves for attention or create some attention toward themselves.
- **Narcissists** – Narcissistic personalities may share information for the sake of appearing to be important and knowledgeable. Individuals with narcissistic traits may be self-centred, have less empathy and desire admiration. They may share news, fake or true, that puts the spotlight on them regardless of the consequences it may have to others.

FINANCIAL GAIN

According to Sunder, criminals targeting vulnerable individuals are known to use fake news as a tool to spread the word about sought after opportunities, for example through fictitious job or training advertisements and other similar scams, whereby unsuspecting individuals are asked to pay some kind of administrative or activation fee with the promise of earnings or other financial rewards in return.

Such fraudulent activity is often disguised as a highly legitimate-looking advert or other form of communication, and the persons targeted may feel pressured by the ambiguity of the situation.

Often not knowing how to verify the information presented, victims may fall prey to the scam, resulting in serious financial loss which can be detrimental who cannot afford the loss.

"Without healthy coping mechanisms in real life, people are more likely to lash out at others or latch onto harmful online trends.

"Whether intentional or not, such behaviour can result in online bullying, reputational damage and financial loss as well as physical violence, not to mention confusion and disruption," Sunder says.

CONCLUSION

"Understanding the impact of consuming and sharing unverified information should be an important part of conversations between employees and employers as well as between colleagues.

"People need to be made aware of the dangers of fake news and online predators.

"Those looking for employment need to be able to identify fake job advertisements" concludes Sunder.

Company vaccination policies - *what you can and can't do*

The Department of Labour published guidelines on 11 June 2021 stipulating that Covid-19 vaccinations can be made mandatory by employers. However, this raises a number of questions, including whether or not any organisation can implement such a policy, and how they go about doing so.

Additional factors also need to be considered, such as how this impacts existing health and safety policies, as well as what to do if employees invoke their right not to vaccinate due to religious, personal or medical reasons.

The landscape is inherently complex and fraught with challenges, and businesses simply cannot afford to get it wrong.

IT IS NOT A BLANKET POLICY

While the guidelines state that mandatory vaccinations can be implemented by employers, this is by no means a blanket policy that can be unilaterally applied.

Employers need to justify their particular circumstances, including the nature of work and the size of the workforce. For example, a small enterprise where the majority of the workforce is able to operate remotely would not be able to justify this approach, whereas a mining or manufacturing concern would certainly have adequate grounds for such a policy.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS TAKE PRECEDENCE

It must also be understood that collective agreements that are already in place with unions will always take precedence.

It is important for businesses to work with unions and communicate clearly, engaging with the workforce on the issue. They cannot simply decide to put a mandatory vaccination policy in place.

International standards, such as ISO 45000, backs up this approach. The ISO standard mandates that a consultative approach be followed, and that employers engage with their workforce to create a safe working environment for all.

A RISK ASSESSMENT IS THE FIRST STEP

Before any policy or procedure can be implemented, it is essential to firstly conduct a risk assessment of the organisation.

This incorporates many aspects, including

- the viability of a remote workforce and of continued remote work,
- the requirement for international travel,
- the number of vulnerable employees,
- the number of employees exposed to the public,



Louise Woodburn, General Manager of KBC Risk Solutions, a Division of KBC Health & Safety

- the effectiveness of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the environment,
- and more.

Once the risk assessment has been conducted to determine the necessity of a mandatory vaccination policy, a plan needs to be formulated to develop clear specifications.

This includes how to handle circumstances where individuals will not vaccinate for their personal reasons.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) precedent demonstrates that individuals cannot be dismissed for refusing to vaccinate, so controls need to put into place to cater to this eventuality.

EXPERTISE AND SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL

Unpacking all of the requirements to implement any health and safety-related policy can be exceptionally complex, and employers simply cannot afford to get it wrong or be inconsistent. Nor can they run the risk of facing the CCMA. Policies need to include all angles and close all loopholes, and understanding the requirements can be challenging.

Businesses must ensure they are covering all of their bases, removing areas of doubt by ensuring that the nuances are understood and that guidelines and controls are effectively implemented.

Without a solid understanding of the implications of a policy, potential objections and how to deal with them, businesses will not be able to handle challenges as they arise.

Communication is key, and working with employees and unions is critical, especially given the volatile nature of the current situation.

As the pandemic evolves, the laws around health and safety are changing on an almost daily basis, making this already complex environment more challenging than ever.

Employers must be aware of the law and make the best decisions for their business and their employees.

Controls need to be put into place to cater for the non-vaccinated



IOSH Virtual Conference

A brighter, safer future – for workers, for businesses, for West Africa

Dates: 16 and 17 September 2021

For **programme** and **registration** details go to

<https://www.iosh.com/wac>

Topics to be discussed include:

- health and safety in the healthcare sector
- health and safety in educational settings
- the impact on different industries of the forthcoming occupational safety and health bill in Ghana
- the leadership role of women in the occupational safety and health profession.



IOSH, the chartered body for safety and health, is the leading membership organisation for safety and health professionals who work to create workplaces that are safer, healthier and more sustainable. It has a membership of over 47,000 safety and health professionals in more than 130 countries.

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) is organising a conference in September that focuses on how safety and health at work will benefit workers, businesses and the economies of West Africa.

The conference will discuss and debate key issues that face the business community regionally and globally and how the application of good safety and health principles at work will bring sustainable competitive advantage. The title of the event, “A brighter, safer future – for workers, for businesses, for West Africa” highlights the benefits that workplace safety and health can create for individuals, communities and society.

Participants will be able to take part in debates and listen to keynote presentations and panel discussions involving, among many others, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Global Compact, the Lagos State Safety Commission, the Ghana Health Service and the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria.

The online conference, which is free to join, follows a hugely successful event last year, attended by over 900 representatives of government departments, non-governmental organisations, businesses, industry and academia. Within months, IOSH inaugurated its West Africa Division, whose members include safety and health professionals working in Ghana, Nigeria and West African countries. It is IOSH’s first network on the continent of Africa and is continuing to attract new members and the possibility of potential collaborations with other institutions based in the region.

The conference will demonstrate the increasingly critical role of occupational safety and health professionals in business planning for all kinds of organisation, whether they are in the private, public or voluntary sector, no matter what their size, from micro-organisation to multinational. In particular, they have a central role to play in recovering economically from the Covid-19 pandemic. This recovery is not merely tactical and operational but an imperative for long-term sustainability.

One key message of the conference will be that the protection of workers must be an essential part of business planning if organisations are to survive and prosper in the future. Governments, businesses and organisations will be urged to plan with this consideration in mind.

ERGONIZE© your workspaces!

Comply with the newly released Ergonomic Regulations

OCCUMED cc Ergonizing© workspaces for 20 years

Link risks to medical surveillance programmes

Ergonomic training programmes

Identify specific risk areas

Contact Dr Claire Deacon Cell: 083 658 5390
Email: claire@occumed.co.za / claire@cd-a.co.za



DuPont employees open their hearts

An essential part of our mission at DuPont is to connect with people, drive progress and volunteerism within society. This strategic approach to impact on communities is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and enables us to meet local needs while empowering employees in the communities where they work and live.

Beyond our day-to-day company purpose of empowering the world with essential innovations, we understand the power of people contributing their time, effort, or resources.

We encourage employees around the world, at all levels, to be involved in their communities in whatever ways they can - while fostering a positive spirit of engagement with one another.

The company has set nine sustainable goals creating sustainable innovations to help customers and the world thrive, increasing the sustainability profile throughout its operations and acting to ensure the inclusiveness, well-being and health of people and communities.



Since 2011, DuPont South Africa staff have been involved in community projects such as cooking food for the Alexandra Disability Centre

Alexandra is a bustling congested township situated next to the financial hub of Sandton, its inhabitants often living in overcrowded accommodation.

DuPont South Africa is involved in many community projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and specifically with the Alexandra Disability Centre since 2011.

This project initiated by one of our passionate DuPont colleagues, focuses on support for the mentally and physically challenged in this community.

The Alexandra Disability Centre is a non-profit organisation consisting of a child care centre, training facility and an economic development workshop. It has empowered over 150 women and men from the Alexandra community by providing job creation skills and opportunities, thereby contributing to alleviating poverty and reducing crime in the area.



DuPont employees donating food staples to Alexandra Disability Centre



During 2019, DuPont donated a wheel-chair to the leader of the Alexandra Disability Centre



The Alexandra Disability Centre building

The centre is successfully run by the disabled, empowering the community with critical skills and giving them the self-confidence and belief that they can contribute independently to their upkeep.

'This is an annual community outreach programme which we as DuPont feel proud to be a part of, particularly as all contributions are funded 100% by our employees, really bringing out the caring and generous spirit of my colleagues' adds Ajen Maharaj, Country Leader for DuPont.

For more information contact:
Alexandra Disability Centre Tel: +27 11 882-1147
Email: admin@alexandradisabilitymovement.co.za



<https://www.safespec.dupont.com> | Tel: +27 11 218-8600

Copyright © 2021 DuPont. All rights reserved. DuPont™, The DuPont Oval Logo, and all trademarks and service marks denoted with ™, ® or © are owned by affiliates of DuPont de Nemours, Inc. unless otherwise noted

A NASA look at risk management

I found a *NASA Risk Management Handbook* on the internet, so looked at its content, which gave me some interesting risk management insights in relation of NASA's Space Mission projects, that I felt I should share.

INSIGHT CONCEPTS

The first insight concept related to the requirement for risk management for NASA, its institutions, programmes and projects, is to have a **Risk Management Performance Focus** with respect to achieving explicitly established and stated performance requirements.

On this basis the context of risk is considered as the potential for shortfalls, which may be realised in the future, with respect to achieving explicitly stated performance commitments.

Such performance shortfalls may be related to institutional support for mission execution, or related to any one or more of the following mission execution domains:

- Safety
- Technical
- Cost
- Schedules

The second insight concept was **RIDM**, meaning **Risk-Informed Decision Making** which is invoked in many different project, process and operational management areas, with the RIDM process being based on systems engineering and other management processes where decisions typically have one or more of the following characteristics:

- **High stakes** involved in deciding on significant costs, significant potential safety impacts or the importance of meeting objectives.
- **Complexity** related to the actual ramifications of alternative options which are difficult to understand without detailed analysis.
- **Uncertainty** in relation to key inputs which create substantial outcome uncertainty of the decision alternative options, and points to risks that need to be managed.
- **Multiple attributes** where the greater the number of things to be considered or used, the greater the need for formal analysis.
- **Diversity of stakeholders** which means the extra attention is warranted to clarify objectives and formulate performance measures when the set of stakeholders reflects a diversity of values, preferences and perspectives.

It needs to be noted that the satisfaction of all of these above conditions is not a requirement for conducting RIDM, but rather the need for RIDM increases as a function of the above conditions.



Leighton Bennett (Pr.CHSA)
Benrisk Consulting,
Insurance Surveyor,
and OHS and
Risk Management
Consultant. He is Vice
President Safety First
Association



Note that all these RIDM decision characteristics would also apply to major South African projects like the Gautrain and Eskom's Medupi and other power station projects.

The third insight concept is how NASA defines **Risk Management (RM)**. To achieve and to promote proactive risk management, NASA integrates two complimentary processes, namely *Risk-Informed Decision Making (RIDM)* and *Continuous Risk Assessment (CRM)* into a single coherent framework, as illustrated.



The fourth insight concept is the **Risk-Informed Decision Making (RIDM) Process** which addresses the risk-informed selection of decision option alternatives to assure effective approaches to achieving objectives. The CRM Process addresses implementation of the selected alternative to assure that requirements are met.

The RIDM title is interesting as it represents the outcome of having performed a risk assessment, in this case a sophisticated engineering related risk assessment, where all the actual and potential alternatives were considered to provide for risk-informed option alternatives decisions. The RIDM process follows a basic SANS/ISO 31000 the Risk Management Process's Risk Assessment steps thinking. Illustrated is the NASA RIDM and CRM relationship.

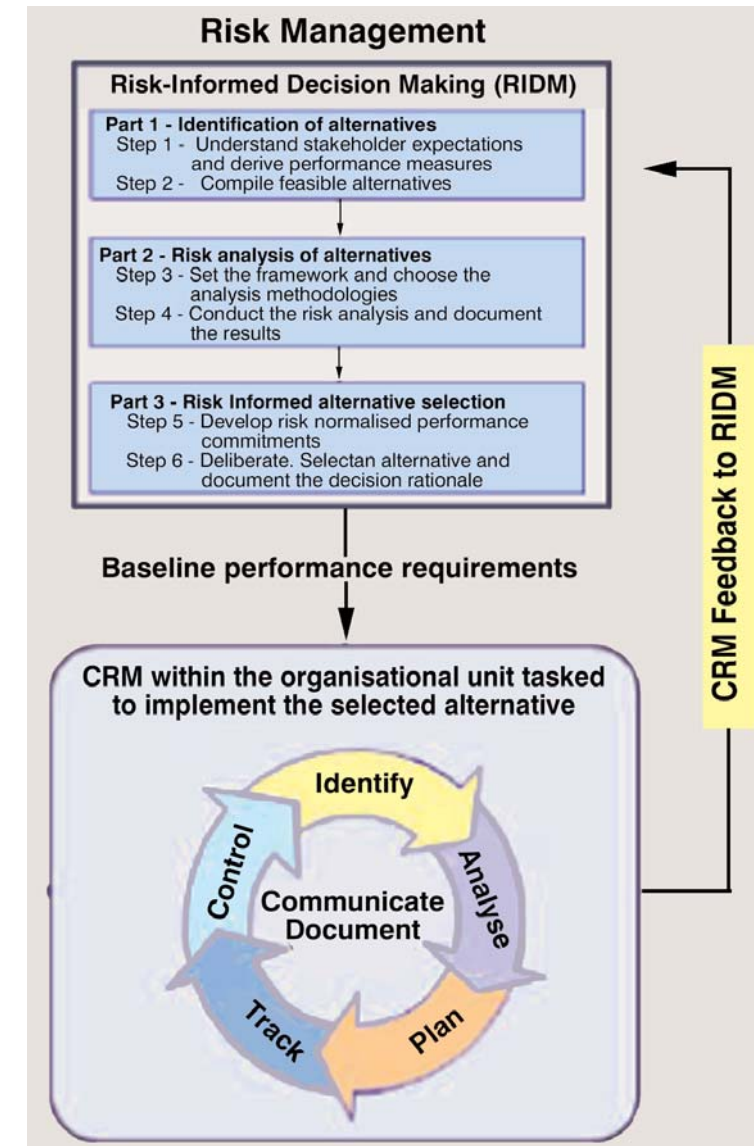
The fifth insight concept relates to managing risk using the **Continuous Risk Management (CRM) Process** to assure that risk management decisions are informed by their impact on objectives at every level of the NASA hierarchy.

The CRM Process is portrayed as an integrated sequence of steps described as five cyclical functions, namely Identify, Analyse, Plan, Track, and Control, supported by comprehensive Communicate and Document functions.

This is interesting as the NASA Continuous Risk Assessment Process follows a systems monitoring approach, in the form of a Plan-Do-Check-Act type of process, like described in the SANS/ISO 45001 OHS Management System Standard.

The CRM Process manages risk by identifying specific issues that are of concern to one or more stakeholders, and which are perceived as presenting a risk to the achievement of one or more performance requirements.

These issues are referred to as *individual risks*, and collectively represent the set of undesirable



scenarios that put the achievement of the activity's *performance requirements* at risk. Thus, each performance requirement has an associated performance risk that results from the aggregation of individual risks. The aggregation usually involves more than just a simple addition of the individual risks since it must account for any interactions and dependencies that exist among them.

Because of these two types of risk, the CRM process involves both a "tactical" dimension and a "strategic" dimension, as follows:

- The "tactical" dimension of CRM supports rapid responses to newly identified sources of potentially significant risk. It conducts risk



analysis and planning primarily in the context of the individual risks that are reported into the risk database.

- The "strategic" dimension of CRM supports a comprehensive understanding of the sources of performance risk. It conducts risk analysis and planning primarily in the context of a quantitative risk model that integrates all known sources of significant performance risk.

So performance risk is quantified using a risk model, most likely developed starting from that developed for the risk analysis of the selected alternative conducted during the RIDM process but expanded as needed to address all significant risk issues. The scenarios in the RIDM risk model that lead to performance shortfalls are initially captured as individual risks to be managed by the CRM process.

Within the CRM process, risk is characterised as a set of triplets:

- The scenario(s) leading to degraded performance with respect to one or more performance measures (e.g., scenarios leading to injury, fatality, destruction of key assets; scenarios leading to exceedance of mass limits; scenarios leading to cost overruns; scenarios leading to schedule slippage).
- The likelihood(s) (qualitative or quantitative) of those scenarios.
- The consequence(s) (qualitative or quantitative severity of the performance degradation) that would result if those scenarios were to occur.

Uncertainties are included in the evaluation of likelihoods and consequences, while this CRM Process allows all the risks to be prioritised in terms of their significance with respect to performance risk.

The term performance risk is essentially synonymous to the term risk. Both refer to the potential for shortfalls with respect to performance requirements.

The term performance risk is used during CRM to distinguish it from the individual risks, and to emphasise its association with the performance requirements.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this RM methodology introduced by NASA is part of a systems engineering process which emphasises the proper use of risk analysis in its broadest sense to make risk-informed decisions that impact the mission execution domains of safety, technical, cost, and schedule for the NASA projects.

REFERENCE

NASA Risk Management Handbook NASA/SP-2011-3422, Version 1.0, November 2011

SABS updates national standard on fire detection and alarm systems



BACKGROUND

The Standards Division of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) maintains and develops several national standards aimed at ensuring the protection of life and property from fire and fire-related damage.

As part of this legislated mandate the SABS has recently published a revised version of SANS 10139, Code of practice for design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems in non-domestic premises which brings South Africa in line with fire safety standards similar to those in the United Kingdom and Europe.

SCOPE OF SANS 10139

The standard provides recommendations for the planning, design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in and around buildings, other than dwellings.

RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE NATIONAL STANDARD

SANS 10139 is based on the British Standards BS5839-1, Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings. Code of practice for design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of systems in non-domestic premises. The British Standard (BS5839-1) was updated several years ago after fatalities occurred at an old age home in Lancashire that killed 14 elderly people.

This revised South African National Standards (SANS) came at a time when the country witnessed two devastating fires.

The wildfire that swept the slopes of Cape Town's Table Mountain spread to the University of Cape

Town, burning the historic campus library, and forcing the evacuation of students.

We also witnessed the incident where 700 patients were evacuated from Johannesburg's Charlotte Maxeke Hospital, after a fire blazed through parts of the medical facility in South Africa's largest city.

The seriousness of fire is often overlooked, and their impact is often underestimated. It is crucial that a national set of guidelines and rules for the designers and installers of fire protection systems is provided for them to follow and uphold.

The costs of fire within this country runs into the billions of Rands and needs to be prevented.

WHAT HAS BEEN REVISED IN THE NATIONAL STANDARD?

- Updated recommendations about the need for a fire detection system, variations from the standard, system components, detection zones, communication with the fire services, staged fire alarms, and manual call points.
- Updated requirements for smoke detectors.
- Updated requirements for spacing and placing of automatic fire detectors.
- A commentary has been added with regards to a control and references the appropriate equipment.
- Updated measures to limit false alarm.
- A commentary on inspection and servicing has been added.

BENEFITS OF THE REVISION

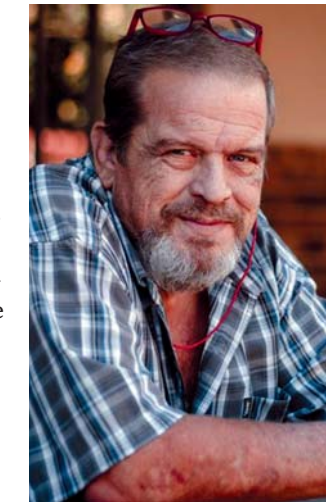
Ms. Laura Swart, Chairperson and Member of the SABS Technical Committee said: "The revision of SANS 10139 will benefit the fire protection industry as it clarifies all requirements and will ultimately eliminate the confusion experienced by the protection industry. This in turn, will result in a more effective use of the national standard, thus improving firefighting and improving the job of saving lives and preventing the loss of property. The standard also aims to mitigate the risk of failure of fire detection and fire alarm systems in and around buildings."

Ms Swart went on to say that that the revision of the national standards was made possible by valuable collaboration with the Fire System Inspection Bureau (FSIB), the Fire Detection Installers Association (FDIA) and the South African insurance industry.

* The official title of the SABS Technical Committee is **SABS/TC021/SC01, Fire safety – Fixed fire extinguishing systems**

Obituary

HENDRIK "VAATJIE" HEYNEKE



by Willie J v Rensburg

When it comes to Vaajtjie Heyneke, how do you sum up a lifetime of memories and accomplishments?

As by now everyone is aware of the fact that our beloved "Vaajtjie" as he was known by family, friends and colleagues passed away at the very young age of 54 years. Vaajtjie passed away in Polokwane where he spent most of his years in the occupational health and safety field. For his wife and children, he was a true role model, and in his profession, he was a true professional, dedicated to the improvement of health and safety systems. As his son Johan mentioned at the funeral, "My dad got big shoes to fill" and this is so true.

Vaajtjie always led by example as a father, grandfather and as a safety professional.

There are only good memories when we think of Vaajtjie, we think of a true gentleman - he was always hard on maintaining standards, but soft on people. He was well known in Polokwane since he started working as an Occupational Risk official in January 1988 at Spoornet, a full 33 years ago.

• Since 1994 Vaajtjie held the position as Senior Health Inspector at Pietersburg Town Council.

• For 2 years (Oct 1995 – June 1996) he held the position as the Regional Manager at NOSA (Polokwane) responsible for overall management of the branch and serving as chairperson of NOSA Provincial forum in Limpopo.

• Vaajtjie then served the Polokwane Local Municipality from July 1996 to 15 July 2021 as Occupational Health and Safety Manager, where he had a huge influence on the development of municipal health and safety systems, mentoring safety personnel and managing municipal health and safety resources.

• Since 2000 Vaajtjie also managed his own occupational health and safety practice (Riscon) as CEO.

• Although Vaajtjie had his own health and safety consulting business, he always had the time for sharing knowledge and mentoring the younger generation wanting to pursue a career in health and safety.

What is so sad is the fact that Vaajtjie could still have contributed so much to the safety industry, but our Heavenly Father decided to call up Vaajtjie for higher duties.

When we look at his achievements in the occupational health and safety field, there is a whole list to mention.

Firstly, he achieved a B-Com Operational Risk

Management degree in 2017, completing the degree with his youngest son, Johan. He previously obtained a National Diploma in Public Health [Environmental Health] at Pretoria Technicon.

This is typical of the Vaajtjie we know, a person with true grit and passion for what he did.

• Vaajtjie was a passionate member of IOSM (Institute of Safety Management) and was rewarded as overall Safety Practitioner of the Year in 1996, he also was awarded a Fellowship by IOSM in 2002.

• Vaajtjie contributed to the growth of IOSM, and he served as vice president of IOSM (2012-2014), when IOSM was

accredited Professional Body status by SAQA in 2013.

• Vaajtjie played an instrumental role as mentor for Candidate Occupational Health and Safety Officers and Managers to obtain their SACPCMP professional registration.

• Vaajtjie was also a Fellow Chartered Member of SAIOSH as well as registered CHS Management Practitioner with the Association of Construction Health and Safety Management (ACHASM).

His achievements, affiliations, several safety awards all came with hard work and dedication for something he loved. Apart from starting every day by sending out emails from 03h00 in the morning, he was also a family man, who had just become a grandfather of a little girl.

Since receiving the news about his health status, he had time to "prepare". Everything was planned and one thing very important to Vaajtjie was that there are only two ways to do things "right or wrong... no in-betweens".

Vaajtjie made sure that he always on time, never late. He believed in three principles namely:

- 1) You are never late
- 2) You never lie
- 3) And you may not steal.

He was a man of ethics, and a legend, even though in the Northern Transvaal we could never understand how he could support the Sharks rugby team. He loved his sport, especially rugby. At the age of 43 he played a rugby game with both of his sons - that was a big achievement for him.

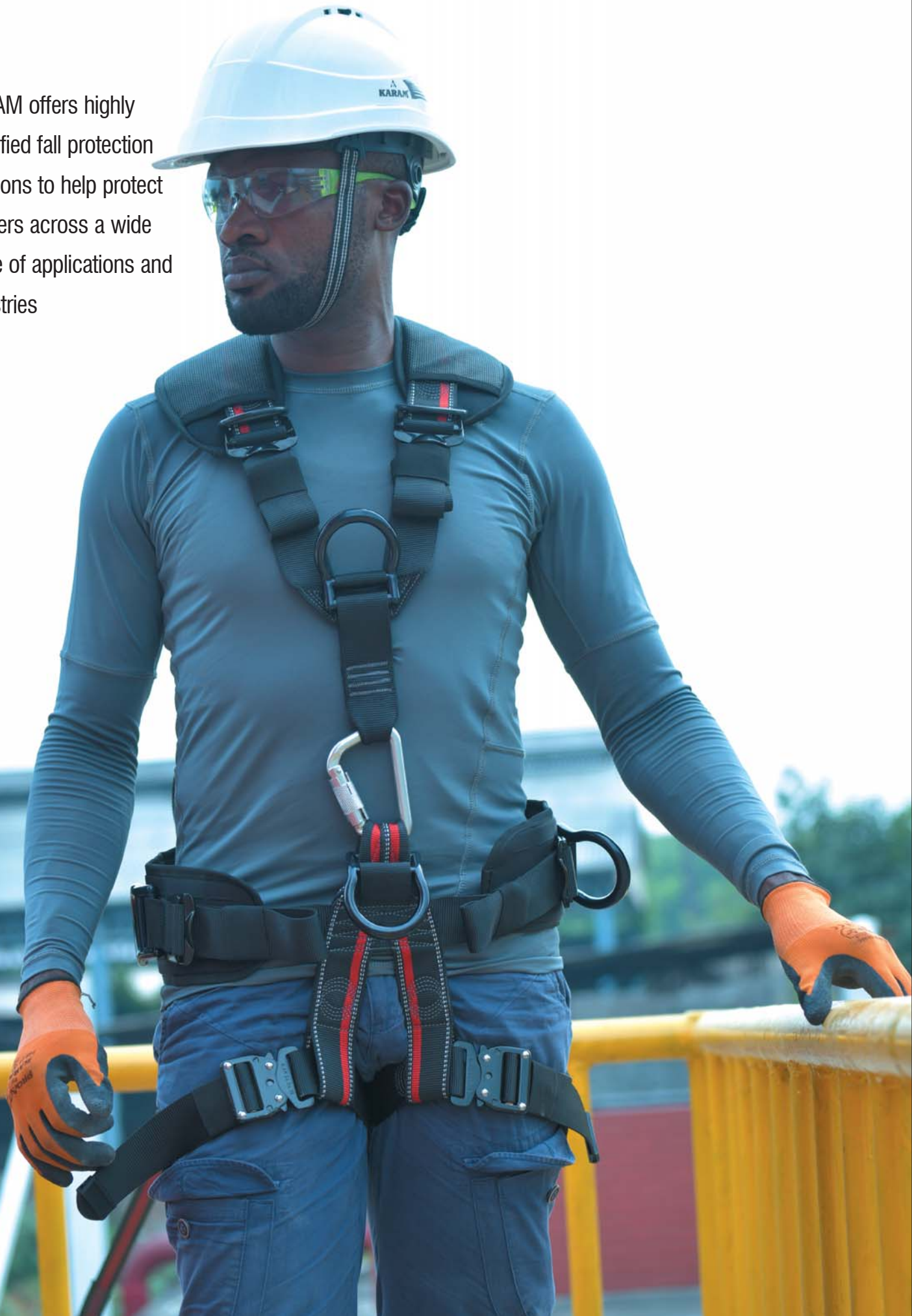
We have truly lost a giant in the health and safety profession, a true professional, a father and a grandfather, a person who cared for others.

Vaajtjie as fellow Safety Professionals we are proud to have been associated with you especially for the example you have set for your friends, family, and fellow safety professionals.

Until we meet again, we will dearly miss you.

KARAM® protects every worker at height

KARAM offers highly specified fall protection solutions to help protect workers across a wide range of applications and industries



INTRODUCTION

As per the latest research conducted by HLS (Height, Lift & Shift), 'Fall from height' is one of the major causes of fatal accidents or injuries in the workplace.

According to the latest HSE statistics, there were 44,400 non-fatal accidents involving falls from height across all industries which counts for 121 accidents every day.

In 2017-18, 35 workers died as a result of an accident caused by working at heights.

In an industrial workplace, 'Falls' are among the most common causes of serious injuries.

Falls generally occur during elevation work-related activities like construction, roof maintenance, painting, welding, bricklaying, installation works, repairing, loading-unloading operations etc.

FALL PROTECTION - SIMPLIFIED

Fall arrest or protection system is a way to avert the fall or to sufficiently lower down the impact force on a human body in an event of a fall. In simple words, the "fall protection system intends to address the hazard of falling from height".

THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT FOR THE RIGHT PROTECTION

With there being such a large number of products and procedures to consider when working at a height, the important thing is to choose the right equipment for the task at hand.

The user must ensure that personal fall protection equipment is certified as per a required safety standard like EN (European Standards).

Equipment complying with this standard easily satisfies ergonomic and application requirements.

Every fall protection device is designed and meant to be used for specific applications. The users should ensure that the right equipment is used for the right kind of job at the right place. They must also ensure that the product is certified as per the required applicable standard in relation to a particular area of usage.

Also, it is of paramount importance that users should personally do a detailed inspection before each use and at least once a year it must be inspected by a competent or trained person.

SAFETY HARNESSES: THE PRIME AND PRIMARY PPE IN FALL PROTECTION

The full-body safety harness is a key part of an active fall arrest system.

When the safety harness is properly worn, fitted, and attached to a fall protection system through a self-retracting lifeline, the force of a fall is distributed through the harness to areas of the body better able to absorb the force and support the

worker's weight.

In addition to distributing force, the design of a full-body harness serves to keep the user upright in a fall, keeping the spine vertical, which is ideal for the body to best absorb the compressive forces of a fall.

KARAM offers a comprehensive range of Safety Harnesses to suit a vast range of applications and situations.

Equipped with the finest ergonomics and features, all KARAM Safety Harnesses are CE certified and the best choice for comfortable and safe usage for applications like fall arrest, work positioning, rescue and rope access, tower climbing and working in confined space.

KARAM PAVES THE WAY TO PROTECT EVERY WORKER-AT-HEIGHT

KARAM offers highly specified fall protection solutions to help protect workers across a wide range of applications and industries.

We ensure that every product must adhere to and pass all the stringent global standards before reaching a customer.

From anchorage connectors to rescue and descent devices, from full-body harnesses to self-retracting lifelines, every fall protection device at KARAM is manufactured and marketed in compliance with the defined industrial standards as per the specific applications.

With more than 2900 certifications and 2600+ certified products in the range, KARAM stands as a 'market leader' of fall protection across the globe.

With a sheer mission to impact lives by protecting the millions of workers working in hazardous industrial environments in every direction of the world, KARAM will continue to deliver safety with exemplary, high-quality products.

KARAM are leaders in fall protection and the manufacturing of personal protective equipment (PPE)

KARAM®

For more information on Karam Africa's products,

visit their website: <https://karamafrica.com>

Tel: +27 32 9400993

Email: hello@karamafrica.com

 SAPEMA Member



The future of uvex safety eyewear - lens coatings and shapes

In future, revolutionary lens shapes in innovative frame designs and the unrestricted field of vision of uvex safety spectacles will ensure perfect, safe vision at all times. New technologies and designs will help you see properly, even in difficult working conditions. The sporty, ergonomic design and convenient wearability features make uvex safety spectacles extremely comfortable and a reliable accessory for your working day. Discover more fascinating details about the future of uvex safety spectacles in this newsletter.

RETRO SPORTS SPECTACLES – NEW TREND FOR SAFETY SPECTACLES

We are already seeing retro-style lens shapes on sports spectacles. This trend continues in the uvex safety spectacles range, which offers even more protection in terms of safety and unrestricted vision for people and their individual areas of activity.

The latest lens designs are no longer so highly shaped and provide more surface area for eye coverage and protection of

the sensitive areas around the eye with straight and flat geometries.

Depending on whether the spectacles are intended for workplaces with dust, mechanical or chemical hazards, additional lens platforms with more or less coverage are used in the peripheral areas of the lens.

Here, a wraparound frame made of soft, comfortable materials can provide perfect protection and good visibility. And all with preventive UV protection up to 400 nm or above.



EFFECTIVE LENS COATING

Coating technologies for safety eyewear are also becoming increasingly innovative and adapting specially to the new conditions of use. Due to the constant changes in personal protective equipment (PPE) when it comes to eye protection, the requirements for even more efficient and anti-fog coatings are becoming increasingly important.

Whereas a few years ago, eye protection was mainly used to protect the person, today it is a mixture of actual eye protection and product protection. This mainly concerns the food and pharmaceutical sectors.

New requirements are also being added – for example due to the current situation caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic: anti-virus and hygiene measures mean that in certain areas it is very important to wear mouth and nose protection in combination with eye protection. For many users, it is particularly annoying that with this combination, the eye protection quickly fogs up and safe vision is no longer guaranteed. Sophisticated coating systems play an important role in the solution and are the only way uvex can offer anti-fog safety spectacles.

Especially for hygienic areas, lasting, effective anti-fog performance on the inside of the lens is crucial. But the right fit of the combination of mouth-nose protection and eye protection also plays a decisive role: ideally, the mouth-nose protection should always be worn under the lens. If the inside of the lens also has a lasting anti-fog coating, safe and clear vision is ensured.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR COATINGS

Scratch-resistant lenses – offering a longer service life for uvex safety spectacles.

The use of different types of coating on the lenses makes uvex safety spectacles suitable for a wide range of uses and means they can be perfectly tailored to almost every work or hygiene situation.

Scratch-resistant coated lenses are particularly popular.

In everyday working life, the mechanical damage to the lenses caused by scratching, rubbing, wiping and chafing against various materials is extensive, so a scratch-resistant coating can significantly extend the service life of safety eyewear.

In working environments with high humidity or sudden exposure to condensation, anti-fog coatings prevent the lenses from fogging up and impairing the employee's vision.

Special processes used to coat the lenses that make them scratch-resistant on the outside and anti-fogging on the inside also offer the possibility of an extremely long service life.

We'll keep you up to date on how uvex safety spectacles are developing and the kind of innovative technologies you can expect to see in the near future.

Stay safe, Stay healthy!
Your uvex South Africa team



Tel: +27 (0) 31 569 6780
Email: info@uvex.co.za / safety@uvex.co.za
<https://www.uvex.co.za>

SAPEMA Member

uvex

protecting people

since 1926

SAIOH President's Message



Hennie Van Der Westhuizen
SAIOH President

There is no argument that 2021 has, in numerous ways, been more challenging than previous years. The fast-surging third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant financial and health impacts on several of our members and associates. In addition, some of our members were seriously affected and, in some cases, traumatised by the recent unrest in KwaZulu-Natal and, to a lesser degree, in Gauteng.

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) Council would like to express our solidarity with every member that has been and / or will be affected by COVID-19 and/or the unrest.

Our prayer is for a swift recovery from the effects of both events and for lessons learnt during these

adversities to be beneficial for future planning.

It is heart-rending that, during my tenure, we have seen such anguish. However, I cannot refrain from expressing how heart-warming it is to have witnessed the comradery and support amongst our members towards each other in these trying times. These challenges have showed the grit in our members and forged a solid bond that is bound to strengthen SAIOH as a professional body.

The SAIOH Management Board's and the SAIOH National Council's activities continue to drive SAIOH's goals for 2021. In this newsletter, updates on the annual conference, Professional Certification Committee (PCC) matters, and other aspects of SAIOH are reported.

Introducing our council members

Moses Mokone, Branch Co-ordinator



Mr Moses Mokone is an occupational hygienist registered with SAIOH; he holds a Bachelor of Technology degree in Environmental Health.

Currently he is studying for a master's degree in Public Health (MPH), in the field of Occupational Hygiene at the University of the Witwatersrand.

He is currently employed at the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) as an occupational hygienist/technical manager.

Moses has more than 10 years of work experience in the field of occupational and environmental health, having worked as an occupational hygiene consultant, and occupational hygiene specialist in various sectors, including mining, petrochemical, and governmental agencies.

Moses serves as a council member for SAIOH, and his portfolio is to manage/coordinate all activities of the SAIOH national branches.

His hobbies include reading, singing, listening to music, playing football, and running marathons.

Council activities

Hennie van der Westhuizen: SAIOH president, e-mail: president@saioh.co.za

Nico Potgieter: SAIOH marketing and communication e-mail: nipotgieter101@gmail.com

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

Kate Smart: SAIOH chief administrative officer e-mail: info@saioh.co.za

1. SAIOH COUNCIL AND MANAGEMENT BOARD ACTIVITIES

SAIOH Technical Committee

SAIOH's Technical Committee preparation is progressing well.

The Committee will consist of members of all three registration levels and will be responsible for researching and drafting all SAIOH position papers and technical papers.

2. SAIOH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2021 Annual Conference will once again, be a virtual conference, consisting of six (three-hour) webinar sessions, to run over a three-week period (with two sessions per week).

The times of the webinars will be confirmed closer to the Conference and will be scheduled in accordance with the presenters' time zones.

The official dates are 19 October to 5 November 2021.



Please note that the SAIOH Annual General Meeting will also take place during this time.

Details to note:

- Four professional development courses (PDCs) will be presented during this period, in the form of two webinars. These will run concurrently in the morning, followed by two in the afternoon.
- Fifteen International speakers, mainly from the USA, UK and Australia, have been identified to present keynote and other presentations.
- The initial invitations and programme will be shared with SAIOH members and stakeholders in due course

- The Conference will be hosted on the NIOH virtual platform; it will be a paid conference, with recordings available afterwards, as well as room for sponsors.

In the interim, SAIOH will be hosting two special training webinars:

- 29 July 2021: Global Harmonising Systems (GHS) and how this guides the occupational hygiene practitioner's (OHP's) scope of occupational hygiene (OH) services; and
- 25 August 2021: Regulations for Hazardous Chemical Agents and guidance on how to comply with these Regulations.

Branch activities

Moses Mokone: SAIOH Branch Co-ordinator, e-mail: moses.mokone@nioh.ac.za

Due to COVID-19, all branch meetings and workshops are currently held online.

Online meetings and workshops present opportunities to SAIOH members who are invited to attend and participate in any branch meetings, regardless of their branch affiliations.

We urge all our members to support their branches and to participate in branch activities.

Members can submit topics for discussion to the various branch chairpersons for consideration in future webinars / meetings.

The Gauteng, Western Cape and Northwest Branches hosted virtual workshops for members

during June 2021.

A branch chairpersons' meeting was held on 9 July 2021 to brainstorm ways in which branch meetings can attract speakers and focus on technical issues confronting the profession in general.

SAIOH would like to revive the stagnant branches, starting with the Mpumalanga Branch. Members who would like to assist with, or contribute ideas towards, this initiative are urged to contact Moses Mokone (Branches Coordinator) or Nico Potgieter (Marketing and Communication) on the provided e-mail addresses.

The SAIOH Council invites and welcomes your feedback on how this communication is helping you as a SAIOH member, and how we can improve it.

If you have any suggestions, inputs, or contributions, please e-mail them to our president at President@saioh.co.za, or to the chief administrative officer at info@saioh.co.za.

From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC)

Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH chief examiner, e-mail: deon.jvuuren@gmail.com

Karen du Preez: PCC chairperson e-mail: KarenD@nioh.ac.za

Lee Doolan: SAIOH PCC administrator e-mail: lee@saioh.co.za

Certification assessments

A summary of results of written and oral examinations year to date (YTD) is provided in Table 1. The YTD pass rate for ROHTs and ROHs levels remain a matter of concern. SAIOH urges prospective ROHTs and ROHs to make use of the SAIOH Mentorship Programme – Lee Doolan can be contacted at the address provided, in this regard, The PCC's Examination Committee is in

discussions with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygiene (AIOH), and Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), to develop and share a single multiple choice question database for the Occupational Hygiene Training Association's (OHTA's) Foundation Module (W 201).

Watch this space!



Table 1. Summary of SAIOH PCC certification assessment results for 2021 (as at 26 July 2021)

Summary of SAIOH PCC Certification Assessment Results 2021											
Certification Category	Written assessment results (March & June 2021)						Final and oral assessment results (March 2021)				
	Total Y.T.D. Assessed 2021	Total Assessed 2021	Y.T.D. Passed 2021	Y.T.D. Failed 2021	Y.T.D. Pass rate % 2021	Pass Rate % 2020	Total Y.T.D. Assessed 2021	Y.T.D. Passed 2021	Y.T.D. Failed 2021	Y.T.D. Pass Rate% 2021	Pass Rate % 2020
OH Assistant	37	0	30	7	81	0	37	30	7	81	0
W201 - Assistant	36	150	31	5	84	86	36	31	5	86	74
OH Technologist	36	49	19	17	53	63	20	10	10	50	58
Occ. Hygienist	25	45	12	13	48	33	10	5	5	50	88
TOTAL	134	244	92	42	69	64	103	76	27	74	73

OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE SKILLS FORUM

The SAIOH Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) was introduced to coordinate all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials, training providers and institutions, and the development and management of assessment and examination systems, where required.

Another function of the OHSF is to evaluate applications from tertiary institutions for recognition of their occupational hygiene-related qualifications.

The OHSF is progressing well with these accreditations. A matrix was recently developed to

evaluate the occupational hygiene (OH) qualifications offered (in line with the 50% OH content requirement). All tertiary institutions that offer OH qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC administrator for information regarding application for recognition (Lee@saioh.co.za).

The details of recognised training providers and recognised qualifications will be available on the SAIOH website (<https://www.saioh.co.za>).

This will make it easier for students and certification candidates to select suitable qualifications that meet SAIOH and international requirements.



Are you using a **SAPEMA Member** for your PPE requirements?

During this unprecedented time of Covid-19, many have jumped onto the PPE band wagon in order to survive. Their only knowledge of PPE, is their ability to trade.

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



Southern African Protective Equipment Marketing Association

Your Protection is Our Priority!

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

www.sapema.org



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 Labour

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

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

“PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!”



<http://www.occutech.co.za>

Email: occutech@occutech.co.za

Tel: (031) 206-1244 Fax: (031) 205-2561

Natural gas for cleaner, more efficient production

Natural gas offers an energy alternative which is environmentally friendly and more cost-effective. Household brands Tiger Brands Limited and Premier FMCG are both on two different journeys of making the conversion to natural gas.

"Our last plant that converted boiler from coal to gas, was Albany Germiston," says National process and Capability Engineer of Tiger Brands Derik Bouwer. Natural gas was used on the boiler installation at one of the Tiger Brands plants.

The use of gas in the packaged goods factories has come with positive changes such as cleaner energy use and competitive pricing, according to Bouwer. This is counter to the use of coal which is well-known for extensive greenhouse gas emissions and excessive waste where Tiger Brands is concerned.

Kobus Schmidt the Manufacturing Executive for Bakeries at Premier FMCG confirmed that Premier has never used coal at their plants.

"We have used paraffin as an energy heating source in the past. We are wip (work in progress) to convert one pilot plant from polyfuel to natural gas," said Schmidt.

Schmidt expanded that since they are in the process of converting their first plant to natural gas

at Premier, they are not able to comment specifically on the difference between the different forms of fuel with relation to their plant. The gas will be used to power plant baking ovens and steam boilers.

"Burners are being replaced with gas burners. Storage of gas is in Tube trucks and not in onsite tanks or stagnant storage facilities.

"It is cheaper though but there is a fair amount of capital necessary to fund the conversion. An additional pricing factor is also based on increased calorific and combustion efficiencies still not proven because the conversion is not completed," continued Schmidt.

Bouwer explained that for Tiger Brands, the switch from coal to natural gas was prompted by environmental factors. Natural gas is more "environmentally friendly" and emits less carbon. Schmidt adds that for Premier FMCG, the use of natural gas is more efficient.

Apart being conscious of the negative effect other forms of fuel have on the environment, natural gas is "more efficient and should increase lifespan of combustion and baking equipment" concluded Schmidt.

Why a price war will hurt the customer

Established in 1961 SARACCA has seen a steady growth in its membership resulting in it becoming one of the most prolific associations within the heating ventilation air-conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC+R) industry. Its success is due to the fact that it continues to drive global standards and compliance levels amongst members.

Global warming has made temperature control a central part of our daily lives, and with the increased demand in HVAC+R, a large portion of the industry including SARACCA members, maintain compliance in global standards while offering customers an array of key skills.

Recently driven by small fly-by-night businesses, the industry has entered a price war between compliant and non-compliant companies which ultimately has cost the customer.

COVID-19 has not made our lives any easier, but the use of air-conditioning has and continues to do so, positioning the global industry to grow by just under 4%*. By 2030 the HVAC market is projected to reach 367.5 billion US dollars. Locally our market has seen its fair share of growth. But, this growth in South Africa is under threat by customers choosing to use non-compliant gas practitioners. By cutting prices at the cost of compliance, non-compliant

HVAC+R businesses have undermined the growth of the industry and hampered South Africa's participation in the global growth rate.

THE COST OF A PRICE WAR

A price war can be seen as a strategic move by local companies to ensure survival in a tough economy. If practised correctly and in line with the law, a price war could offer an ideal opportunity to realign prices. However, when the price war comes at the cost of compliance, the customer will bear the brunt and become the ultimate loser.

Ultimately the cheaper the quote the higher the risk of that company not being compliant.

SARACCA as a key player in the industry views the current price war as a major blow to the industry. While SARACCA members operate within the law and practise global standards non-compliant businesses have eroded the industry value by undercutting prices at the cost of compliance.

The real-time cost of this price war sits between 25%-39% of the project value. In essence, once the installation has been completed by a non-compliant practitioner a Certificate of Compliance (CoC) cannot be issued. The customer would then have to

pay a compliant practitioner to rectify the installation and issue the CoC. In some instances, the cost has bypassed the initial budget by 40%.

"It is in the interest of every business owner to use a compliant practitioner when installing, repairing, or servicing an HVAC+R system. If you choose to go the non-compliant route, it will hit your pocket!" says Barney Richardson, Director of SARACCA

THE VALUE OF COMPLIANCE

HVAC+R companies that remain compliant will ultimately succeed in an industry governed by global standards. Customers serious about long term savings will see the benefit between choosing compliance over non-compliance, and SARACCA

continues to drive this awareness.

The HVAC+R industry is heavily regulated in South Africa. A non-compliant installation, service or repair leaves a customer without the required certification. Homes without the proper certification cannot be transferred to new owners, and larger installations cannot claim from insurance policies in the event of damage, explosion, or theft.

SARACCA encourages all HVAC+R companies to join the SARACCA family and benefit from the many support elements needed to improve compliance.

SARACCA "family" members remain committed to compliance and offer the highest standards of work.

Reports of deaths due to non-compliance

The South African Qualification and Certification Committee (SAQCC Gas) is calling on all non-compliant practitioners to register or face the full might of the law.

The gas industry has recently been rocked by reports of deaths occurring due to non-compliant installations. SAQCC Gas urges industries to use registered gas practitioners. Gas in the wrong hands can be deadly, and non-compliant gas practitioners don't have the required training to ensure its safe handling. Whether installing, repairing, or servicing gas equipment it is against the law to use non-compliant gas practitioners.

VERIFY GAS PRACTITIONERS' REGISTRATION

The gas industry is regulated by world-class legislation and safety standards. Mandated by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), gas practitioners are registered with SAQCC Gas. Those wanting to enter the gas business must undertake relevant training. There are tried and tested criteria and guidelines in place to maintain the safety levels and standards the industry enjoys.

Gas practitioner registration can be verified by:

- Requesting to see the gas practitioner's registration card.
- Verifying the gas practitioners' credentials via the verification portal on <https://www.saqccgas.co.za>.

Gas practitioners are registered for 3 years. On renewal of their registration, practitioners are required to undergo refresher training courses or provide ongoing competence.

The gas industry is divided into 4 key specialities, they are:

- Refrigerant gases
- Liquefied petroleum gas
- Natural gas
- Industrial and medical gases

It is important to note that gas practitioners may not install, repair or service gas equipment outside their designated speciality.

BYPASSING COMPLIANCE

Gas practitioners who ensure their registrations are up to

date will enjoy the full benefits of belonging to a regulated industry. By avoiding the registration process and entering the industry, a non-compliant gas practitioner is effectively putting industries at risk. Non-compliance will be followed by the required legal action taken against the gas practitioner and in certain instances the customer.

In April, a guesthouse owner was arrested for the deaths of two guests. The toxicology report revealed that the couple died of carbon monoxide poisoning suspected to be caused by a gas leak from the shower's gas geyser. In addition to the owner, in cases where deaths occur, the non-compliant practitioner could also be held liable.

Recently an unregistered mechanic lost his life when a refrigeration system exploded while being pressure tested with nitrogen from a cylinder without a pressure regulator.

REGISTRATION BENEFITS

The ultimate benefit to registering as a gas practitioner is the knowledge, skill, and workmanship that gas practitioners will use when installing, repairing, or servicing gas equipment.

Only registered gas practitioners can issue Certificates of Conformity (CoC) and offer the reassurance of compliance. Investigations into non-compliant installations, repairs or services are detrimental to a non-compliant gas practitioners' livelihood and can result in charges being laid against the gas practitioner. The investigation is thorough and in certain cases the practitioner could lose their registration cards.

THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Industries must help drive compliance by only using registered gas practitioners. The onus is on companies to verify every gas practitioner that installs, repairs or services gas equipment.



Ten principles of employee empowerment on construction health and safety

The concept of worker engagement is defined as a process whereby workers on a construction site are motivated and empowered to participate in the improvement of health and safety (H&S) (Lawani et al, 2016: 2117). Engaging with the worker of issues pertaining to H&S increases motivational factors and empowers the worker. Studies have shown that there are advantages to developing a highly engaged workforce. Workers that are highly engaged are immersed in their jobs, enjoy the challenges arising from the workplace and form stronger organisational commitment (Lawani et al, 2016: 2118). Empowering workers to participate is crucial for effective H&S management. A study conducted by Okorie et al (2014:958) found that a lack of empowerment in skills development among site managers and supervisors impact negatively on H&S management on construction sites. Given that certain H&S management styles set the example for workers, it can be assumed that a lack of employee empowerment could similarly result in poor H&S management on construction sites.

The construction industry is described as a unique workplace due to work being performed in outdoor surroundings under conditions that are not conducive to H&S (Agumba et al. 2014: 3). The physically demanding nature and the unsafe risks of construction work increases the risk to H&S of workers. Additionally, construction workers constantly face changing scenarios such as changes in workplace location and/or a change in colleagues, partly owing to the duration of construction projects (Agumba et al. 2014: 3).

Tracy (1990) proposed 10 principles of employee empowerment that allows for active engagement in H&S management, promotes a positive health and safety culture and has the potential to mitigate health and safety risks on construction sites.

This article explores the implementation of these principles under the guidance of legislation in South Africa and the use of recent literature focusing on construction health and safety in South Africa.

1. INFORM WORKERS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY

Section 13 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) no 85 of 1993 states that "... employers shall as far as reasonably practicable cause every employee to be conversant with the hazards to his/her H&S that is attached to any work which he/she has to perform.." (RSA, 1993: 16).

Studies on H&S concur with section 13, as stated by Mudenha et al (2014; 175) that the awareness of H&S requirements and responsibilities is important among employers and their employees. Enhancing



Simamkele Ngxesha is a BSc. Hons student at NMU specialising in Construction Health and Safety Management. He obtained his undergraduate qualification at Rhodes University with majors in Human Kinetics and Ergonomics.



worker empowerment through informing workers of their responsibilities plays a crucial role in achieving organisational goals. Most construction workers will support organisational goals if they understand how these goals stand to benefit them, their fellow workers, the business, and society as a whole (Lawani et al, 2016; 2118).

Agumba et al (2014; 7) indicated that elements influencing H&S performance are inter alia employee involvement and empowerment, and that management plays a crucial role in influencing worker participation. Management commitment to H&S influences worker participation. Okorie et al (2014; 952) stated that managers play an important role in shaping the worker's understanding of H&S by communicating to them the firms' H&S policies and supervising activities on construction sites.

2. PROVIDE WORKERS WITH REQUISITE AUTHORITY

The OHS Act section 14 states that "every employee shall take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons' who may be affected by his acts or omissions" (RSA, 1993; 18).

Workers feel an increased sense of value from their organisations when they are involved in decision making processes, particularly when those processes concern their H&S and welfare (Okorie et al 2014; 957). A lack of requisite authority and worker involvement in construction H&S issues is inadequate in South African construction sites (Okorie et al 2014; 957). Workers often feel left out of key decisions regarding H&S and such decisions directly affect them and this could potentially affect their productivity. Okorie et al (2014; 957) also argue that construction managers need to be proactive, transparent and trustworthy towards their workers as such traits can result in the promotion of a positive H&S culture.

3. SETTING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Mohamed and Chinda (2005) indicated that there was a need to investigate the causal relationship between the H&S goal of overall H&S performance and the actual activities that underpin H&S undertaken by construction firms. H&S performance can be measured by two indicators, lagging and leading indicators, which form proactive and reactive approaches to H&S safety.

Adopting leading indicators to measure H&S performance is a reactive approach because lagging indicators rely on accident statistics and DIFR performance, which subsequently means that an organisation is "waiting" on disaster to strike before taking affirmative action (Okorie et al, 2014; 4).

This reactive approach exposes workers to a variety of risks and gives an impression that workers are statistics.

Adopting leading indicators in H&S performance is a proactive approach because leading indicators are more thorough and offer constant surveillance. The value of using leading indicators is that changes can be made before accidents occur and an intervention can be devised to identify potential weaknesses in H&S performance. By using leading indicators to measure H&S performance, management allow themselves to set excellent standards with regards to H&S through administrative and management commitment, H&S training, safety reviews, accident record and legislation and codes and standards.

Other H&S standards that organisations can set include setting zero targets. Organisations set zero targets as philosophically underpinned aims whereby they aspire to achieve zero accidents, injuries and fatalities on construction sites. Although various case studies show that zero targets are goals that are difficult to attain, a construction company in the United Kingdom was able to achieve its target of zero accidents through training and awareness initiatives (Smallwood & Emuze, 2016: 454). It is important to note the role of employees and their involvement and empowerment through training and awareness. This supports the claim stated above that most construction workers will support organisational goals. It is therefore critical for organisations to set clear and concise standards of H&S that aspire to achieve excellence and involve employees in such standards.

4. TRAIN WORKERS TO ENABLE PARTICIPATION

Section 8(1)(e) of the OHSA stipulates that every employer shall provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of his employees by providing information, instructions, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of his employees

With the legal requirements for employers to provide employees with adequate H&S training stated above, it is important to note that H&S training has far-reaching benefits for organisations. H&S training for personnel is an absolute requirement for an effective H&S culture as training does not only increase workers' competencies but also engenders commitment to their work (Okorie et al, 2014; 956). This concurs with Lawani et al, (2016; 2118) who stated that the provision of training for workers is fundamental for ensuring meaningful communication and worker contribution. Training increases job satisfaction, organisational commitment, productivity, (Okorie et al, 2014; 959) and worker contribution as it creates awareness for workplace H&S (Okorie et al,

2014; 956) through the identification of hazards, reporting unsafe conditions and near misses (Lawani et al, 2016; 2118).

5. PROVIDE WORKERS WITH KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

The importance of sharing knowledge and information within the construction industry lies in the perception and the importance of H&S on construction sites (Lawani et, 2016; 2118). Agumba et al, (2014; 6) indicated the importance of communication in influencing H&S performance through formal and informal dialogue. Formal communication includes induction, training, written rules, policies and the use of legislation. Okorie et al, (2014, 960) argue that formal dialogue alone will not help organisations achieve their H&S objectives and that implementation, supported by informal communication and supervision, increases H&S performance.

6. PROVIDE FEEDBACK RELATIVE TO H&S PERFORMANCE

Feedback relative to H&S through face-to face discussions has a direct impact on the capabilities of workers and offers workers with meaningful interactions that enhance worker commitment (Lawani et al, 2014; 2119). Feedback offers workers insight into areas of concern and helps evaluate current H&S performance. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2015) notes that obtaining feedback from workers before making decisions is critical in enhancing worker engagement. The transient nature of construction projects hinders effective communication with workers because often the workforce is unacquainted with each other and will disband to work on other projects (Lawani et al, 2014; 2119).

Okorie et al, (2014; 952) stated that site managers have a role to play in achieving effective communication with the workforce with regards to H&S. Site managers know and understand the problems faced by workers as they are always with them, they also interpret H&S policies and procedures, and have the requisite authority to provide feedback to most stakeholders since they form a direct line of contact with top management.

7. RECOGNISE WORKERS FOR H&S ACHIEVEMENTS

A study conducted by Hinze et al, 2013 aimed at determining best practices to be implemented in order to improve H&S performance found that there is not a single initiative solely responsible for achieving world class H&S and that it was a listing of different initiatives. Out of a list of 22 important H&S practices, a significant portion of improving H&S culture was rewarding and recognising safe behaviour of the workers (Okorie et al, 2014; 952). It is important to note that in order to establish trust

in the organisation, management must be consistent in how safe behaviour is rewarded from one project to the next (Boshoff et al, 2017; 120).

Transformational leadership which entails commitment and support by leaders emphasises participatory approach to H&S management. Managers who demonstrate genuine care and encouragement for all workers, and make H&S part of an organisation's work culture are likely to have a positive H&S culture. Poor H&S performance is attributable to managers who do not inspire their workers by rewarding behaviours that support safe work (Okorie et al, 2014; 959).

8. TRUST WORKERS

Geller (2008: 148) cited by Okorie et al. (2013; 959) argued that a workplace that promotes distrust between workers and management is one that cannot develop a positive H&S culture. This means that workers who bypass safety instructions in an attempt to increase production while being ignored by management, are led to believe that management views unsafe acts as acceptable.

The adopted management and leadership style of an organisation should aim at building trust and team spirit among workers as this is needed to sustain high levels of worker H&S performance. In order for workers to be engaged and to strengthen their commitment to an organisation, there needs to be an element of reciprocity in trust (Okorie et al, 2014; 959).

9. GIVE WORKERS PERMISSION TO FAIL

A construction site which experiences poor H&S performance is led by an autocratic leader who is constantly overly assertive and lacks good human relations (Okorie et al, 2014; 952). Giving workers permission to fail works in conjunction with giving them requisite authority. When workers are entrusted to safely carry out tasks and are given room to fail, it gives them a sense of freedom within the workplace. The reciprocal determinism model illustrates that a positive safety culture is influenced by the interplay between internal psychological factors (the person) and the external factors (the situation and environment). The internal factors include the worker's perception of the work, knowledge, cognitive skills and level of commitment while external factors describe the construction site that the worker under in terms of effective leadership, management commitment and support to enhance safety (Boniface, 2016; 107). Supportive leadership allows workers to grow and encourages commitment to their work.

10. TREAT WORKERS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

The H&S culture within an organisation reflects the workers' and management's attitude towards H&S as the safe and unsafe behaviours of

management will most likely be emulated by the workforce. Good leadership and management help foster a supportive organisation H&S culture. Smallwood and Emuze (2016; 459) found that a sound foundation of H&S culture through treating workers as the most important resource and showing respect for people is fundamental for organisations aspiring to reach a zero target workplace. This means that there are zero fatalities, injuries and diseases.

A sound foundation in the form of 'people are the most important resource' and 'respect for people' must be provided for the 'zero target' journey; journey as current reality manifests itself in the form of fatalities, injuries, and disease and therefore continuous improvement is necessary to achieve the vision and goal of 'Zero fatalities, injuries, and diseases.

REFERENCES

- Agumba, J. N., Pretorius, J. H., & Haupt, T. C. (2014). Important health and safety performance improvement indicators for small & medium construction enterprises in South Africa: eliciting expert opinion using the Delphi Technique. *Ergonomics SA: Journal of the Ergonomics Society of South Africa*, 26(2), 3-22.
- Boniface, O. (2016). A safety culture development model for the SMEs in the building and construction industry. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 7(3), 106-115.
- Boshoff, D., Krugell, C., & Van Heerden, H. (2017). Characteristics of the safety climate in teams with world-class safety performance on construction projects in South Africa. *Acta Structilia*, 24(1), 99-127.
- Geller, E.S. (2008) Behaviour-based and Occupational Risk Management: *Professional Safety*, 29(3), 539-561.
- Lawani, K., Hare, B., & Cameron, I. (2017). Developing a worker engagement maturity model for improving occupational safety and health (OSH) in construction. *Journal of Construction Project Management and Innovation*, 7(2), 2116-2126.
- Mohamed, S., & Chinda, T. (2005, May). Organisational safety culture: a system dynamics approach. In *Proceedings of the W99 4th Triennial International Conference for Rethinking and Revitalizing Construction Safety, Health Environment and Quality* (pp. 282-292). Port Elizabeth.
- Mudenha, W. F., Naicker, N., & Chadyiwa, M. (2018). Awareness of health and safety responsibilities among contract cleaning workers. *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, 24(6), 172-176.
- Okorie, V., Smallwood, J., Van Wyk, J., & Emuze, F. (2014). A qualitative review of the health and safety leadership roles of managers in South African construction. *Journal of construction project management and innovation*, 4(2), 950-965.
- Republic of South Africa (2014). No. R. 84 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993; Construction Regulations 2014. Government Gazette No. 37305. Pretoria: Government Printing Works.
- Smallwood, J., & Emuze, F. (2016). Towards zero fatalities, injuries, and disease in construction. *Procedia engineering*, 164, 453-460.



Do you want to keep your workplace safe?
Do you want to make sure that your workers return home safely and in good health every day?

Then you cannot afford to be without the SAFETY HANDBOOK

The most comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety Handbook that is available for the South African market



Tel: +27 11 701-5054
Email: admin@safety1st.co.za
www.safety1st.co.za

Or order a digital copy from:
www.skillstrainlms.co.za
search for Safety Handbook



SAFETY HANDBOOK

For the South African industry and other workplaces


















For all who have the safety of workers at heart

Author: S.A. KADIRI
Co-author: D. NIESING

Published by the Safety First Association 

- CONSTRUCTION SAFETY - H&S WORKPLACE REGULATIONS
- HEAT STRESS - RISK ASSESSMENTS - CONFINED SPACE ENTRY
- ELECTRICAL SAFETY - PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING - BACK PAINS
- CHEMICAL HAZARDS - INDUSTRIAL SAFETY- FIRST AID - ERGONOMICS
- FIRE SAFETY - RISK INSPECTIONS - PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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

OUTSOURCING YOUR NON-CORE OSHE REQUIREMENTS?



To remain competitive and focussed on your core business, restructuring, downsizing and similar strategies have often necessitated businesses reducing the attention paid to and the priority required for the maintenance of good corporate governance & best practice.

In this process, the onerous financial, legal and moral liabilities of Occupational Safety, Health, Environmental (SHE) and General Risk Management, which can impact on the competitiveness and reputation of a business, tend to be overlooked as the production and profitability imperatives receive priority. Businesses frequently lack the in-house expertise to meet these business liabilities.

Benrisk Consulting is your outsourced partner of choice to cost effectively manage the liabilities from the Occupational Safety, Health & Environment (SHE) Risks and Risk Management fields.

We provide a "3P" Service; a Personalised, Practical and Professional service, to facilitate a positive impact on the profitability of your operations.

Benrisk Consulting provides, amongst others, the following Outsourced Services:

Occupational Safety, Health & Environmental Services:

- Construction H&S Specifications and Plans development (Pr.CHSA)
- SHE programme design and implementation services
- SHE inspection and legal compliance audit services
- SHE management and advice services
- Incident investigation services (basic to comprehensive)
- Emergency procedures plan development

Risk Management Services:

- Risk management process implementation services
- Risk assessments (Basic to sophisticated: Baseline/ Issue-based/ HAZOP/ What-it/ FMECA/ FTA)
- Enterprise-wide Baseline risk assessment workshop facilitation
- Risk control survey and audit services
- Management risk profiling and assessment workshops

Insurance Underwriting Survey Services:

- Site insurance underwriting survey reports
- Insurance underwriting loss estimates

Training Courses

- SHE courses:
- "Hard & Soft Rock" Excavation Safety training
- Risk assessment (Baseline and Issue-based HIRA)
- OHSAct 16(2), H&S Representatives, etc
- Comprehensive incident investigation
- General maintenance safety induction
- SHE topic presentations as requested
- Risk Assessments and Risk Management Process facilitation and seminars

Other Services Available

- Services customised to suite client needs - just ask!!

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