



# Abbreviations and acronyms in occupational health

In order to make communication more effective, people devise abbreviations and acronyms. These abbreviations and acronyms become an accepted way of communicating but people often forget that the very abbreviations and acronyms they use to communicate more effectively make other people feel incompetent when they do not know what they mean. The occupational health, safety and environmental field is not unique in this regard and members find the use of abbreviations and acronyms confusing. This is particularly the case with abbreviations relating to transport as found on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

A list of common abbreviations and acronyms used in South Africa is given in this article. For further abbreviations and acronyms visit the glossary on the Association of Societies for Safety and Health (ASOSH) website ([www.asosh.org](http://www.asosh.org)).

## A

**ACGIH** – *American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists.*

**ADN** – *Accord relatif au transport de marchandises Dangereuses par voies de Navigation intérieures* (European Provisions concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways).

**ADNR** – *Accord relatif au transport de marchandises Dangereuses par voies de Navigation intérieures sur le Rhin* (Provision concerning the Carriage of Dangerous Goods on the Rhine).

**ADR** – *Accord européen relatif au transport international des marchandises Dangereuses par Route* (European Agreement concerning the international carriage of dangerous goods by road).

**AIHA** – *American Industrial Hygiene Association.*

**ASOSH** – *Association of Societies for Occupational Safety and Health.* Umbrella organisation for SHE/EHS societies in South and Southern Africa. A forum at which the various Member Societies exchange ideas and discuss occupational safety and health issues.

**AU** – *African Union.*

## B

**BEI** – *Biological Exposure Indices.*

**BIFSA** – *Building Industries Federation South Africa.* BIFSA functions as a federation of Master Builder Associations (MBA) and Construction Industry Associations (CIA). It represents the national interests of employers in the building and allied industries

and serves a co-ordinating role. The primary aim is to provide leadership to the Building Industry by directing and co-ordinating activities, providing quality service, to maintain a national platform and to promote a profitable environment to achieve benefits for its members and the community.

**BIOH** – *British Institute of Occupational Hygienists* (now amalgamated with BOHS).

**BOHS** – *British Occupational Hygiene Society.*

## C

**CAIA** – *Chemical and Allied Industries' Association.*

**CAS Number** – *Chemical Abstracts Service Number.* Concise, unique means of material identification.

**CEN** – *Comité Européen de Normalisation (European Committee for Standardization).*

**CFC** – *Chlorofluorocarbon.* Associated with damage to the Earth's ozone layer.

**CNS** – *Central Nervous System.*

**COIDA** – *Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 1993.*

**COM** – *Chamber of Mines of South Africa.* The Chamber of Mines of South Africa is a prominent industry employers' organisation, which exists to serve its members and promote their interests in the South African mining industry.

**COSATU** – *Congress of South African Trade Unions.*

**COHSEF** – *Construction Occupational Health, Safety & Environment Forum* (This forum no longer exists). The Construction Industry Occupational Health & Safety Forum strove to create an environment which facilitated continual improvement, thereby contributing to the elimination of occupational disease, injury and loss.

**CPC** – *Chemical Protective Clothing.*

**CSIR** – *Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.* The premier technology and research

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## D

**DEAT** – Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

**DENOSA** – Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa.

**DME** – Department of Minerals and Energy.

**DOH** – Department of Health.

**DOL** – Department of Labour.

**DOT** – Department of Transport.

**DWAF** – Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.

## E

**EDL** – Essential Drug List.

**E8hEV** – Equivalent eight hour exposure value.

**EINECS** – European Inventory of Existing Chemical Substances.

**ELINICS** – Supplement to EINECS.

**ESSA** – Epidemiology Society of South Africa.

**ESSA** – Ergonomics Society of South Africa.

**ETQA** – Education and Training Quality Assurance Body. A body accredited in terms of section 5 (1)(a)(ii) of the South African Qualifications Act No. 58 of 1995, responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards and qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to monitoring and auditing of national standards and qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1)(b)(i) of the Act.

## F

**FPASA** – Fire Protection Association of Southern Africa.

## H

**HBS** – Hazardous Biological Substance.

**HCS** – Hazardous Chemical Substance.

**HIV/AIDS** – Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

**HPCSA** – Health Professions Council of South Africa. The Council, in conjunction with the Professional Boards, is committed to promoting the health of the population, determining standards of professional education and training, and setting and maintaining fair standards of professional practice.

**HSG 173** – Health and safety guidance document HSG 173 (Monitoring Strategies for Toxic Substances), Health and Safety Executive, United Kingdom.

**HST** – Health Systems Trust. A dynamic independent non-government organisation established in

1992 to support the transformation of the South African health system.

## I

**IATA** – International Air Transport Association.

**IATA-DGR** – IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations.

**ICAO** – UN International Civil Aviation Organization.

**ICAO-TI** – Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air.

**ICOH** – International Commission on Occupational Health.

**IDLH** – Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health.

**IEA** – International Ergonomics Association.

**ILO** – International Labour Organization. The International Labour Organization is the UN specialised agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights. It was founded in 1919 and is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which brought the League of Nations into being, and it became the first specialised agency of the UN in 1946.

The ILO formulates international labour standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations setting minimum standards of basic labour rights: freedom of association, the right to organise, collective bargaining, abolition of forced labour, equality of opportunity and treatment, and other standards regulating conditions across the entire spectrum of work related issues.

**ILO CIS** – ILO International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre.

**ILO/SAMAT** – ILO Southern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (MDT).

**IMO** – International Maritime Organization.

**IMO/IMDG Code** – IMO International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code.

**IOHA** – International Occupational Hygiene Association.

**IoSM** – Institute of Safety Management. The Institute of Safety Management, which was established in 1952, currently has some 500 members situated in 12 branches around South Africa. Its members are drawn from a wide spectrum of associated disciplines such as industrial safety practitioners, occupational hygienists, nurses and doctors, security managers, fire experts, risk management consultants, etc, employed in industries across the board.

Its main aim and objective is to improve the quality of service rendered by its members through education and training, by representing its members at government and employer level and by generally striving to enhance their professional status.

**IPCS** – International Programme on Chemical Safety.

**IRCA(1)** – International risk assessment, consulting, and behaviour based management and training services provide organisations with the practical solutions that enable them to identify and manage risk exposure.

**IRCA(2)** – *International Risk Control Africa*. A private company.

**ISO** – *International Organization for Standardization*.

## J

**Joint Effort** – *WHO/ILO Joint Effort on OHS in Africa*.

## L

**LEL or LFL** – *Lowest Explosive Limit or Lower Flammable Limit*.

**LOA** – *Life Officers' Association of South Africa*. An association of registered long-term insurance companies conducting business in South Africa. The LOA is a forum where member offices can interact to promote their interests and the interests of current and future stakeholders.

## M

**MBOD** – *Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases, Department of Health*.

**MDHS 39/4** – *Methods for the Determination of Hazardous Substances 39/4* (Asbestos fibres in air, sampling and evaluation by phase contrast microscopy (PCM) under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations), Health and Safety Executive, United Kingdom.

**MEDUNSA** – *Medical University of Southern Africa*.

**MHSA** – *Mine Health and Safety Act 1996*.

**MHSC** – *Mine Health and Safety Council*.

**µg** – *Microgramme* (one-millionth of a gramme).

**µm** – *Micrometre*. One-millionth of a metre; often referred to as a micron.

**min** – *Minute*.

**MMOA** – *Mining Medical and Other Health Care Professionals Association (formerly Mine Medical Officers' Association of South Africa)*.

**MOHAC** – *Mine Occupational Health Advisory Committee*.

**MQA** – *Mining Qualifications Authority*.

**MRC** – *Medical Research Council of South Africa*. To improve the nation's health status and quality of life through relevant and excellent health research aimed at promoting equity and development.

**MSDS** – *Material Safety Data Sheet* (same as hazard data sheet, material data sheet and chemical safety data sheet).

**MVS** – *Mine Ventilation Society of South Africa*.

## N

**NACA** – *National Association for Clean Air*.

**NCOH** – *National Centre for Occupational Health, Department of Health*. The National Centre for Occupational Health (NCOH) is primarily concerned with the prevention of work-related illness. It offers a number of services to provincial structures, occupational health practitioners, workers and management to support development of good occupational practice.

**NDOT** – *National Department of Transport*.

**NEDLAC** – *National Economic Development and Labour Council*. At Nedlac, Government comes together with organised business, organised labour and organised community groupings on a national level to discuss and try to reach consensus on issues of social and economic policy. This is called 'social dialogue'. Nedlac's aim is to make economic decision-making more inclusive, to promote the goals of economic growth and social equity.

**NEPAD** – *New Partner in Africa's Development*.

**NGO** – *Non-governmental Organization*.

**NOC** – *Not Otherwise Classified*.

**NOEL** – *No Observed Effect Level*.

**NOS** – *Not Otherwise Specified*.

**NOSA** – *National Occupational Safety Association*. Provides an integrated range of occupational risk management services. The NOSA Integrated Five Star System consists of 72 separate elements, covering five focus areas: Premises and Housekeeping, Mechanical, Electrical and Personal Safeguarding, Fire Protection and Prevention, Incident Recording and Investigation, Organisational Management.

**NOx** – *A general formula for oxides of nitrogen (NO, NO<sub>2</sub>)*

**NQF** – *National Qualifications Framework*. The set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages life-long learning.

**NSB** – *National Standards Body*. A body registered in terms of the South African Qualifications Act No. 58 of 1995, responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the registration of national standards and qualifications have been assigned.

**NUM** – *National Union of Mineworkers*.

## O

**ODMWA** – *Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act 1973*.

**OEL** – *Occupational Exposure Limit*.

**OEL-CL** – *OEL-Control Limit*.

**OEL-RL** – *OEL-Recommended Limit*.

**OESSM** – *The Occupational Exposure Sampling Strategy Manual, published by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Publication No. 77-173 of 1997, USA.*

**OHS** – *Occupational Health and Safety.*

**OHSA** – *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1993.*

**OHSAP** – *Board of Registration for Occupational Hygiene, Safety and Associated Professionals.* It was established by the Institute of Occupational Hygienists of Southern Africa (IOHSA) and the Institute of Safety Management (IoSM) for the purpose of registering the competencies of practitioners and regulating the quality of OHS education and training courses and course providers.

OHSAP is recognised nationally and internationally as the Body for the Establishment, Advancement and Maintenance of the Standards of Education, Training and Practice of Occupational Hygiene, Occupational Safety and Associated Professionals in South Africa.

## P

**PAH** – *Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons.*

**PCB** – *Polychlorinated Biphenyl.*

**ppb** – *Parts per billion.*

**ppm** – *Parts per million.*

**PPE** – *Personal Protective Equipment:* equipment a worker wears as a barrier between himself or herself and the hazardous agent(s).

**PSSA** – *Physiology Society of South Africa.*

**PsySSA** – *Psychological Society of South Africa.*

**PVC** – *Polyvinyl Chloride.*

## R

**RID** – *Règlement concernant le transport International ferroviaire des marchandises Dangereuses* (Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail) by the Organisation intergouvernementale pour les Transports Internationaux Ferroviaires (OTIF) – Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail.

**RMA** – *Rand Mutual Assurance Company Limited.* The Rand Mutual Assurance Company Limited, known as the Rand Mutual, was founded in 1894 by mining companies on the Witwatersrand as a mutual insurance company to underwrite workers' compensation for mining industry employees injured in the course and scope of their environment. In fact, the Rand Mutual pioneered workers' compensation insurance in South Africa.

**RPE** – *Respiratory Protective Equipment.*

**R Phrases** – *Risk phrases:* a set of numbered standard sentences which appear on user labels for packaged goods (eg, R23: Toxic by inhalation).

**RTP** – *Registered Training Provider.*

## S

**SAAI** – *Southern African Acoustics Institute.*

**SABS** – *South African Bureau of Standards.* Your starting point for information on standards.

– Provides over 500 000 standards, specifications, codes of practice and test methods for reference purposes.

– Maintains sets of international (ISO, IEC, CISPR, etc), European (CEN, CENELEC) and national standards from foreign countries (BSI, DIN, AFNOR, SAI, etc).

**SACAA** – *South African Civil Aviation Authority.*

**SA-CATS-DG** – *South African Civil Aviation Technical Standards Relating to the Conveyance of Dangerous Goods.*

**SADC** – *Southern African Development Community.*

**SADC ELS** – *SADC Employment and Labour Sector.*

**SAEP** – *Southern Africa Environment Project.*

**SAIEH** – *South African Institute of Environmental Health.*

**SAIOH** – *Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene* – Amalgamation of the Occupational Hygiene Association of Southern Africa (OHASA) and the Institute of Occupational Hygienists of Southern Africa (IOHSA).

**SAMA** – *South African Medical Association.* The SA Medical Association differs from the Health Professions Council in that its membership is voluntary and it has no statutory or disciplinary powers. At present some 70% of doctors in both the public and private sectors are members of the association, which is registered as an independent, non-profit section 21 company. The Association acts as doctors' and patients' champion, and strives for a health care dispensation that will best serve their needs.

**SAMOSA** – *South African Occupational Musculoskeletal Disorders Surveillance Action group (NCOH).*

**SAMSA** – *South African Maritime Safety Authority, Department of Transport.*

**SANC** – *South African Nursing Council.*

**SAPC** – *South African Pharmacy Council.* A statutory body created as a result of the recognition of the pharmacy profession by the legislature in South Africa, as an exclusive occupational group.

**SAPS** – *South African Pulmonology Society.*

**SAQA** – *South African Qualifications Authority.* The South African Qualifications Authority is a body of 29 members appointed by the Ministers of Education and Labour. The functions of the Authority are essentially twofold: To oversee the development of the NQF, by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achieve-



ments in terms of such standards and qualifications; To oversee the implementation of the NQF by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions to the bodies referred to above, as well as the registration of national standards and qualifications on the framework. It must also take steps to ensure that provisions for accreditation are complied with and where appropriate, that registered standards and qualifications are internationally comparable.

**SARCS** – *South African Red Cross Society.*

**SARPS** – *South African Radiation Protection Society.*

**SASAEM** – *South African Society for Aerospace and Environmental Medicine.*

**SASM** – *South African Society of Microbiology.*

**SASOHN** – *South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners.*

**SASOM** – *South African Society of Occupational Medicine.*

**SASTM** – *South African Society of Travel Medicine.*

**SATS** – *South African Thoracic Society.*

**SCBA** – *Self-contained Breathing Apparatus.*

**SCUBA** – *Self-contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus.*

**SETA** – *Sector Training and Education Authority.*

**SGB** – *Standards Generating Body.* A body registered in terms of section 5(1)(a)(ii) of the South African Qualifications Act No. 58 of 1995, responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the establishing of national standards and qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1)(b)(i) of the Act.

**SGG** – *Standards Generating Group.* Responsible for writing the educational and training standards for a specific section. Submits the written standards to the SGB.

**SHE** – *Safety, Health and Environment.* (In the USA known as EHS – Environment, Health and Safety).

**SIMRAC** – *Safety in Mines Research Advisory Committee.* The Safety in Mines Research Advisory Committee, known as SIMRAC, was established in terms of Section 29 (9) (a) of the Minerals Act, (Act 50 of 1991) with the principal objective of advising the Mine Health and Safety Council on the determination of the safety risk on mines, and the need for research into safety on mines based on the safety risk.

SIMRAC identifies research projects to address and reduce safety risks on mines, and determines the cost and priorities of projects, concludes agreements for carrying out projects, imposes a levy to fund research, monitors the progress on these projects and communicates research results to all stakeholders.

**SIMPROSS** – *SIMRAC Project Support Services.*

**SORDSA** – *Surveillance of Work-related and*

*Occupational Respiratory Diseases in South Africa (NCOH).* A national registry for occupational respiratory diseases. It is a collaborative project between the National Centre for Occupational Health, the South African Pulmonology Society and the South African Society for Occupational Medicine the South African Society for Occupational Health Nurses and the Department of Labour. The project is sponsored by the World Health Organization/South Africa Technical Cooperation Programme: Occupational Health.

**S Phrases** – *Safety phrases:* a set of numbered standard sentences which appear on user labels for packaged goods (eg, S 15: Keep away from heat).

## T

**TLV** – *Threshold Limit Value.* Maximum airborne concentration of a material to which most workers can be exposed during a normal daily and weekly work schedule without adverse effects.

**TLV-C** – *TLV-Ceiling Limit.* Concentration not to be exceeded at any time.

**TLV-Skin** – A notation indicating possible significant contribution to overall exposure to a material by way of absorption through the skin, mucous membranes, and eyes by direct or airborne contact.

**TLV-STEL** – *Short-Term Exposure Limit* or maximum concentration for a continuous exposure period of 15 minutes.

**TLV-TWA** – *TLV Time Weighted Average* concentration for a normal 8-hour workday or 40-hour week.

**Tremcard** – *Transport Emergency Card.* Instructions on how to deal with emergencies involving hazardous chemicals.

## U

**UEL or UFL** – *Upper Explosive Limit or Upper Flammable Limit.*

**UN** – *United Nations.*

**UN Number** – *UN substance number.* Four-digit numbers which have been assigned by the UN Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, to individual substances (eg, sulphuric acid) or groups of similar substances (eg, carbamate pesticides).

**UNISA** – *University of South Africa.*

## W

**WBGT index** – *Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Index.*

**WHO** – *World Health Organisation.*

**WHO/AFRO** – *WHO Regional Office for Africa.*

**WHO/EMRO** – *WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.*

**WHO CC** – *WHO Collaborating Centre.*