

SAIOH news

As part of our service to members, in this newsletter we provide feedback on the latest developments within the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH). SAIOH exists for its members and is reliant on them to continue to serve this noble profession, ethically. Therefore, we invite your inputs and feedback on any matters communicated below.

SAIOH PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Naadiya Mundy: SAIOH President
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The remarkable speed at which SAIOH has achieved and continues to achieve success is a testament to the tireless efforts of our dedicated volunteers. Their unwavering commitment to our institution's success is truly commendable. We are grateful for their hard work and appreciate their unwavering dedication to our shared goals.

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

I recently read a featured article in the *African OS&H* magazine titled

Naadiya Mundy

Photograph: courtesy of SAIOH

'Storytelling in training'.¹ This inspired me to explore a storytelling approach as a means to both celebrate the profession to which I belong, and encourage young professionals to consider it as a career path.

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

Similarly, occupational hygienists are the unsung heroes of our everyday world. While they may not battle Sith Lords or engage in interstellar warfare, their mission is equally crucial, with their main focus on protecting workers' health. These professionals are dedicated to identifying, evaluating, and controlling health hazards in the workplace, ensuring that employees can work in safe and healthy environments. Their tools may not be lightsabres, but they utilise advanced technology and scientific principles to combat invisible threats such as toxic chemicals, harmful dust, and excessive noise. These methods are not arbitrary. Much like the *Star Wars* heroes who use their skills and knowledge to protect the galaxy, occupational hygienists employ their expertise in physiology, toxicology, and industrial hygiene to safeguard the wellbeing of workers across industries. Their ability to assess risks accurately and implement effective control measures hinges on their technical knowledge,²

skills, and adherence to strict professional and ethical standards. This commitment ensures that their work is not only effective but also responsible and trustworthy, highlighting the importance of maintaining high ethical standards in the field.

More specifically, occupational hygiene is defined as the science and art dedicated to anticipating, recognising, evaluating, and controlling environmental factors or stressors in the workplace that may cause sickness, impaired health and wellbeing, or significant discomfort among workers or the broader community.³ Occupational hygienists are adept at managing biological, chemical, and physical hazards in workplace environments.⁴ They are often academically trained across multiple disciplines, and are equipped with established methodologies and frameworks for hazard assessment and control.⁴ Pursuing a career in occupational/industrial hygiene offers numerous benefits and opportunities for those passionate about health and safety. Some key elements include:

- Adherence to ethical standards: adherence to ethical guidelines that prioritise the health and safety of workers and the community. This includes honesty, integrity, and accountability in all professional activities.
- Competency and continuous learning: occupational hygienists must maintain a high level of expertise through continuous education and professional development. This ensures that they remain up to date with scientific and regulatory advancements, and can effectively address emerging hazards.
- Effective communication: clear and effective communication with stakeholders, including workers, employers, and regulatory bodies.
- Commitment to best practices: use of established best practices and evidence-based methods in the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control of workplace hazards.
- Collaboration and leadership: the ability to work within multidisciplinary teams, and demonstration of strong leadership and collaborative skills.

In essence, both *Star Wars* heroes and occupational hygienists share a common goal: to protect and preserve life. While one defends against cosmic threats and the forces of evil, the other ensures that workplaces are free from hazards that can harm health. Their efforts might not be as visible as those of a Jedi in battle, but the impact of occupational hygienists is profound, making them true guardians of our health and safety.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FEEDBACK

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The SAIOH management and Council held and participated in several meetings during the period April to July 2024, focusing on collaboration and goal achievements. Further meetings were held to strategise and plan the updating of the SAIOH quality management system (QMS), the way forward, with David O'Malley of the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) and their training M-modules, the new SAIOH website, and the SAIOH 2024 conference. Discussions were held with Prof. Johan du Plessis of North-West University on the development of SAIOH's own occupational hygiene ethics course.

During this period, SAIOH management also met with Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), and other occupational hygiene organisations to discuss the threat to occupational hygiene, worldwide.

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene also hosted the Department of Employment and Labour's (DoEL's) workshop on Hazardous Chemical Agents and attended the DoEL/SAIOH/Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authority (OH AIA) Association's liaison meeting and the OH AIA Association's meeting.

Strategic plan

The SAIOH Council continues to review the 2023–2027 strategy, ensure that targets are being met, and explore further strategic developments for the institute and its members.

Ethics

NGO Law has advised that the legal review of SAIOH's ethics policy and procedure(s) falls outside their expertise, and they have recommended seeking assistance from specialised lawyers. This is an urgent matter as it is crucial for the Ethics Committee to begin its work. The ethics plan is a vital component of SAIOH's strategy.

SAIOH branch activities

The Western Cape branch's second meeting took place on Friday, 7 June 2024 in an online format. The Gauteng branch hosted its second meeting on Friday, 12 July 2024. The meeting was held in-person at the Franklin Roosevelt Park Golf Club in Johannesburg. Presentations on new occupational hygiene technologies by G. Warne (AMS Haden), and an interactive session on welding fumes by Jaco van Rensburg (Gijima), were followed by attendees playing bowls, eating tasty hamburgers, and interacting socially.

The Botswana Association for Occupational Hygiene (BAOH) is meeting regularly, and is involved with the organising of the SAIOH-BAOH 2024 conference in Gaborone from 21 to 24 October 2024.

SAIOH 2024 annual scientific conference

The Botswana branch will host the SAIOH-BAOH annual 2024 conference in Gaborone from 21 to 24 October at the Phakalane Golf Estate and Conference Hotel. The detailed programme and registration details are available on the SAIOH website (www.saioh.co.za). The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene will provide detailed feedback in the next issue of *Occupational Health Southern Africa*.



Image: courtesy of SAIOH

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

The SAIOH General Manager, Deon Jansen van Vuuren, President, Naadiya Mundy, and OHTA representative, Jakes Jacobs, met several times with the OHTA and BOHS at the IOHA 2024 Conference in Dublin, regarding their 'new' Occupational Hygiene (OH) Certificates. This was to enable SAIOH's acceptance of these qualifications at the relevant Professional Certification Committee (PCC) qualification requirement level.

Emerging Leaders Institute Programme

Three South Africans, Naadiya Mundy, Goitsewang Keretsetse, and Deon Swanepoel, were selected to attend the Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI) Programme, which was held in conjunction with the IOHA 2024 Conference in Dublin, Ireland. The Emerging Leaders Institute is dedicated to enhancing the leadership skills of early-career occupational, environmental, health and safety (OEHS) and product stewardship professionals with less than 15 years of experience.

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

- Enhanced leadership capabilities: participants expanded their awareness and influence of self and others, developing skills in strategic thinking, decision-making, and effective communication.
- Team management: training focused on building and managing high-performance teams, equipping attendees with essential team leadership skills.
- Professional impact: the programme emphasised making a lasting impact on the future of the profession, fostering a sense of responsibility and forward-thinking among participants.

Moreover, the ELI provided valuable networking opportunities with other emerging leaders, industry experts, and mentors, thereby enhancing professional connections. The focus on career advancement was evident, as the programme equipped participants with the skills needed to take on leadership roles, boosting their career prospects and professional growth.

Deon Jansen van Vuuren received the 2024 **IOHA Lifetime Achiever award** and gave a talk on: 'Selling of occupational hygiene ... difficult, but extremely important'.

Some quick statistics from the IOHA conference:

- Forty-two associations, globally, are members of IOHA, representing 8 222 National Accreditation Recognition- (NAR-) certified occupational hygienists.
- The three newest associations are Mongolia, Chile, and Nigeria (the second in Africa).
- Eighteen associations' certification schemes are now accredited by the NAR Committee.
- SAIOH has the second-largest number of registered occupational hygienists, globally, viz. 223 (in June 2024), but is dwarfed by The Board for Global, Environment, Safety, and Health Credentialing, Inc. The Board of Global Credentialing (BGC), previously called the American Board of Industrial Hygiene, which has 6 807 registered occupational hygienists.

International Occupational Hygiene Association NAR Committee feedback:

- The NAR Committee developed a revised accreditation evaluation matrix with updated requirements, which was approved at the IOHA Board meeting.
- SAIOH's Professional Certification Committee (PCC) meets and exceeds the IOHA minimum requirements for ethics, qualifications, experience, and certification system.

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene's NAR is an important step in maintaining its credibility and reputation in the field of occupational hygiene. The re-application process has begun, with the PCC Exco team diligently working on submitting necessary documentation to IOHA for review.

Deon Jansen van Vuuren is now on the IOHA Governance Committee, working on updates to the IOHA management system, quality procedures, and document management system.

The IOHA has relaunched its *Global Exposure Manager* (GEM) newsletter, which is available on its website.

SAIOH Technical Committee feedback

The SAIOH Technical Committee is conducting research on welding fumes, focusing on measurement and analysis. Dr Ivan Niranjani, the Technical Portfolio Coordinator, is leading this project. Additionally, a sub-committee was established by SAIOH and OH AIA to create a technical and position paper on the topic. This collaborative approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of welding fumes, measurement, and the impact of exposure.

SAIOH's second Technical Committee has been actively developing technical procedures and a position paper on heat stress management, in addition to conducting research on the topic. The committee's two-fold focus is to create a technical paper that will enable SAIOH to submit well-rounded and relevant proposals to strengthen the Physical Agents Regulations in 2024.

Wessel van Wyk, the former Technical Coordinator, is actively working on a position paper regarding real-time monitoring. The document will be shared with SAIOH members and stakeholders once it is approved by SAIOH's technical sub-committee and the Technical Committee. The paper aims to provide insights on real-time monitoring,



Attendees at the IOHA National Accreditation Recognition (NAR) Committee meeting at the IOHA conference

Photograph: courtesy of Deon Jansen van Vuuren

enabling informed decision-making and collaboration among industry professionals.

The Department of Employment and Labour requested comments on the new Lead Regulations by 31 May 2024. A collaborative effort was made by SAIOH, the OH AIA Association, and SASOL, after which comments were submitted to the DoEL. The team would like to extend thanks to Tatjana Rogowski for her instrumental role in driving this initiative.

Communications

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

FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

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Certification assessments

A summary of results for the assessments that took place mid-March to July 2024 is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. SAIOH PCC certification assessment results (March–July 2024)

Certification category	Assessed	Written assessments			Oral assessments			
		Assessed	Passed	Failed	Pass rate	Assessed	Passed	Failed
	n	n	n	%	n	n	n	%
OH assistant	109	107	2	98.2	0	0	0	-
OH technologist	58	45	13	77.6	67	34	33	50.7
Occupational hygienist	29	19	10	65.5	27	13	14	48.1
Total	196	171	25	87.2	94	47	47	50.0

PCC assessment improvements

The PCC technical team has revised the 17 occupational hygiene skillsets and is now developing scenario questions in line with the requirements for oral assessments.

Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum

One of the functions of the Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) is to evaluate applications from tertiary institutions for recognition of their occupational hygiene-related qualifications. The OHSF is progressing well with these accreditations and is currently evaluating the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's (CPUT's) occupational health qualification. All tertiary institutions that offer occupational hygiene qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC Administrator for information regarding application for recognition: lee@saioh.co.za.

Three asbestos modules from the SAIOH OHSF are now available for registered training providers. These modules, specifically AP101 – Asbestos Counting, AP102 – Asbestos Bulk Analysis, and AP103 – Risk Management, are ready for distribution and training. These comprehensive modules will enable providers to offer in-depth training in asbestos-related topics, providing individuals with essential skills and knowledge in the field. Please contact Lee Doolan (lee@saioh.co.za) for further information. [📄](#)