SAIOH news

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) is dedicated to its members and the advancement of the occupational hygiene profession. As part of our commitment, we regularly share updates and developments with our members. SAIOH thrives through your active involvement and ethical contributions in the field of occupational hygiene. To further strengthen our community, we encourage feedback and input on the matters discussed in this edition of the Journal.

SAIOH PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Karen du Preez: SAIOH President
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Karen du Preez
Photograph: courtesy of SAIOH

The legacy of SAIOH

The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene is a professional body recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), with approximately 1 000 members. The management team and Council members who serve SAIOH volunteer their time and expertise to contribute to the vision and mission of SAIOH. What motivates someone with a demanding day job to take up a position that places another claim on their already limited time? The answer is 'legacy', which can be defined as the long-lasting impact of specific past events or actions. The actions and commitment of past and present leaders of SAIOH have contributed to the growth of SAIOH and paved the way for incoming members to excel. Standing at the beginning of my tenure as SAIOH President, I acknowledge these past actions and contributions. I know the road has been travelled by great names in occupational hygiene, and following in their footsteps is a privilege and an honour.

My commitment to SAIOH members is to build on the great example set by past presidents, who served the occupational hygiene profession and SAIOH's best interests with passion and dedication. Together with the Council and management team, my focus will be on identifying and implementing projects that align with SAIOH's strategic objectives, to enable our members to practise sound and ethical occupational hygiene that ensures safer and healthier workplaces. My invitation to our members is to utilise the opportunities that SAIOH provides you to grow professionally, and excel as occupational hygiene professionals in southern Africa and beyond.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FEEDBACK

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The SAIOH Management Board has retained the momentum of 2024 with various meetings and collaborative discussions. The first Management Board meeting took place on 3 February 2025, followed by the SAIOH strategic session and first Council meeting on 26 and 27 February 2025, respectively.

Other interactions include:

- September and October 2024: Impromptu Zoom and MS Teams meetings were held with the conference organising and planning committee.
- 16 October 2024: The Department of Employment and Labour held a successful Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Strategy Conference and the signing of the OHS Accord at Emperors Palace.
- November 2024, January and February 2025: Information about several occupational hygiene-related webinars was circulated to SAIOH members.
- 21 November 2024: SAIOH Professional Certification Committee (PCC) Chief Examiner represented SAIOH at the South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN) Annual Conference in White River, Mpumalanga.
- 25 and 26 November 2024: SAIOH participated in the Occupational Heat Exposure Symposium organised by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- 27 November 2024: SAIOH participated in the *Occupational Health Southern Africa* Editorial Board meeting.
- 29 November 2024: SAIOH participated in the Mine Health and Safety Council's heat tolerance screening workshop.
- 29 November 2024: SAIOH attended the Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authority (OH AIA) Association's meetings.
- Naadiya Mundy, representing SAIOH management, attended ongoing meetings with Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), and other occupational hygiene organisations to discuss and implement strategies to address global threats to occupational hygiene. These threats have been exacerbated by the US Congress' call to abolish their Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act.

SAIOH strategic plan

The current SAIOH strategic (5-year) plan is steered by Jaco Pieterse. This is discussed, and progress is evaluated at the monthly SAIOH Management Board and quarterly Council meetings.

Ethics

NGO Law is currently conducting a review of the SAIOH Ethics Policy and Procedures. We have received their initial feedback, along with additional questions for SAIOH regarding specific procedures. The

review of our procedures is urgent as it is important for the Ethics Committee to begin with implementation, and it is also a crucial item in the SAIOH strategy (#3).

Note: From 1 January 2023, all SAIOH-certified members are required to provide proof that they have completed an acceptable occupational hygiene ethics training course. A one-year phase-in period was allowed during 2022. Terry McDonald, of the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS), presented Professional Development Courses (PDCs) during the 2021 and 2022 Annual Conferences and again on 25 July 2024. These online seminars are available to purchase.

SAIOH branch activities

The Western Cape and Gauteng branches each held successful meetings in November 2024. In Gauteng, the high turnout overwhelmed SAIOH's Zoom capacity, leading to technical difficulties. The Western Cape branch (in-person) held an innovative quiz on all things related to SAIOH. Both branches are preparing for their first meetings of 2025. Members are reminded to stay alert for our Mailchimp notifications.

Unfortunately, the Central (Free State), Northern Cape, and Mpumalanga branches remain inactive.

SAIOH 2025 Annual Scientific Conference

The conference dates have been confirmed as 20–23 October 2025. Members are requested to save the date and keep a lookout for abstract submission dates.

The 2025 SAIOH Conference will be held on 20–23 October 2025 at the Raddison Blu Hotel, Umhlanga, Durban and will be hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal branch of SAIOH.

Occupational Hygiene in Practice – Navigating New Workplace Challenges

International Occupational Hygiene Association Board, the National Accreditation Recognition Committee, and Occupational Hygiene Training Association feedback

The Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) and the IOHA continue to publish their newsletters. Links are e-mailed to all SAIOH members and published on the SAIOH website: www.saioh.co.za

The OHTA *Global Link* and IOHA *Global Exposure Manager* (GEM) newsletters are posted on the SAIOH website and sent to all members via Mailchimp as soon as they become available.

Deon Jansen van Vuuren's representation of SAIOH on the IOHA Board and the National Accreditation Recognition Committee (NARC) concluded on 31 December 2024. The PCC Exco has nominated Corlia Peens as the new IOHA Board Director and member of the NARC, effective 1 January 2025.

Several IOHA and NARC meetings took place in October, November, and December 2024, including an IOHA Governance Meeting on 19 October 2024, where the draft IOHA strategy document for 2026–2030 was considered.

Excellent news

SAIOH was informed by IOHA, just before the Botswana Conference in October 2024, that the NARC renewed the SAIOH PCC's system for another five years.

SAIOH Technical Committee feedback

The SAIOH Technical Committee's research on welding fumes, encompassing both measurement and analysis, was spearheaded by Dr Ivan Niranjan, the SAIOH Technical Portfolio Coordinator. A subcommittee, comprised of SAIOH and OH AIA Association members, has already convened to develop a technical and position paper on this topic. The final position paper is expected in 2025.

Our second Technical Committee has started developing technical procedures and a SAIOH position paper on heat stress management. Unfortunately, the death of Schu Schutte was a setback. We have since commenced co-ordination with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Dr Johan Kielblock to conduct the necessary research. The deadline for this is mid-2025. The focus remains two-fold: to develop a technical paper, and to enable SAIOH to provide comprehensive and relevant proposals to strengthen the recently launched Physical Agents Regulations (PAR), formerly known as the Environmental Regulations for Workplaces.

Wessel van Wyk, the previous technical co-ordinator, is still involved in finalising a position paper on real-time monitoring. Once this document receives approval from the SAIOH PCC Exco's sub-committee and Technical Committee, it will be circulated to all SAIOH members and stakeholders.

Communications

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

Numerous interactive communications were accomplished in the final months of 2024 and the first two months of 2025:

- November 2024: the then SAIOH Vice President, Karen du Preez, gave a presentation on SAIOH at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) for their 3rd-year students.
- February 2025: Deon Jansen van Vuuren, representing SAIOH, spoke about heat stress to the Diploma in Occupational Health students at the University of the Witwatersrand School of Public Health.
- SAIOH communicates daily with its stakeholders via e-mail, Mailchimp notifications, phone calls, and virtual meetings. These

communications cover important news, technical information, legislation changes, new standards, occupational hygiene job opportunities, occupational hygiene products and services, courses, and webinars on occupational hygiene, health, and occupational and environmental safety.
- Several communications were held with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), regarding the threat to occupational health and safety in the USA.

Several e-mail notifications on occupational hygiene and health webinars and short courses were distributed towards the end of 2024 for IOHA, WHWB, South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM) webinars, the SASOHN Annual Conference, and Safety-First's Fire Conference.

Several online events and webinars were recently hosted by our stakeholders and attended by SAIOH management, members, and staff, including:
- 30 January 2025: WHWB webinar on asbestos and silica risks
- 12 February 2025: University of Johannesburg Occupational Health Department's lecture on 'The impact of new technologies on occupational health'

FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

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Professional Certification Committee (PCC) members are SAIOH-registered occupational hygienists (ROHs) with at least five years' experience at this level, volunteering their time to ensure that the certification processes are in line with South African requirements and international occupational hygiene practices. The PCC processes and procedures are documented in Chapter 2 of the SAIOH Quality Manual, and assessors undergo regular instruction and training through meetings and webinars.

The PCC is supported by highly skilled and dedicated administrative staff, who adhere to strict professional conduct to provide the best possible service to all members. The PCC administrators, in handling communication with members regarding the sensitive topic of assessment processes and outcomes, occasionally have challenging conversations with members. We urge all members to treat staff and volunteers with respect and dignity at all times. SAIOH regularly provides members with updates on rules, guides, ethics, compliance, and more. We value each member and strive to maintain a community where everyone feels respected and valued.

Certification assessments

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

PCC news

- The PCC Exco nominated a new Chief Examiner, Dr Goitsemang Keretetse.
- The PCC is developing an electronic written assessment on the MS Excel platform to replace the current learning management system (LMS) electronic assessment system. This task is proving to be more challenging than anticipated, especially as we aim to convert all certification assessments to multiple-choice format. This work is ongoing.
- The PCC's written assessments will continue to be conducted in hard copy format until a new system is finalised and implemented.

PCC activities

- The subcommittee responsible for revising the skill set/self-assessment tool meets biweekly. They have completed work on the 17 skill sets and are developing scenario questions aligned with the skill set module requirements for use in oral assessments. PCC members convened on 14 February 2025 for the first of a series of training workshops.
- The PCC ExCo held an official handover session on 24 January 2025, during which the previous Chair, Vice Chair, and Chief Examiner officially transferred their duties to the new PCC management team. The new team comprises Dr Ivan Niranjan as Chair, Andre van Rooyen as Vice Chair, and Dr Goitsemang Keretetse as Chief Examiner.

Table 1. SAIOH PCC certification assessment results for 2024

Certification category	Written assessments				Oral assessments			
	Assessed	Passed	Failed	Pass rate	Assessed	Passed	Failed	Pass rate
	n	n	n	%	n	n	n	%
OH assistant	245	240	5	98.0	0	0	0	-
OH technologist	84	70	14	83.3	101	58	43	57.4
Occupational hygienist	41	22	19	53.7	34	18	16	52.9
Total	**370**	**332**	**38**	**89.7**	**135**	**76**	**59**	**56.3**

Table 2. SAIOH PCC written and oral assessment dates and deadlines, 2025

Assessment type	Deadline for applications	Deadline for assessment evaluations and payment	Assessment date
Written	12 January	14 February	14 March
Oral	-	-	Week of 11 April
Written	25 April	30 May	27 June
Oral	-	-	Week of 25 July
Written	1 August	5 September	3 October
Oral	-	-	Week of 14 November

We thank the previous incumbents, Corlia Peens (Chair) and Maryke van der Walt (Chief Examiner), for their excellent service.

The PCC assessment dates for 2025 are in Table 2.

Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum

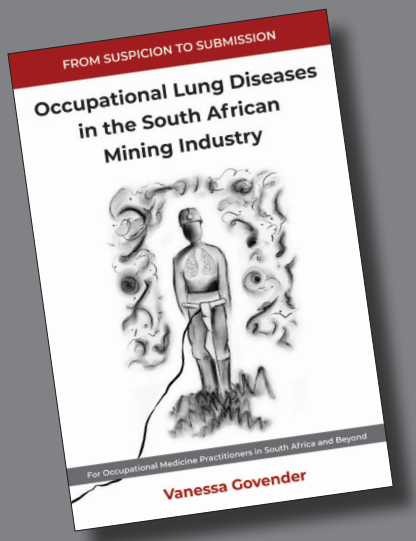
The SAIOH Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) was established to oversee all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials, such as asbestos training courses, and occupational hygiene training short course providers and institutions. The forum is also responsible for the development and management of assessment and examination systems.

The OHSF took part in the OHTA Approved Training Provider forum meetings in 2024/2025. The OHSF is making good, albeit slow, progress with the accreditation of tertiary institutions and is in the final stages of evaluating the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's (CPUT) occupational health qualification. Qualifications offered by North-West University (NWU) and the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) are already recognised. Several universities, including those from Botswana and Uganda, are scheduled to meet in early 2025 to discuss their curricula. All tertiary institutions that offer occupational hygiene qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC Administrator, Lee Doolan, for information regarding application for recognition: lee@saioh.co.za

Details of recognised training providers and recognised qualifications are available on the SAIOH website (www.saioh.co.za). This makes it easier for students and certification candidates to select suitable occupational hygiene training programmes that meet SAIOH and international certification requirements.

Dr Hennie van der Westhuizen contributed to the OHSF by developing draft questions based on an article previously published in *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, to pilot an additional Continual Professional Development (CPD) activity. This initiative will allow members to earn CPD points and promote more active involvement in the Journal. SAIOH is preparing to launch this activity during the second quarter of 2025 and, thereafter, at least biannually, based on interest and participation of members.

NEW BOOK



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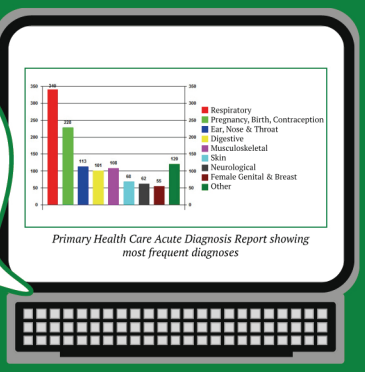

Primary Health Care Acute Diagnosis Report showing most frequent diagnoses

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