

Deon Jansen van Vuuren

BSc Hons (North-West University), National Diploma in Safety Management (University of Johannesburg), Certificate in Operational Competence and Diploma in Professional Competence in Occupational Hygiene (British Occupational Hygiene Society), SAIOH Fellow

From the outset of his career, Deon demonstrated a strong commitment to occupational hygiene and a willingness to engage actively in the field. This interest dates back to his postgraduate studies, during which he completed month-long practical placements at the Chamber of Mines Research Organisation (COMRO) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), now CSIR Miningtek. During this period, he was mentored by leading practitioners, including Dr Johan Kielblock and Mr Schu Schutte, who were undertaking pioneering work on heat acclimatisation for underground mining.

Following his postgraduate studies, Deon completed the mandatory two-year national military service with the South African Army. After basic training, he successfully applied to join a newly established unit responsible for developing and delivering occupational health and safety (OHS) training programmes across the military service. In recognition of his contributions and completion of the necessary officers' training course (SA Army College), he was promoted through the ranks to lieutenant.

After completing his compulsory service, Deon remained involved with the South African Army Citizen Force (CF) for a further 15 years, providing OHS support until the CF's disbandment in 1994. During this time, he attained the rank of captain, again completed the necessary officers' training course, and received three 'Chief of the South African Army' commendations for excellent service.

Deon's civilian career included appointments as a Regional Safety Advisor at the National Occupational Safety Organisation (NOSA), OHS Manager at a manufacturing plant, and Chief OHS Officer at the Roodepoort City Council. At the City Council, he developed and implemented a comprehensive OHS programme, improving its NOSA grading from two to four stars. He was subsequently recruited by Middelburg Steel and Alloys, a NOSA five-star organisation, to manage OHS and occupational hygiene programmes across three manufacturing plants. When the company became Columbus Stainless, Deon was appointed Group Manager for Occupational Hygiene.

In this role, Deon was tasked with establishing an occupational hygiene consultancy to serve the broader group of companies, including Columbus Stainless, Gencor (BHP Billiton and Samancor), and Anglo American. This initiative evolved into Gijima Occupational Hygiene, Environmental Services and Laboratory (Gijima OHES&L), an occupational hygiene approved inspection authority (AIA), accredited by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) and the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) under SANS ISO 17020. The consultancy provides services to industry, mining, and government, supported by an accredited analytical chemistry laboratory (SANAS ISO 17025). Its scope expanded to include environmental monitoring, electromagnetic fields and non-ionising radiation, vibration, diesel particulate matter, vehicle illumination surveys, and ergonomics assessment and training.



Deon Jansen van Vuuren – SAIOH General Manager

Photograph: courtesy of SAIOH

A hallmark of Deon's leadership was his commitment to professional development. He adopted a strategy of recruiting and mentoring young occupational hygiene practitioners in alignment with the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) certification framework. Under his management, the Occupational Hygiene Business Unit (BU) achieved an exceptional professional profile, with approximately 45% of staff registered as occupational hygiene assistants, 25% as occupational hygiene technologists, and 30% as registered occupational hygienists.

By the time of his retirement at age 65, the Occupational Hygiene BU comprised approximately 85 staff members, making it the largest of its kind in South Africa. The period under Deon's leadership had a lasting and far-reaching impact on the practice of occupational hygiene, nationally. Following its sale to Gijima IT Company as part of the Human Capital Management (HCM) Division, the BU became both highly sustainable and profitable and, by 2018, it was the highest-performing entity within the group.

Alongside his professional career, Deon made extensive voluntary contributions to the profession. He joined the Occupational Hygiene Association of South Africa (OHASA) in 1980 and later the Institute for Occupational Hygienists of Southern Africa (IOHSA), serving on the Examination Board. Following the amalgamation of OHASA and IOHSA to form SAIOH in 2001, he chaired the Professional Certification Committee (PCC) for many years and served as Chief Examiner. He was elected SAIOH President in 2005, serving a three-year term during which South Africa hosted the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) Conference at the Pilanesberg Nature Reserve in North West province. In 2007, SAIOH Fellow, Rob Ferrie, who was the IOHA President, then recruited and nominated Deon onto the IOHA National Accreditation Recognition Committee (NARC), which

manages a global recognition scheme for occupational hygiene certification programmes. Deon played a leading role in securing international recognition for SAIOH, successfully guiding three applications to the NARC. He subsequently served on both the IOHA Board and the NARC, including a four-year term as Chair of the NARC.

After retiring from Gijima OHES&L in 2018, Deon was appointed as SAIOH General Manager, a position he still holds. During this period, he strengthened SAIOH's financial sustainability, expanded its administrative capacity, implemented the *MySAIOH* electronic membership system, and supported the delivery of seven highly successful annual scientific conferences. Under his leadership, SAIOH's membership has grown to nearly 1 000 members, and the Institute has been accredited three times by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as the sole professional registration body for occupational hygiene in South Africa.

Over more than 46 years, Deon has served the discipline of occupational hygiene with exceptional dedication and integrity. Much of this contribution was provided on a voluntary basis, both nationally and internationally. Rather than stepping back after retirement, he chose to continue serving the profession with the same commitment and generosity. In recognition of his lifelong contribution, Deon was awarded the IOHA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024, following his successful nomination by SAIOH (he was one of four finalists). The award honoured his enduring impact on the advancement of occupational hygiene, the promotion and development of occupational hygiene standards and practices, and the protection of worker health. In 2025, SAIOH also bestowed the SAIOH Lifetime Achievement Award on Deon, the first in the history of SAIOH. 📌

UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUTH AFRICA

MMPA Golf Day
26 July 2026
e-mail: noluthandos@mpas.org.za

INTERNATIONAL

WHWB Webinar- Engineered Stone
Monday, March 30, 5:00 p.m. EDT; 9:00 p.m. GMT, Tuesday, March 31, 8:00 a.m. AEDT
30-31 March 2026
Website: <https://whwb.org/>
Registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/jplnSMjKRjGVcHVia60J1Q#/registration>

Go to

www.occhealth.co.za

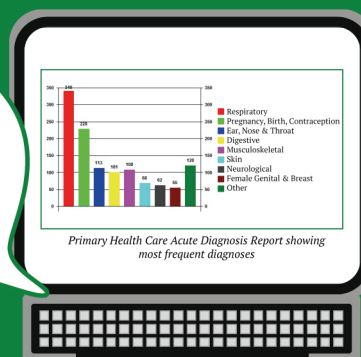
'Upcoming Events'

to see upcoming local and international OH events

Clinsys

Occupational & Primary Health

New -
Covid-19
Module



Caroline Mathew
+27 84 580 4016

Website: www.clinsys.co.za
clinsys@twinsolutions.co.za