

SAIOH president's message

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MESSAGE FROM OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT, NORMAN KHOZA

The year 2020 has come and is almost gone – what a year in the history of our profession! What makes me proud of our occupational hygiene professionals is the fact that the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) did not lose a single soul due to COVID-19. Well, at least none that was reported. This can be credited to how careful our members are when dealing with hazards. One of the things we need to do is encourage the public to reduce smoking behaviour. I believe that we have a lower percentage of smokers in the profession than in the general population, which is a great advantage when faced with a respiratory pandemic.

I have come to the end of my term as the 2020 SAIOH president. There are several individuals I would like to acknowledge – those who encouraged me to stand for president and those who made my work easy. I cannot name every person who assisted me along the way, so I will just say thank you to the SAIOH members, the National Council, the SAIOH Management Board, and the Professional Certification Committee (PCC). I also thank the Department of Employment and Labour, the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), South African Institute of Safety and Health (Saiosh), Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA), my organisation, the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), and many more. To the incoming president and his Council, I wish you all the best for 2021–2022. I believe that these will be great years for our noble profession. We certainly have trust in your ability and I pledge my unwavering support to all. Let me end my last message with two quotes from the former US president, Mr Barack Obama, in his farewell speech: "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek", and "We did not come to fear the future, we came to shape it". Let us participate, to shape the future of the occupational hygiene profession, not only in southern Africa but Africa at large.

MESSAGE FROM OUR INCOMING PRESIDENT, DR HENNIE VAN DER WESTHUIZEN

This has been a remarkable year. The consequences of the worldwide management and control of the COVID-19 pandemic tossed us into a crucible where trusted ways of thinking were put to a flame test. On the one hand, it provided the opportunity and time to reminisce on the essence, worth and systems within SAIOH and, on the other hand, it forced us to develop innovative strategies to manage changing and emerging demands. Norman led us through the storm and into the emerging solutions with his calm, thorough, encouraging, and democratic leadership style. It was a pleasure working with and learning from him. Fortunately, he remains part of the management team. In essence, the management will retain its newly gained impetus as the members remain the same, with only some roles changing. It is the abilities and selfless input from this capable team that will take us through the next cycle. One cannot conclude without giving due credit to the dedicated administrative team that oils the gears, and the many members working behind the scenes towards forwarding the goals of SAIOH without expecting mention or compensation. I am honoured to be part of this team and am of a firm belief that we will serve our members well.

SAIOH 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

This year marked the first of its kind, whereby the SAIOH AGM was held on a virtual platform (Zoom) on 4 November 2020 and attended by almost 150 SAIOH members.

SAIOH Constitution

The SAIOH Constitution was amended and removed from the quality management system (QMS) to stand on its own. It was circulated to all members and, at the SAIOH 2020 AGM, it was voted on and successfully ratified.

Amendments to the Constitution are as follows:

- The SAIOH president must be a SAIOH registered occupational hygienist.
- The terms of office for all voted and ex-officio members are now two years.
- The incoming Council will be from the AGM.
- Regional co-ordinators and the regional structure and procedures are now written into the Constitution.
- The QMS will be updated as necessary and be approved/signed off by the SAIOH Council and/or PCC.

To get to the current ratified Constitution was a rich journey. The first Constitution was the Occupational Hygiene Association of South Africa's (OHASA's) in 1983, the second one was the Institute of Occupational Hygienists of Southern Africa's (IOHSA's) in 1999, and thereafter it became SAIOH's. In 2015, the Constitution moved into the SAIOH QMS (Chapter 1) but, in 2019, it was again removed from the QMS and amended. The Constitution has now been ratified as Document 01, October 2020.

SAIOH Council changes

Another year has come to pass, and with it come a few changes in the SAIOH Council. Naadiya Nadasen was voted as the 2021/2 vice president, and Dr Hennie van der Westhuizen (current VP) will be taking over from Norman Khoza as the 2021/2 president on 31 December 2020. Norman will take over as immediate past president for 2021/2. We wish the Council members all the best in their new portfolios and look forward to continuing this journey with them. The remaining Council members will serve out their two-year terms in 2021, and we wish them equally well in their endeavours for the profession.

SAIOH financials

The SAIOH financial statements for 2019 were audited and approved. In 2020, the financials suffered a blow due to the impact of COVID-19, most notably the loss of income from the Annual Scientific Conference. Several cost-saving measures (i.e. change in offices rental agreement) and income-generating initiatives (i.e. virtual conference by means of webinars) were instituted to reduce the impact.

Ethics Sub-Committee

Oscar Rikhotso was recently co-opted to Council to fill the vacant position of the Ethics Sub-Committee chairperson. A formal handover meeting was held in November, and we are awaiting final inputs from legal advisors regarding the associated procedures. The Ethics Sub-Committee will continue its work in 2021 in all earnest. Ethics-specific webinars are planned, with a subsequent multi-year validity certificate that will form part of membership registration renewal criteria with effect from 2022.

SAIOH strategy

An outline of the SAIOH medium-term strategy, and work conducted and inputs received thus far, was presented to members at the 2020 AGM. Work in this regard continues to be driven by Jaco Pieterse, the co-opted Council member responsible for this strategy.

SAIOH VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The SAIOH 2020 Annual Scientific Conference was a virtual conference, consisting of five webinars in the form of professional development course (PDC) sessions. Two to four speakers presented on different aspects of the same topic in each of the webinars. With the quality of presenters and the topics covered, we have no doubt that our members found the webinars of value.

A nominal attendance fee was asked, i.e. R200 per member, and students were allowed access for free. One CPD point was awarded for attendance of every webinar. Presentations and recordings will

be sent to all participants and will be available at a later date for a nominal fee, on request.

The webinars were well attended i.e. webinar 1 – Hazardous Biological Agents: 70 participants; webinar 2 – Statistics in Occupational Hygiene: 100 participants; webinar 3 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): 85 participants; webinar 4 – Indoor Air Quality: 96 participants; and webinar 5 – Occupational Health Risk Assessments: >100 participants.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Council activities continued online on the SAIOH virtual platform (Zoom) and included monthly Management Board and quarterly Council meetings. SAIOH had the usual representation on the South African National Accreditation System's Occupational Hygiene Special Technical Committee (SANAS OH STC) meetings (two in 2020), and at the Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authorities Association (OH AIA Ass.) meetings (two in 2020).

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with the OH AIA Association, and the MoU with Saiosh was renewed. Other MoUs are being pursued and renewed – more details will follow once completed. SAIOH also continues to actively participate by commenting and contributing to legislation and guidelines (e.g. Department of Employment and Labour), most notably the code of practice on harassment and gender-based violence, and the review of the OHS Act and associated regulations (including the Hazardous Biological Agents (HBA) Regulations, more recently).

Some of the following key initiatives are planned for 2021:

- Ethics training and awareness webinars
- More position and technical papers
- Revamping of the SAIOH website, to make it more interactive
- Marketing of SAIOH and occupational hygiene to schools and universities

BRANCH ACTIVITIES

All SAIOH branches, other than the Mpumalanga branch, held regular meetings, discussions, and mini workshops on virtual platforms throughout 2020. We applaud our branch chairpersons and members in this regard and urge them to continue these initiatives to the benefit of our members, the profession and, ultimately, the workforce.

OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE AND SAIOH AWARENESS

Jaco Pieterse conducted a radio interview on the Afrikaans radio station, RSG (*Spektrum*), on 26 October 2020, on ergonomics in the workplace and the new Ergonomics Regulations. This recording was posted on the SAIOH website. This continues the trend of promoting SAIOH and the OH profession, as reported in previous newsletters.

The presentations and recordings of all webinars and radio talks were circulated to SAIOH members and stakeholders, and remain available on the SAIOH website (www.saioh.co.za).

FROM THE PCC

Occupational hygiene skills forum

The PCC's Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) is currently working hard on improving the oral assessment format. Members are

2021 CALENDAR

Event	Location	Date	Contact
SAIOH Annual Conference	Western Cape	26–29 October 2021	info@saioh.co.za

Table 1. SAIOH PCC registration assessment and meeting dates, 2021

Assessment/meeting	Closing date for applications and payments for application and evaluation	Final date for all assessment payments	Assessment date
Written assessments	29 Jan 2021	19 February	12 March
PCC ExCo meeting	26 Mar 2021		
PCC meeting/oral assessments	23 Apr 2021		
Written assessments	14 May 2021	4 June	25 June
PCC ExCo meeting	2 July 2021		
PCC meeting/oral assessments	30 July 2021		
Written assessments	6 Aug 2021	27 August	17 September
PCC ExCo	1 Oct 2021		
PCC meeting/oral assessments	15 Oct 2021		
Written assessments (universities)	Nov 2021		

Table 2. Final assessment results, 2020 year to date

Certification Category	Assessed	Passed	Failed	Pass rate %
OH assistants (W201 course)	68	52	16	76.5
OH technologists	41	27	14	65.9
Occupational hygienists	17	13	4	76.5
Total	126	92	34	73.0

meeting every two weeks on a virtual platform. This project should be completed mid-2021 and rolled out in the last six months of 2021. In-service training will be done for all oral assessors of the PCC.

A task team is engaging with the Mine Ventilation Society (MVS SA) management on mining qualifications to meet the new PCC qualification criteria. The PCC has extended the deadline of accepting the current mining qualifications (Intermediate Mine Environmental Control, and Advance Mine Environmental Control certificates) to 31 Dec 2021, to allow for implementation of their new qualifications.

Another OHSF task team is working on accreditation of tertiary institutions' OH qualifications, in line with the 50% OH content requirement. The same team has developed criteria to approve OH short courses and accredit recognised training providers (RTPs) for providing such courses.

Qualification criteria changes

With effect from 1 Jan 2021, the new qualification criteria will be enforced, as approved in 2018 and rolled out in 2019. These criteria are available on the SAIOH website. For more information, please contact Lee or Rebecca, the PCC administrative officers (Lee@saioh.co.za and Rebecca@saioh.co.za). Furthermore, from the end of 2021, all certified SAIOH members will need an ethics certificate, approved by the OHSF. Ethics training courses will be rolled out during 2021, at all workshops, via webinars and at the Annual Conference.

Assessments

Our virtual platforms for oral and written assessments are doing well, and we continue to drive improvements in this regard.

For the written assessments in quarter 3, we started using our Internet platform for all three categories: registered occupational hygiene assistant (ROHA), registered occupational hygiene

technologist (ROHT), and registered occupational hygienist (ROH). Candidates logged onto the SAIOH website, using their username/passcode and e-mail address. They then received their specific written paper on their laptop and completed it online. This process was piloted in 2019, while sitting at the Gauteng assessment centre in front of a computer screen with persons assisting with access and other difficulties. Feedback from previous online written assessments was taken into consideration, and candidates can now (from a week before the assessment), register/log on and take some mock questions to get used to the system. Candidates will also, for the interim, be given an additional 30 minutes to complete the assessment.

PCC registration assessments and meeting dates for 2021 are shown in Table 1.

Assessment statistics

Table 2 summarises the final certification assessment results, on 10 November 2020.

We congratulate all our members who passed their assessments and wish them the best in their professional development journey! All the candidates who passed will be certified and registered at the respective levels, as per the established processes. We encourage those who did not pass to not give up and to seek a mentor through SAIOH's mentorship programme to assist them in their development. Lee Doolan, PCC administrative officer, can be contacted in this regard.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The SAIOH Council invites and welcomes your feedback on how this communication is helping you as a SAIOH member, and how we can improve. If you have any suggestions, inputs, or contributions, please e-mail them to our president, at president@saioh.co.za.

The 2020 SAIOH Annual Scientific Conference goes virtual

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The year 2020 would have been a big one in the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene's (SAIOH's) history. In November, SAIOH was scheduled to hold its Annual Scientific Conference in Cape Town. Everyone loves to visit the fairest Cape. But, in April, SARS-CoV-2 visited our shores, and the government declared a national state of disaster, otherwise known as level 5 lockdown. As time progressed, we remained stuck in our home provinces. Consequently, the SAIOH Management Board decided to cancel the 2020 conference and move it to October 2021.

However, out of necessity, we developed our technological skills and started to use virtual platforms for online meetings, as well as the new kid on the block, webinars. Suddenly, we used terms like Zoom (not as in a car passing at top speed) and Teams (or Microsoft Teams); we were at home, working long hours while attending virtual meetings and webinars. The real key to this was speed – we could arrange to meet people very quickly, and travel and long distances were no longer limitations.

SAIOH has, in the past, profited from its annual conferences, which ensured that we were financially comfortable, and allowed us some luxuries, such as office space and administrative staff. Although SAIOH is a non-profit organisation, our financials took a knock during

the pandemic, with the loss of income from the annual conference and no reduction in expenses.

During most of 2020, we held all the SAIOH Council, Management Board, Professional Certification Committee, PCC Exco, and branch meetings on Zoom where we could host 100 people at any one time. We also started to attend webinars (loosely defined as Web- or Internet-based seminars). There were many such webinars – often up to three in one week – primarily about SARS-CoV-2 transmission, wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE), efficacy of masks and face shields, and much more.

First, we were invited by other occupational health and safety (OHS) stakeholders to the webinars that they hosted, e.g. the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), the South African Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Saiosh), the Wits Health Consortium (WHC), and Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB). We soon started to host our own webinars, mostly for our members, e.g. the role of the occupational hygiene practitioner (OHP) and SAIOH during lockdown, the efficacy of cloth face masks, the use of ventilation to curb the spread of the virus (the last two in collaboration with the NIOH), and the Ergonomics Regulations (in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Labour and the Ergonomics Society of South Africa).

At the beginning of October, the general manager and the Technical Portfolio Council member proposed that we host the 2020 annual conference on a virtual platform before the end of the year, in November. It was suggested that we ask attendees for a nominal fee, i.e. R200 per webinar for SAIOH members and our stakeholder members, no charge for students, R250 for others, and R300 for sponsors.

On 9 October, the virtual conference (VC) team held its first Zoom meeting. In less than two hours, it was agreed that the conference would comprise five webinars in a professional development course (PDC) format (training sessions). One topic was selected for each 3-hour PDC webinar, each with 3–5 presenters.

On 26 October, the VC team had a final meeting, which mandated the following actions:

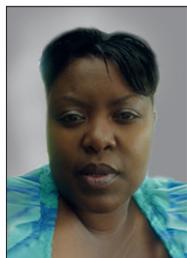
- the SAIOH Zoom licence was extended to enable us to host more than 100 people (we can now host 500 people)
- a first notification was sent with an initial conference programme to all the SAIOH members and our OHS stakeholders, on 30 October
- a sponsorship invitation, including the benefits of sponsoring one or more PDC-webinars, was sent to suppliers of occupational hygiene (OH) equipment, OH analytical laboratories, PPE suppliers, OH training providers, and others
- the PCC agreed to award every SAIOH member one CPD point for each webinar attended
- the PDC webinars were also verified and awarded CPD points by Saiosh
- the advertising material received from the sponsors was loaded onto the SAIOH website and will remain there for a period of three



Jaco van Rensburg



Momeena Omarjee



Tando Magolego



Dr Mpumelelo Ndaba



Tobias van Reenen



Dr Greg Kew



Garth Hunter



Prof. Jérôme Lavoué



Prof. Lisa Brosseau



Prof. Cas Badenhorst



Dr Tahira Kootbodien



Dr Tanusha Singh



Adrian Sims



Anna Fourie

Summary of the SAIOH 2020 virtual Annual Scientific Conference PDC-webinars

Topic	Date	Presenters
Hazardous Biological Agents (74 participants) • HBA risk assessments and complexities thereof (using different examples) • Biological monitoring and medical surveillance of HBAs, as per HBA Regulations	10 Nov 2020	Dr Tanusha Singh, NIOH Dr Nompumelelo Ndaba, NIOH Dr Graham Chin, NIOH
Statistical Analysis in Occupational Hygiene (103 participants) • Introduction to epidemiology, basic concepts and methodologies used (with OH examples) • Most significant OH diseases in the South African context • Exposure toxicology • Exposure statistics and analyses of OH data and Statistical Analysis Tools • Theoretical background of statistics needed for the tool (overview) • Expostats tool for analysing OH data – included examples, using supplied links, that participants can review • Benefits, links, and examples of other exposure statistics and OH data analysis tools	12 Nov 2020	Dr Tahira Kootbodien, NIOH Prof. Jérôme Lavoué, University of Montreal, Canada; one of the developers of Expostats
Personal Protective Equipment: All the Occupational Hygienist Needs to Know about PPE (90 participants) • Selecting and recommending correct PPE, and correct use thereof • National regulations on PPE • SABS specifications to address OH exposure risks • Occupational health (including dermatological risks) of wearing PPE • PPE for health workers	17 Nov 2020	Prof. Lisa Brosseau, University of Minnesota, USA Ms Tando Magolego, National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications, South Africa Ms Momeena Omarjee, South African Health Products Regulatory Authority Ms Anna Fourie, NIOH
Indoor Air Quality and Ventilation (107 participants) • Specifically, ventilation in the built environment, workplaces, etc.	20 Nov 2020	Mr Adrian Sims, VentTech, UK Mr Tobias van Reenen, CSIR, SA Mr Garth Hunter, Engen, SA Dr Greg Kew, SASOM
Occupational Health Risk Assessments... the Genesis (107 participants) • Occupational health risk assessment as the start of any occupational health programme • Importance of high-quality risk assessments • Benefits of a correctly conducted OH risk assessment • Different approaches to risk assessments • Importance of wording, oversight of risk assessments, formulating of HEGs, and a detailed discussion of the OH risk assessments and occupational health exposure assessment guidelines developed by the AIHA (USA).	24 Nov 2020	Prof. Cas Badenhorst, Anglo American Mr Jaco van Rensburg, Gijima OHES&L Mr Deon Swanepoel, D'Sayensi Occupational Hygiene Dr Hennie van der Westhuizen, CPUT

- months after the end of the conference; it will also be circulated to all the SAIOH members and OHS stakeholders
- the logos of the sponsors were displayed before and at the end of each webinar, and mentioned in the opening address
- the presentations and recordings will be released to registered participants and will be available to others at R200/webinar

The fast-tracked, and fantastic, virtual 2020 SAIOH Annual Scientific Conference was attended by 481 participants.

The 2021 SAIOH Annual Conference will be held in Cape Town, from 26 to 29 October.

SAIOH is already discussing live-streaming to enable more of our members to attend.