

SAIOH president's address

Hennie van der Westhuizen: SAIOH president
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The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) management and the SAIOH National Council are going fullsteam ahead with the planned initiatives for 2021. Entities have already met and are working hard to ensure a prosperous year. In this newsletter, an overview is provided of activities to date, planned activities (including an appetiser about the annual conference) and Professional Certification Committee (PCC) matters. Starting with this newsletter, we are also introducing our SAIOH National Council office bearers – a few persons at a time – so our SAIOH members get to know them better.

We are looking forward to ending the first quarter on a high note, and will keep driving to make the remainder of 2021 memorable!

INTRODUCING OUR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Nico Potgieter: SAIOH marketing and communication
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1. Dr Hennie van der Westhuizen, SAIOH president



Having studied a National Diploma in Environmental Health at the Pretoria College for Advanced Technical Education, Hennie started his career as an environmental health officer with the Department of National Health in 1979. During his years as a civil servant, he gained experience in local and international control of epidemic and communicable diseases, such as smallpox, bubonic plague, yellow fever, cholera, malaria and Congo fever. Other functions included monitoring and evaluating services at municipalities, in rural communities and in government departments, that could affect public health. These included water supply, suitable accommodation, food hygiene, refuse removal, and sewerage treatment. During this time, he studied towards a Higher Diploma in Public Health at the Cape Technikon.

In January 1993, Hennie was appointed as a lecturer in occupational hygiene at Port Elizabeth Technikon. He enjoyed teaching immensely, realising that this was his calling in life, and immersed himself in teaching and occupational hygiene. During his tenure at the Technikon, which later became Nelson Mandela University, he obtained an MSc degree in occupational hygiene at the University of Greenwich in London. Whilst lecturing, his employers gave him permission to register with the (then) Department of Labour, as an Approved Inspection Authority.

In 2007, a decision had to be made to either leave the Technikon to do full-time consulting, or to continue at the Technikon. He chose academia, accepting the position of head of the Department of

In this newsletter

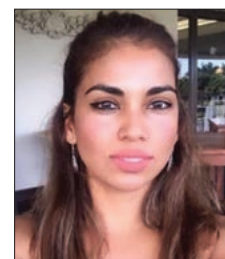
- Introducing our Council members
- Council activities
 - SAIOH strategy update
 - SAIOH Council and Management Board activities
 - SAIOH Annual National Conference
- From the Professional Certification Committee (PCC)

Environmental and Occupational Studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). There, he managed the Environmental Health and Environmental Management academic programmes. He also became involved in the African Academy for Environmental Health and, as part of an international team, comprising a member from Zambia and a professor from the University of Belfast, Northern Ireland, he undertook to write the occupational hygiene syllabus for member institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Whilst at CPUT, Hennie was awarded an Erasmus Mundus international scholarship to pursue studies towards a PhD at the Katholic University of Leuven (KUL) in Leuven, Belgium, for 18 months. After he retired at the end of 2016, he remained active in academic matters and occupational hygiene. He is currently a SANAS technical assessor.

Hennie lives in Bellville, Cape Town, with his wife and enjoys growing orchids, some of which have successfully been sent to orchid heaven.

2. Naadiya Nadasen, SAIOH vice president



As the occupational hygienist for Apex Environmental, Naadiya Nadasen is both diligent in the discipline of occupational hygiene and committed to the profession. With more than nine years of professional experience, she has independently demonstrated strong knowledge in the occupational hygiene industry, and has completed a variety of projects and training programmes. While studying towards a Master's degree in Environmental Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Naadiya's passion, enthusiasm and curiosity for occupational health grew, and cemented her career as an occupational hygienist. Naadiya currently provides voluntary support to the KZN SAIOH branch and is the vice president of SAIOH, where she is committed to growing the organisation.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Hennie van der Westhuizen: SAIOH president

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Nico Potgieter: SAIOH marketing and communication

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Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH general manager

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Kate Smart: SAIOH chief administrative officer

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1. SAIOH strategy update

The annual SAIOH strategy meeting for 2021 was held earlier this year and was attended by all the key role players within SAIOH. In the previous strategy session, six main objectives, along with their performance indicators, were identified. The purpose of this year's session was to allocate specific task teams to each objective. These teams will now be responsible for the rollout of each of the objectives, which are:

- To maintain and ensure SAIOH's relevance in creating workplaces free of health risks in the African context – immediate past president (Norman Khoza) and vice president (Naadiya Nadasen)
- To embrace the application and use of fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and digital technologies in occupational hygiene practice – technical chair (Deon Swanepoel)
- To preserve professionalism and ethical professional practice amongst occupational hygiene practitioners – ethics chair (Oscar Rikhotso), Prof. Cas Badenhorst (in a support capacity), and president (Hennie van der Westhuizen)
- To develop and build the SAIOH brand in the African context, locally and abroad – marketing and communication (Nico Potgieter)
- To contribute to improving training and continuous development of the occupational hygiene profession in the African context – PCC chair (Karen du Preez) and president (Hennie van der Westhuizen)
- To provide and maintain good governance and administrative practices within SAIOH – general manager (Deon Jansen van Vuuren) and the SAIOH administration

2. SAIOH Council and Management Board activities

Memoranda of understanding

We are pleased to announce that the Management Board has done the ground work and is busy finalising memoranda of understanding with the Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA) and the Responsible Packing Management Association of South Africa (RPMASA), with the latter already signed.

Website and social media

The SAIOH Management Board has been actively sourcing a third party to assist in the revamp of the SAIOH website. Several suppliers were consulted and a few were selected to help facilitate this process. The administrative team has also been hard at work, ensuring that SAIOH has a greater presence on all social media platforms, with the intent of greater cohesion between social media and the SAIOH website.

SAIOH branches

A branch chair strategy meeting was held on 11 March 2021, where the branch chairs focused on members' needs, planning their meetings and workshops for the year, and the hosting of mini-conferences as webinars. Participants will now need to discuss strategies and focus areas with their individual branches, which will be communicated to all SAIOH members.

Make your mark

The SAIOH Council invites topics, and the establishment of working groups for technical papers, from its members. If you have any suggestions or contributions in this regard, please e-mail them to our president at president@saioh.co.za or to the chief administrative officer at info@saioh.co.za.

3. SAIOH Annual National Conference

SAIOH is pleased to announce that the SAIOH Annual Conference Committee is working hard, planning the upcoming SAIOH annual conference, which is due to take place in Cape Town from 26 to 29 October 2021. The theme will be *Navigating Occupational Hygiene in unchartered waters*.

The Committee is considering different formats, e.g. face to face, virtual or a hybrid option. The option of also live-streaming the Conference is also being considered, to ensure easy access to everyone and higher participation of SAIOH members and other interested parties. As history dictates, everyone can expect a fully loaded conference programme with a variety of interesting topics, excellent Professional Development Courses (PDCs), and the usual awards evening and gala dinner (if not virtual). A sneak preview of the programme follows.

Focus topics

- Global harmonised systems (GHS)
- Asbestos Abatement Regulations
- Hazardous Chemical Agents Regulations
- Ergonomics Regulations

Professional Development Courses (PDCs)

- Principles in workplace design for 'physically challenged' people
- Identification of non-routine asbestos-containing materials during risk assessments
- Risk assessment

Provisional keynote topics

- Epigenetics and occupational hygiene
- Particulate sampling – analytical procedures
- Dust sampling for space agencies
- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – Department of Employment and Labour
- Epigenetics and asbestos
- Mining forum – topic to be decided

Provisional oral presentations

- Psychosocial issues
- Ergonomics
- Globally harmonised systems (GHS)
- Matching biological exposure indices (BEIs) to occupational exposure limits (OELs)
- PCC sessions
- Asbestos-contaminated soil remediation

FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE (PCC)

Lee Doolan: SAIOH PCC administrator

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Deon Jansen van Vuuren: SAIOH chief examiner

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Karen du Preez: PCC chairperson

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Certification assessments and important dates

A total of 76 candidates registered for the written assessment in the first quarter of 2021:

- 37 at the occupational hygiene assistant level
- 23 at the occupational hygiene technologist level
- 16 at the occupational hygienist level

Important upcoming PCC dates

- First PCC written assessments for 2021 took place on Friday 12 March
- PCC meeting scheduled for Friday 23 April 2021
- PCC oral assessments scheduled from 23 April to 6 May 2021

Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum

The SAIOH Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) was introduced to administer all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials, training providers and institutions, and the development and management of assessment and examination systems, where required.

The SAIOH OHSF recently approved the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) as the first recognised training provider (RTP) for the SAIOH AP 101 – Counting of airborne asbestos fibres by phase contrast microscopy (PCM) module. The module will be presented by the Occupational Hygiene Section of the NIOH, and the examination will be administered by the SAIOH PCC. Prospective training providers can apply as RTPs for the AP 101 module, as well as the AP 102 – Analysis of bulk materials for asbestos content module. Other modules currently in development include the AP 103 module on Management of asbestos in buildings, including risk assessment.

Another function of the OHSF is to evaluate applications from tertiary Institutions for recognition of their occupational hygiene-related qualifications. Qualifications at the South African Qualifications Authority's National Qualifications Framework (SAQA NQF) level 8 or higher, with an occupational hygiene content of at least 50%, or that align with the content of the Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) International Certificate in Occupational Hygiene (ICertOH), will be recognised by the SAIOH PCC for evaluation at occupational hygienist level. Qualifications at a SAQA NQF level 7, with an occupational hygiene content aligned with at least 50% of the content of the OHTA ICertOH, will be recognised by the SAIOH PCC for evaluation at occupational hygiene technologist level. 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).

The details of recognised training providers as well as recognised qualifications will be made available on the SAIOH website (www.saioh.co.za).

Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) feedback

SAIOH has a memorandum of understanding with OHTA, which is internationally recognised, including by the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA). SAIOH recognises and accepts OHTA's occupational hygiene qualifications as part-requirement for its registration prerequisites. Recent feedback from OHTA includes:

- OHTA recently launched a newsletter called *OHTA Global Link*. It is available on the SAIOH website under the Resources and Publication tab (<https://www.saioh.co.za/page/Resources>).
- In November 2020, the SAIOH PCC representative on the OHTA board, Peter-John Jacobs, presented an update on OHTA, which can also be viewed on the SAIOH website under the Resources and Publication tab (see link above).

All OHTA news is posted on the SAIOH website (www.saioh.co.za), as soon as it is received, for our members to peruse. Information is also available on the OHTA website (www.ohlearning.com).

SAIOH OHTA Approved Training Providers (ATPs) are listed below. Their details can also be found on the OHTA website.

1. **Apex Environmental** (e-mail: dee@apexenviro.co.za, Tel: 031 914 1004, www.apexenviro.co.za)
2. **Blugrey Occupational Hygiene Consultants (Pty) Ltd** (e-mail: manager@blugrey.co.za, Tel: 083 243 3932, www.blugrey.com)
3. **Health and Occupational Hygiene Laboratory CC** (e-mail: hohl@telkomsa.net, Tel: 012 653 3850, www.hohlcc.co.za)
4. **National Institute for Occupational Health** (e-mail: JeannethM@nioh.ac.za, Tel: 011 712 6406, www.nioh.ac.za)
5. **Nershco Services (Pty) Ltd** (e-mail: admin@nershco.com, Tel: 083 302 6200, nershco.com/home.php)
6. **Poltech (Pty) Ltd** (e-mail: philipv@poltech.co.za, Tel: 012 653 2181, www.poltech.co.za)
7. **Sedulitas** (e-mail: pjjacobs@sedulitas.co.za, Tel: 082 551 400, www.sedulitas.co.za)

CREATING GENERAL PUBLIC AWARENESS

SAIOH continues to market and communicate occupational hygiene across multiple platforms, thereby increasing the general public's awareness and knowledge of our noble profession. Some recent items include:

- SAIOH has sent a motivation to the Department of Health, requesting that the Institute be added to the priority list for COVID-19 vaccinations, as many of our members are involved in fighting the pandemic on the frontline. We are awaiting feedback.
- SAIOH is launching a Technical Committee, which will be responsible for developing position and technical papers. We look forward to great outputs from this Committee.
- A third and fourth round of radio interviews on Radio Sonder Grense (RSG) took place recently. Jaco Pieterse spoke about ergonomics towards the end of last year, and about hazardous biological agents (HBAs) – specifically Legionella – earlier this year. SAIOH also organised a pool of occupational hygiene experts to be interviewed in other languages. This information and details were shared with all SABC radio stations, so we hope to hear more interviews soon.

Contribute to awareness

RSG is an Afrikaans radio station of the national broadcaster, the SABC, with around 2 million listeners (mostly Afrikaans-speaking). Thus far, this has been the key radio station targeted for public awareness.

If any of our members or other interested parties have contacts with other radio stations, TV channels, etc., SAIOH can assist in setting up interviews on topical issues.

If you have any suggestions, inputs, or contributions in this regard, please e-mail them to our president at President@saioh.co.za, or to the chief administrative officer at info@saioh.co.za.

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 it. If you have any suggestions, inputs, or contributions, please e-mail them to our president at President@saioh.co.za, or to the chief administrative officer at info@saioh.co.za