

BENEFITS OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE AS PART OF ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

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INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the most recent Profile of Occupational Health and Safety report issued by the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) revealed a lack of safety, health and environment (SHE) compliance in several sectors, mainly the public sector, SMMEs, and informal sector. DEL inspections data showed poor compliance by the wholesale, retail, and manufacturing sectors, while the highest compliance rate was noted in the construction and agriculture sectors. In the mining sector, fatalities remain a challenge despite a decline in injuries.

In addition to the above, a research was conducted by Mtikitiki, N et al (2025) into the Occupational Health and Safety Management System of a South African University Setting. The study alluded that inconsistent hazard reviews, insufficient training frequency, procedural delays, infrastructure limitations, and resource constraints as being the main challenges to occupational health and safety performance and compliance.



CONSTRUCTION FIRM FINED AS WORKER LOSES LIFE AND ANOTHER INJURED

- During the construction of a new engineering hall at the University of Birmingham on 7 January 2020.
- Two employees fell 10 metres to the ground and one died
- Another employee suffered serious injuries
- The accident investigation took place and resulted to the contractor being fined £285,000
- The investigation also found that the incident could have been prevented had the contractor implemented better controls and put in place better communication between operators of the cranes and scissor lift.

<https://press.hse.gov.uk/2024/09/17/construction-firm-fined-as-worker-loses-life-and-another-injured/>



The incident occurred during the construction of a new facility at the University of Birmingham



- Workplace safety compliance involves following set health, safety, and environmental regulations and guidelines to protect employees, contractors, visitors, and anyone else on the premises, and to prevent accidents, injuries, and potential legal issues.
- Health and Safety Safeguard investments on the institutions



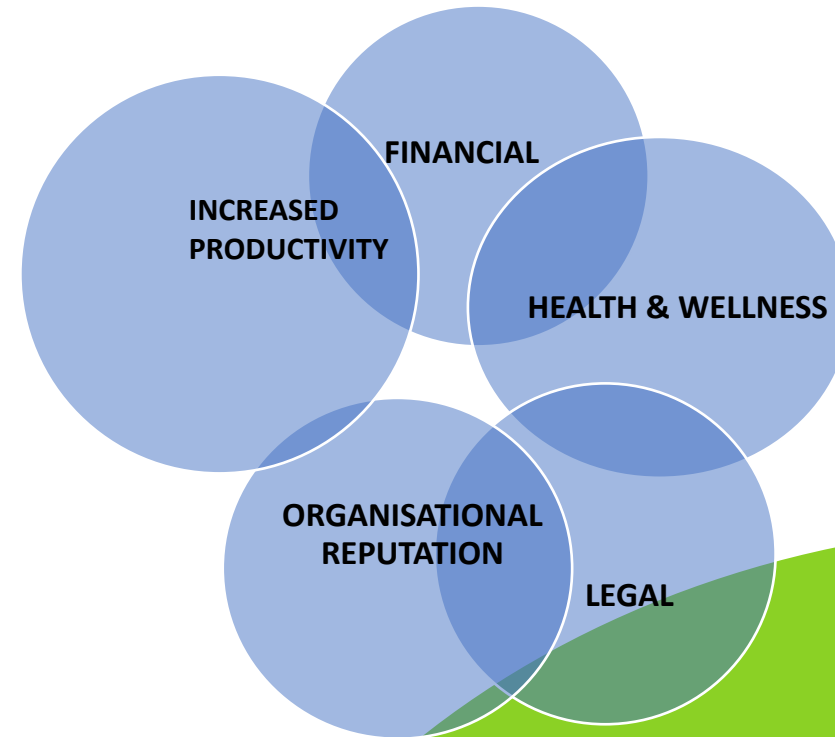
COMMON HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS



- Poor risk profiling
- Workplace designs that lack ergonomic longevity
- Lack of use of qualified built environment professionals at the early stages of construction (i.e. CHS Agents)
- Non-compliance with updated or evolving health and safety Regulations
- Material selection, indoor furniture and equipment
- Inadequate facilities management (i.e. Maintenance plan, security)
- Emergency preparedness and risk planning not in place due to budget constraints

KEY BENEFITS

- Occupational Health and Safety as means of safeguarding organisational investments
- Safeguards Physical Assets
- Safeguards Non-Physical Assets



FINANCIAL BENEFIT

- When institutions implement set safety management systems, they are able to identify potential risk before they become threatening or costly thereby improving their financial performance.
 - Healthcare costs
 - Productivity and output losses
 - Employer adjustment costs
 - Other workers working overtime
 - Hiring temporary workers
 - Recruiting and training a replacement worker
 - Insurance premiums
 - Production disturbances
 - Administrative costs





HEALTH & WELLNESS BENEFIT



- Reduced Accidents & Injuries
 - If the institution does not have set health and safety system in place, accidents and incidents cannot be tackled, monitored and managed.
 - Health and wellness programmes benefits not only the employees but the business or institute itself.
 - By having set health and safety system in place health and wellness related risk can be controlled, substituted, and completely managed.
 - By identifying and mitigating hazards, agents help prevent accidents and injuries, leading to fewer lost workdays and reduced healthcare costs.
 - Effective OHS compliance ensures business continuity by minimizing disruptions caused by workplace incidents.



ORGANISATIONAL REPUTATION BENEFIT

- Building trust with employees
- Increased positive competitiveness
- Business becomes attractive to stakeholders

LEGAL BENEFIT

- Improved Compliance
- Minimised Liability
- Protection of Management and Directors
- International, National Accreditation & Recognition
- Improved Contractor and Supplier Relationships
- Supports Due Diligence and Audit
- CHS Agents ensure businesses adhere to legal and regulatory requirements related to occupational health and safety, minimizing the risk of fines and penalties.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

- A safe and healthy work environment fosters a more positive and productive work culture, as employees feel more comfortable and confident in their work.
- Reduced Downtime from Injuries and Incidents
- Standardised Safe Work Procedures
- Encourages Innovation and Process Improvement
- Healthier Workforce



IMPROVED BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- A robust health and safety program can help minimize disruptions caused by accidents and illnesses, ensuring business operations can continue smoothly.
- Promotes Reliability to Clients and Stakeholders
- Improves Resilience to External Shocks



Conclusion

- Food for thought 😊
- According to Construction Education & Training Authority (CETA) sector skills plan 20/21 to 25/26 Safety, Health and Sand Environment Practitioner is a scarce skill.





References

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<https://www.labour.gov.za/DocumentCenter/Publications/Occupational%20Health%20and%20Safety/The%20Profile%20Occupational%20Health%20and%20Safety%20South%20Africa.pdf>



THANK YOU
