

Safety and Health Professional



by Ir. Shum Keng Yan

Ir. Shum Keng Yan is a chemical engineer and a certified accident prevention and safety practitioner. He advises on EHS in the chemical, fast moving consumer goods, heavy metal manufacturing and building services industries across Asia Pacific and beyond. He regularly delivers talks at conferences, forums and universities.

Over the last few years, we have taken a journey to understand the building blocks of a Safety Management System and the drivers. One of the key drivers is the Safety Professional. The Safety Professional is the company's internal consultant and subject matter expert who advises the management on the direction of Safety and Health.

Who is a Safety Professional? Let us refer to our legislative framework. Under Section 29 (4) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1994, the safety and health officer shall possess such qualifications or have received training prescribed by the Minister from time to time by notification in the Gazette. In addition, under Regulation 4 of the Occupational Safety and Health (Safety and Health Officer) Regulations 1997, no person shall act as a safety and health officer unless he is registered with the Director General of the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).

Thus there is an element of a qualification and experience before a person can be registered as a Safety and Health Officer.

In Malaysia, the preferred qualifications are the Safety and Health Officer Certificate, Executive Diploma, Degree or Master. For the list of qualifications and training institutes, visit <http://www.dosh.gov.my/index.php/en/list-of-competent-training-centre/79-3-safety-and-health-officer-training-centre/file>

However, multinationals may have in-house requirements of their preferred qualifications such as the more common NEBOSH (UK) or CSP (US).

An applicant still needs to meet a minimum of 3 years relevant experience in Safety and Health. There are also other supporting documents to be submitted in the application process.

Once the application is approved, the applicant can be registered as a Safety and Health Officer. Many job advertisements erroneously states that the advertiser is looking for a person with only the Safety and Health Officer NIOSH certificate. The correct version should be a person with a Safety and Health registration from DOSH.

So if you are looking to put in place a proper Safety and Health Officer, make sure you check the applicant's certification and registration. Similarly, if you want to embark on a career in Occupational Safety and Health, the above is a start.

Here is a question: Does a Safety and Health Manager need a Safety and Health Officer registration?

Send your comments to: pub@iem.org.my

Professionalism goes beyond Qualification. Safety Professional does not equate to Professional Safety. ■

The safest risk is the one that you do not take. Often, it is the gap in the risk perception that leads to a gap in risk control.