

## TRAINING NORMS FOR THE WORK AT HEIGHT INDUSTRY POLICY

Former Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, addressed the CEOs of all SETAs at the Inter-SETA Forum on the 7th of December 2010. The former Minister used the opportunity of his first formal address to all SETA leaders to outline his vision for the future of the sector education and training authorities. Below is an extract from that speech:-

- ✓ “We have an historical opportunity to mend the bridge that was broken between the education system and the training system. We must rebuild a unified and coherent education and training system.
- ✓ We must end this terrible practice of ‘short-termism’ – one day and two day courses do not address the qualifications and skills crisis that we are facing in this country.
- ✓ We must work together to achieve a highly skilled and highly qualified workforce. This requires longer term, sustainable programmes. We must not tolerate shabby, low-quality, useless training interventions that do not do anyone any good, but just make money for the provider.
- ✓ We must have a zero tolerance for bad training, training that leaves people no better qualified than they were before.”

Since that speech, much water has flowed under the bridge and today we find ourselves in an environment that calls on Professional Bodies, professional development partners and the SETAs to implement proper programmes of training.

The Institute for Work at Height Professional Body is empowered by the SAQA in terms of its policy document dated 27 July 2012 to inter alia:-

*“Recognise suitable education and professional development partners and be involved in the curricularisation of learning programmes offered by the education and professional development partners”- Refer Section 19 of the policy document.*

Following an audit on all of its providers the Board was advised that there are training courses offered by some of its recognised providers that fall outside the scope of recognition by the Professional Body.

The Board has therefore made it a policy that only recognised courses may be offered by the providers. These recognised / approved courses are either NQF registered or Non-NQF based programmes. In all cases the programmes must meet the Professional Body’s requirements.

Legal ramifications:-

The term “Competent Person” is defined in the Construction Regulations 2014 and it clearly states that if a specific qualification is registered on the NQF then that registered qualification is the only one deemed acceptable for the purpose of declaring a person competent.

It is therefore the duty of our recognised professional development partners to convey this message to their clients.

Some of the major corporates have in the past implemented “In-House” work-at-height training courses for their employees and have approached several professional development partners to deliver these courses to their employees.

These courses are often tailored to suit the needs of the client by only focusing on certain aspects of a particular work at height procedure and do not contain all of the outcomes and assessment criteria of the full qualification.

It is quite clear in terms of the Construction Regulations that persons trained against such a course cannot be declared competent.

They cannot be certified nor registered on SAQA's National Learner Record Database (NLRD).

In the event of an incident involving such a person it is highly probable that a court of law will frown upon this practice and declare the person inadequately trained with all the legal consequences that could flow from such a finding.

It is the duty of the employer to ensure that the "working environment is safe and without risk to the health of his employees" refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Act section 8.

Note that an Employer could claim in papers before the court that they are not specialist trainers and have thus contracted such services to specialist professional development partners and it is the duty of the professional development partner to inform the employer of the appropriate type of training. Thus, shifting the blame back onto the professional development partner!

The Institute for Work at Height Professional Body will not support any professional development partner that stands accused of malpractice in the event of them offering such courses.

Providers are urged to desist from this practice and the Professional Body will gladly issue them with a letter of support confirming that, as a recognised provider they may only offer approved courses.