



Safety and Health

WHAT DO SAFETY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS DO?

Safety and health professionals develop and coordinate safety and health systems and strategy in an organization, identify hazards and assess risks to safety and health, put appropriate safety controls in place, and provide advice on accident prevention and occupational health to management and employees. Increasingly Safety and Health Professionals are also responsible for many of the environmental aspects of their workplace. As this profession matures there is an increased emphasis on risk management strategy and on workplace culture.

Safety and health professionals may perform the following tasks:

- Promote occupational health and safety within the organization and develop safer and healthier ways of working
- Make sure that the organization is aware of, and complies with, all legislation in relation to the use of its plant, equipment and substances, as well as in all workplace activities
- Help supervise the investigation of accidents and unsafe working conditions, study possible causes and recommend remedial action
- Develop and implement training sessions for management, supervisors and workers on health and safety practices and legislation
- Coordinate emergency procedures, mine rescues, fire fighting and first aid crews
- Communicate frequently with management to report on the status of the health and safety strategy and risk management strategy
- Develop occupational health and safety strategies and systems, including policies, procedures and manuals

WHAT ARE THE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES?

The minerals industry has made a very strong commitment to a vision of the industry free of injury, fatality and disease. Without Safety and Health Professionals this vision cannot be achieved. Many professionals from other technical areas move into Safety and Health roles.

Occupational Health and Safety Officer

Occupational Health and Safety Officers inspect and test machinery and equipment, such as lifting devices, machine shields and scaffolding, to make sure they meet appropriate safety regulations and make sure that personal protective equipment are being used in workplaces according to regulations and that dangerous materials are correctly stored. They are often required to conduct training sessions for management and employees, identify and test work areas for potential accident and health hazards, such as toxic fumes and explosive gas-air mixtures, as well as implement appropriate control measures.

OH&S Auditor

An OHS Auditor can be an external consultant position or an internal staff position in larger companies. It requires formal qualifications in OHS or equivalent industrial experience, and formal training in auditing. It is different from an inspector in that the audit process requires gathering of evidence and proof that procedures are being implemented, rather than just inspecting for hazards or risks. A professional auditor will normally be a member of an audit professional association. Auditors may be employed by consultancies or run their own business.

Hygienist

Hygienists identify and investigate problems of occupational/ industrial hygiene (chemical, physical and biological hazards) in the workplace. They use scientific equipment to measure and control hazardous substances and the effects on workers health of physical impacts such as noise.

Risk Manager

Risk Managers understand certain critical management issues of fundamental importance to the mining industry. They are concerned with advanced applications in risk management, in particular the human behavioural side of risk taking, making errors, accident occurrence ergonomics, as well as application of risk management to some of the major hazards in the mining industry. They apply the fundamentals of risk management; the adoption of risk management tools in the regulatory environment; risk management in specific mining-related processes; environmental risk management; mining and other disasters and the application of risk management techniques; emergency preparedness in the mining industry.

Mines Inspector

Mine inspectors primarily conduct on-site inspections or investigations of mines, mills and quarries in search of conditions that are potentially hazardous to the safety and health of workers. They inspect to ensure that equipment is properly maintained and used, and that mining practices are carried out in accordance with safety and health laws and regulations. They investigate accidents and disasters, and may help direct rescue and fire fighting operations when fires or explosions occur. Mines Inspectors work to identify the causes of accidents to determine whether laws and regulations have been violated. Inspectors discuss findings directly with mine management and issue citations describing violations and hazards that must be corrected. They have the authority to close a mining operation if they encounter a work situation that presents an imminent danger to workers. They may also be called upon by mine personnel to provide technical advice and assistance.

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Why did you choose your particular career?

1. As I had an interest in health and safety, mining was the logical choice as the industry deals with some of the most potentially dangerous and unhealthy conditions. Working in the mining industry gives me the opportunity to make the biggest difference and be exposed to and learn the most about a wider variety of Occupational Safety and Health issues.
2. I care about people's health and want them to return home after a days work unaffected by work processes. I also want them to go into their later years not having been negatively affected by their past occupations.
3. Great pay, conditions and opportunities (training, career development, travel etc)

the biggest, most profitable companies (e.g. mining) are in a position to look after you the most in regards to these things and I like working in a big team.

What have you done so far in your career?

I am on a graduate program whereby my development is structured and I do a lot of courses to do with my field and other fields, such as HR etc. My basic role includes working within the Environmental Health and Safety Management system where I carry-out Health surveillance and Health monitoring and I'm also developing Health Management Plans and Training packages.

What have you enjoyed most about your profession?

The opportunity to be involved in a range of different tasks. In EHS you get to work with a lot of different people which I enjoy, but what I've enjoyed the most is being able to provide advice on Occupational Health related

matters, that may enhance or maybe even save someone's life....and also having the opportunity to promote Safety's neglected cousin 'Health'.

For someone considering a career in your profession, are there any words of wisdom to pass on to them?

Try to gain employment as a graduate, on a graduate program with the right company. I recommend mining - they are able to foster your development and provide you with the skills and abilities to do what ever it is you want to do. If you care about the Health and Safety of workers and want to make a positive difference to people's lives, mining is the way to go, you will find the company's values are in line with your own so you will be supported, not constantly blocked when trying to improve safety and health conditions. The people are also great - down to earth, friendly, supportive and very, very team focused.

