

1 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT OHS LEGISLATION

1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT (OHS ACT)

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act) is the cornerstone of workplace safety in South Africa. It was established to ensure that all employers provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of their employees.

The Act sets out the general duties of employers, employees, and health and safety representatives in promoting occupational safety. It also empowers the Department of Labour to enforce compliance and to hold parties accountable for neglecting their legal duties.

1.2 EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OHS LAW

Employers are legally required to assess workplace risks, implement preventive measures, provide personal protective equipment (PPE), and ensure that workers are adequately trained in safety practices. They must also create and maintain safety policies and appoint health and safety representatives where necessary.

Employees, on the other hand, are expected to adhere to safety procedures, report hazards or unsafe practices, and take reasonable care for their own health and safety as well as that of others. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities can result in disciplinary action or legal consequences.

1.3 COMMON WORKPLACE HAZARDS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

In creative sectors such as film, television, music production, and live events, workplace hazards may include electrical shocks, trip hazards from cables, exposure to loud noises, fire risks from lighting equipment, and ergonomic strain from prolonged computer use.

Other risks involve the use of ladders and rigging equipment, manual handling of heavy gear, and the potential for psychological stress due to demanding schedules. Identifying and mitigating these risks is essential to protect both workers and the quality of the creative output.

1.4 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Health and safety policies serve as a formal statement of an organization's commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of its staff. These documents typically outline procedures for risk assessments, the use of PPE, emergency preparedness, equipment maintenance, and incident investigation.

Having clear procedures in place helps to prevent accidents and ensures a coordinated response when incidents occur. Training and regular safety drills are key to reinforcing these policies and ensuring they are implemented effectively.

1.5 INCIDENT REPORTING AND EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

Timely and accurate reporting of incidents is vital in identifying safety issues and preventing recurrences. Employees must know how to report injuries, near misses, and unsafe conditions. Reporting typically involves filling out an incident report form and notifying a supervisor or safety officer. Emergency protocols should include clear steps for evacuation, first aid procedures, and contacting emergency services. These protocols must be communicated to all staff and tested regularly through drills to ensure readiness in the event of an actual emergency.