

New standard rolled out for workplace safety officers

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Labour Chief Chan Chun Sing (centre) congratulating SISO president Bernard Soh after the launch of the new standard. With them is Mr Ho Siong Hin, Commissioner for Workplace Safety and Health. PHOTO: DON WONG FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

It spells out 5 tiers of career progression, relevant skillsets and code of conduct

Workers in charge of safety can now refer to a new standard that will help them chart their careers and upgrade their skills.

The Singapore Institution of Safety Officers (SISO) yesterday introduced the first professional standard for workplace safety and health professionals here.

It covers five tiers of career progression in the field - from officer to director - and specifies the years of experience and skillsets needed at each level. The standard also lays out a code of conduct and ethics for these workers.

Its aim is to help workers in the field better develop their careers, and boost their competency.

SISO honorary president Seet Choh San said the standard also helps to address the mismatch between an employee's skills and an employer's needs, by helping companies find a suitably skilled worker more easily.

“MATCHING NEEDS AND SKILLS

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MR SEET CHOH SAN, Singapore Institute of Safety Officers honorary president.”

He recounted his experience with a firm which struggled to find a Singaporean worker to fill the post of workplace safety and health regional manager. The problem, he realised, was that it had failed to specify the right requirements for the job.

The company was on the verge of hiring someone from Australia, but managed to attract a suitable Singaporean candidate after tweaking the job advertisement.

"This new standard helps align expectations, so if companies want a regional safety director in future, they can just signal that they're looking for a level-four professional," he said. "All the requirements - experience, skills - are set out in the standard."

The new standard is supported by the Ministry of Manpower, Workplace Safety and Health Council, and the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). SISO plans to introduce it across a range of sectors, including manufacturing and construction. It will hold roadshows next year to publicise the standard.

So far, about eight NTUC-affiliated unions have come on board to support the standard.

One of them is the United Workers of Electronics and Electrical Industries, which sees to the interests of about 66,000 members.

Its president Fahmi Abu Bakar Bafana said the standard will make workers aware of skills they need to pick up, or courses they should enrol in, to progress to the next career tier.

The new standard was launched yesterday after a ceremony for the pioneer batch of graduates from the Workplace Safety and Health Leadership Programme.

Started last year by SISO and NTUC, it aims to groom managers in the field for leadership positions.

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