

Alliance to provide encompassing training solution

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Health and safety training and equipment provider Action Training Academy (ATA) has joined forces with consulting and training firm KBC Health & Safety and working-at-height training provider Height Wise Training Academy to develop an encompassing health and safety training solution.

"This strategic alliance is the first of its kind in South Africa," says ATA director **Alastair Farish**.

The alliance will focus on providing contractor induction, first aid, firefighting and height safety training.

The details of the training programme are in the process of being finalised.

Further, Farish notes that there is increasing demand for ATA's ten-day safety officer course.

He says 20 years ago, health and safety was not a priority in South Africa; however, in today's global business environment, it is as important as production and financial success, leading to an increase in the financial resources allocated to health and safety training and equipment.

With the lack of local safety officers, there are more individuals pursuing a career in this field.

Farish has also noticed a demand for safety officer training tailored to the construction industry, while ATA's course provides



TAX REBATE

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generic health and safety training that can be applied to production, industry, factories, the administrative environment or the construction sector.

ATA International Training Division (ITD) director **Trevor Justus** explains that the company developed courses to meet customers' specific needs in the past, such as a first aid course specific to underground mining operations for miner Anglo Platinum.

This year, the company included a three-day British Safety Council- (BSC-) accredited

programme on how to supervise staff safely in its safety officer package, providing companies with internationally recognised training.

"The company has a good relationship with the BSC and intends to build the relationship by adding further BSC-accredited courses, such as an environmental management and a ten-day BSC safety officer course," adds Farish.

ATA's safety officer course focuses on creating a prepared environment by including first aid, firefighting and emergency-planning training along with general health and safety training.

"Many safety officer courses only focus on theoretical health and safety content, while our course also focuses on emergency content, prepared environment, equipment checks, ensuring emergency skills are spread throughout the workforce, performing regular emergency evacuation drills and the thorough planning of escape procedures and routes.

"Locally, 40 to 50 safety officers receive training each month in our health and safety officer skills programme, which, along with all our entry-level courses, is accredited by the Health and Welfare Sector Education Training Authority," says Farish.

Using the services of a Seta-accredited training provider enables a company to claim up to 60% of its yearly skills development levy

back from government, which represents 1.5% of its yearly payroll.

Last year, the company trained 22 000 people in various health and safety courses, which all comply with the regulations in the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act, No 85 of 1993.

To prevent repeating these courses, Farish notes that it is important for individuals to complete the next level of training before a certificate expires.

"To assist, ATA contacts individuals six months before the renewal date of their certificate to complete further training. First aid training expires after three years, while firefighting, health and safety and health and safety officer certificates expire after two years," he says.

New Courses

In February, the company introduced a one-day hazardous-material course, which is proving to be popular with universities, as these institutions work with a significant number of chemicals in their printing departments.

The toner and ink used in their printing departments are classified as hazardous materials and waste and, therefore, require specific management and disposal.

The course covers various spills in different environments, the materials needed to contain the spills, how to contain a spill if it spreads into a drainage system and the disposal and storage of the waste.

The University of South Africa's Pretoria and Florida campuses, in Gauteng, have completed the hazardous-material course, as well as ATA's one-day stacking and storing course, launched in March.

"These courses will not be as popular as the first aid and firefighting courses because there is no significant legislative drive that stresses training in this regard, only accepted industry principles need to be adhered to," says Farish.

ATA is also currently working on a three-hour section 16.2 health and safety work-

shop, which provides senior management with an overview of applicable sections of the OHS Act, as well as general health and safety principles.

Section 16 of the Act refers to a CEO's duties in terms of health and safety and explains that the CEO is ultimately responsible and liable for health and safety in a company.

In subsection 2, the Act acknowledges that the CEO's main responsibility is to run a business and, therefore, allows the responsibility of health and safety to be delegated to another individual, such as a security or human resources manager, but under the direction and control of the CEO.

International Training Division

The main focus of ATA ITD is the provision of a competence course presented at the Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital, in Johannesburg, for medical professionals working in the mining, oil and gas, construction and infrastructure industries, operating in remote locations in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, explains Justus.

"The companies operating in Africa want to be confident in the skills of their medical staff from a social responsibility and legal aspect," he says.

Trauma care and critical surgery specialist Professor **Ken Boffard** notes that the number of foreign practitioners who request to be trained in South Africa has increased significantly over the past few years.

"South Africa is the only country in the world that offers formal subspecialty training in trauma surgery.

"The Charlotte Maxeke trauma unit is also the only one in the world that offers a successful training programme that includes training material, well-developed treatment protocols and excellent teachers," adds Boffard, who is the Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital surgery department head and the first African professor to be elected president of the International Society for Surgery.

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COMPETENCE TRAINING

ATA ITD provides competence training for medical professionals working in remote locations in Africa, the Middle East and Europe

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The two-week intensive course focuses on advanced trauma life support and advanced cardiac life support, making it possible for medical practitioners to refresh skills that they do not use regularly.

The package includes a number of short courses, which are internationally certified by scientific and educational association the American College of Surgeons and US voluntary health agency the American Heart Association.

Justus says the biggest challenge to South Africa when bringing medical professionals to train is obtaining registration papers, as it is a time-consuming process.

ATA ITD assists medical practitioners in obtaining Health

Professions Council of South Africa and South African Nursing Council certification, which enables them to legally treat patients in South Africa. Trainees are only allowed to treat patients independently after they have been at the Charlotte Maxeke trauma unit for over a month.

The division has also expanded its course offering by introducing occupational hygiene, which involves training for individuals working in noisy, dusty, poorly lit and hot conditions.

The course is offered through the University of Pretoria and has been well received by the mining sector, as mineworkers are exposed to all these conditions, concludes Justus.