

# Accredited health, safety and firefighting training needed

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**S**outh Africa needs broad-based first aid and firefighting training, in schools and in the corporate sector, to improve the successful management of emergencies, says health and safety training and equipment provider Action Training Academy (ATA) director **Alastair Farish**.

The immediate response to an emergency, whether a heart attack or a fire, makes a significant difference to the outcome, he notes.

Farish explains that paramedics or emergency services often arrive at the scene of an emergency after the critical period has elapsed and then have to deal with an out-of-control blaze or a patient who has not received cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and cannot be saved.

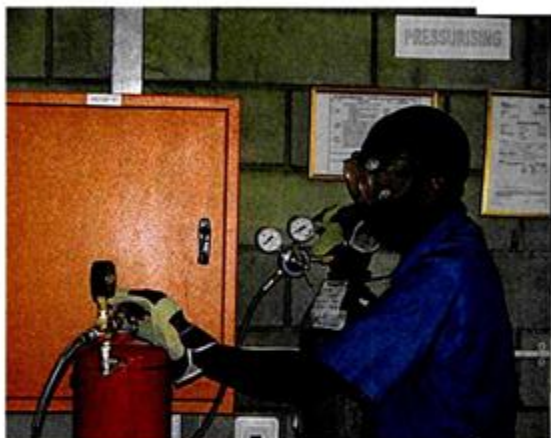
However, in a First World country like the US, if a patient collapses from a heart attack, paramedics are often guaranteed that CPR would have been started within a minute or two of the patient collapsing, as many people are trained and competent in CPR and first aid.

In South Africa, the knowledge of how to manage and contain a fire is as important and can mean the difference between an uncontrollable blaze causing loss and injury, or a contained and managed fire that can be extinguished and where people have been evacuated from the building effectively, he says.

"There is not enough general and corporate education regarding this critical aspect of what we believe is need-to-have knowledge.

"Most people and companies do not know where to start when an emergency occurs," says ATA training manager **Riaan Oberholzer**.

South Africa needs a national approach



## FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

Firefighting equipment must be serviced by SAQCC-accredited technicians and people should be trained in the use of firefighting equipment and health and safety equipment

to health and safety, first aid and firefighting training for individuals and especially for schools, says Farish.

"There needs to be more emphasis on public and on corporate education, which should not be viewed as a policing act but rather as guidance on what needs to be done in an emergency," he adds.

ATA trained 22 000 people in its accredited first aid, firefighting, CPR and health and safety courses last year, he reveals.

Further, South African Qualification and Certification Committee- (SAQCC-) certified technicians must service the firefighting equipment.

"Companies or individuals can go to the SAQCC website and enter the technician code found on the service label of firefighting equipment to determine where the service technician works and whether [the technician is] accredited with the SAQCC," notes Oberholzer.

ATA's factory, in Kya Sands, in Johannesburg, its mobile workshops and its technicians are all SAQCC-accredited.

The company also trains SAQCC-accredited technicians in its workshops, Farish concludes.