South Africa ahoy!

South Africa has always been a news-maker on the international media scene. So far this year, we have been involved in rescue missions to Haiti, hosted foreign airline passengers left stranded when an Icelandic volcano sent its debris across European skies, and we’re about to hold the first FIFA World Cup tournament in Africa. The latest news at the time of going to print estimates the death toll of the Haiti disaster to be around 250 000 to 300 000 people, according to the United Nations. Furthermore, 300 000 people were wounded and 1 million left homeless and destitute. While these figures may be alarming and dismaying, the damage could have been a lot worse without the help of brave international rescue teams. These men and women put their lives on the line to save the lives of others. And although this might be a condition of their chosen professions, it does not detract from the generosity, empathy and sense of duty they offer the public every day.

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Red alert for SHEQ auditors

Ke nako! South Africa has but a few weeks before the curtain lifts on the FIFA World Cup 2010. Pulses in the country are racing as the excitement barometer steadily rises.

It’s fair to say though that internationally the puls-es of many SHEQ consultants and companies are quickening with the recent events filling the newspaper pages. Locally, final site inspections of the World Cup hosting venues are being undertaken and trial runs launched to ensure this milestone event in South Africa’s history goes smoothly. Top of mind in the international news is the volcanic ash disaster in Iceland in April. According to news reports, the ash cloud was emitted from a volcano, which lies beneath the Eyjafjallajökull glacier.

Air traffic in most of Western Europe was grounded as this ash cloud drifted south across the skies of Europe and costing several airlines billions of US dollars. This restriction was issued because not only did the grainy ash particles impair visibility in the upper reaches of the atmosphere but once sucked into the aircraft engines they would also cause aircraft systems to cease working.

This was the case in Alaska in 1989 when all the engines of a Boeing 747 failed after flying into a volcanic ash cloud.

Keeping with the ‘ash’ theme, catch the latest debate on the perceived prohibition of smoking in the workplace in this month’s magazine. Other workplace issues addressed in May are the labour law implications for employees whose substance abuse problem filters into the office. Pieta van Deventer also tells us about the effects and solutions around excessive work-related noise, while Christel Fouché gives us pointers for conducting effective training.

Happy reading!

Editor