

# INSIDE TVET

THE **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council** is doing its part to ensure safe and healthy conditions in workplaces across Barbados.

In keeping with its mandate to coordinate and manage the technical and vocational education and training system, thereby ensuring the quality of workforce training available to Barbados' workers, the council has collaborated with employers, occupational safety and health professionals, and training providers to develop national occupational standards (NOS) in occupational safety and health.

Technical officer Kenmore Bynoe, who has responsibility for occupational safety and health explained: "Developing occupational safety and health standards is critical especially in light of the **Occupational Safety and Health Act**. That Act speaks to every organisation having a trained and qualified person being responsible for safety and health at the company."

Bynoe noted that the occupational standards in Occupational Safety and Health also provided the necessary information and knowledge for individuals who might not be safety and health officers, or specialists, but who wanted to be better informed so as to contribute to their own personal health and safety.

In addition to being used as the basis for developing education and training programmes, occupational standards are also used to provide recognised certification in the form of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) to people who are assessed against the standards and deemed competent in the specific occupational area and level.

Bynoe disclosed that the occupational standards in Occupational Safety and Health Level 3 would be finalised and presented to the public in less than a month's time.

"Interviews have been conducted for assessors and training has commenced for those assessors. By December the assessors should be certified so that candidates can apply and be assessed for the NVQ," he said.

Elaborating further, Bynoe said: "The National Vocational Qualification Barbados (NVQB) is being developed at Level 3 initially, but levels 4 and 5 will be explored as the demand for the higher levels are made known. Level 3 has been chosen because Occupational Safety and Health addresses total involvement of the candidate in ensuring the safety and health of self as well as others.



**ROY WARD, an emergency management specialist who is also qualified in environmental health and safety, occupational health and safety and risk management believes there are numerous benefits to be gained from integrating occupational standards into the BCC's occupational safety and health course. (GP)**



## Improving occupational safety and health

"Level 3 is for a specialist who has responsibility for safety and health within an organisation. The Level 3 has been compared with the Advanced Level certificate in Britain."

From September, the Barbados Community College (BCC) will become the first local training provider to make available an occupational safety and health training course that is based on the standards. The Introduction to Occupational Safety and Health (ISOSH 101) course is being offered through the Industry Services Unit (ISU).

Bynoe explained: "The Safety and Health Programme was fashioned from the mapping of their original course with the Occupational Safety and Health Level 3 occupational standards. BCC is also looking to present intermediate and advanced programmes along the same lines next year."

He added: "Discussions are ongoing to have a similar activity take place at the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic."

The BCC's 45-hour occupational safety and health course, which is worth three credits, was first introduced in 2006. With the relaunch in September as a competence-based course in which participants are trained, assessed and certified against standards, it will become the first of three courses offered by ISU that prepare participants to be assessed for the NVQB in Occupational Safety and Health Level 3.

Course instructor Roy Ward, an emergency management specialist who is also qualified in environmental health and safety, occupational health and safety and risk management, shared his perspective on the benefits of

integrating occupational standards into the occupational safety and health course.

The federally certified instructor who has been teaching emergency management for the past 20-plus years said: "The [original] course that ISU delivered before was a generic course. It delivered basic information and gave participants an overall grasp of what occupational safety and health was about. The [new] standards-based course has improved the level of delivery to an occupational safety and health student. A graduate will be able to contribute to a higher level of safety and health in the workplace."

He noted: "As an instructor in occupational safety and health, the use of the standards forced me to narrow my focus rather than continue to deliver broad, generic presentations. It should therefore improve the process of the transfer

of knowledge and the depth of sharing, which should help the students to benefit more."

Ward, who designed the introductory, intermediate and advanced levels of the NOS-based occupational safety and health course, said that the new format will:

- Improve the level of training and the quality of training products (which is what a student would get from a trainer)

- Force management to review the performance standards that are currently in use in the workplace

- Allow both management and the employee to accept current legislative guidelines, and,

- Allow the new Occupational Safety and Health Act to become the model for all workplaces

He added: "The NVQB will use the Occupational Safety and Health Act as its teaching platform. The NVQB is introducing elements of the incoming Act as prerequisite reading, so every student will benefit from the training from that perspective."

Graduates of the original course David Nwator, a supervisor in the construction industry; and Winifred Williams, human resources manager at the Sandy Lane Hotel; both shared the benefits of undertaking the safety and health training.

Nwator said: "At times there are serious injuries in this field. Only two weeks ago a worker fell from a scaffold, when [we] checked it appeared as if the scaffold had not been properly set up. If there are persons on the job who are knowledgeable about safety and health, it could help to reduce some of the injuries that occur on the job."

He added: "The occupational safety and health course teaches you the need to check every tool properly before you go and use it. Those are some of the things that we need to look at particularly in the construction industry."

Williams noted: "The training has taught me to be more mindful of safety in my working environment and to be aware of the use of personal protective clothing, and when to safeguard myself and others."

Ward added that the introduction of the NVQ-based occupational safety and health training would facilitate the integration of the safety and health standards into the workplace.

"Competence-based training is about assessing performance in the work place, in order for the performance to be assessed it means workers will have to be allowed to practice what they have been taught," he stressed.