

THE REQUIREMENT OF SITE SAFETY SUPERVISOR (SSS) AND SAFETY AND HEALTH OFFICER (SHO) IN A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

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In the construction industry, safety is the most crucial element in ensuring that every project is carried out smoothly without any risks that could jeopardize workers or the project's progress. Construction sites involve various high-risk activities, such as working at heights, operating heavy machinery, and handling hazardous materials. Therefore, adherence to all safety regulations, without exception, is essential to minimize the likelihood of accidents on-site.

Importance of SSS and SHO

To ensure that all safety measures are complied with, the appointment of a Site Safety Supervisor (SSS) and/or a Safety and Health Officer (SHO) is required, depending on the scale of the project, the number of workers involved, and the level of workplace risk. An SSS is responsible for overseeing safety compliance in small to medium-scale projects, whereas an SHO is required for larger and more complex projects to ensure full adherence to laws and safety guidelines set by regulatory authorities. With proper supervision and enforcement by an SSS and/or SHO, potential risks can be identified early, and preventive measures can be implemented to safeguard workers' safety and maintain the smooth execution of construction projects.

When workers carry out tasks on-site without the presence of an SSS and/or SHO, the likelihood of non-compliance with safety regulations increases significantly. This lack of supervision may lead to unsafe work practices, putting workers in hazardous situations that could result in serious injuries or fatalities. Figure 1 below shows workers failing to adhere to the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while working at heights, posing a risk of falling that could result in fatal injuries or death, caused by the lack of supervision from an SSS and/or SHO.



Figure 1: Workers with no PPE ^[1]

Differences between SSS and SHO

Although the main function of both the SSS and SHO is to ensure compliance with all safety aspects on-site, there are significant differences in their regulatory requirements, scope of responsibilities, and job functions. Table 1 outlines the key distinctions between the two roles in terms of their requirements and responsibilities.

Table 1: Comparison of SSS and SHO Based on Requirements and Responsibilities ^{[2][3][4][5][6]}

KEY ASPECTS	SITE SAFETY SUPERVISOR (SSS)	SAFETY AND HEALTH OFFICER (SHO)
Applicable Regulations	Regulations 25, Factories and Machinery (Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction) (Safety) Regulations 1986	Subsection 29 (2), Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA)
Appointed By	Main contractor	Occupier/ employer if the total contract price of the project exceeds RM20 million
Purpose	Helps the main contractor meet FMA requirements and promote safe conduct of work generally within the worksite.	Helps the occupier/ employer meet OSHA requirements and promote safe conduct of work at the place of work.
Regulatory Requirement	Not specified, however every Contractor other than main Contractor in charge of worksite who employs more than 20 persons shall appoint Contractor Safety Supervisor to be stationed minimum 5 hours a week.	Mandatory for project cost more than RM20 million or high risk workplace as directed by Superintending Officer (S.O)/ Project Director (P.D)/ Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH)
Site Presence Requirements	Minimum 15 hours per week	Full-time presence required
Safety Training	Not specifically outlined	Conducts safety training sessions and awareness programs
Safety Inspections	Inspecting and rectifying any unsafe place of work	Investigate any accidents, near-misses, dangerous occurrences, occupational poisoning, or occupational diseases that occur at the workplace
Preventive Actions	Correcting any unsafe practice	Collect, analyze, and maintain statistics on any accident, dangerous occurrence, occupational poisoning, or occupational disease that occurs at the workplace

Application of SSS and SHO

SSS and SHO are professionals who are expected to have a comprehensive understanding of safety laws. This is because the process of becoming an SSS or SHO involves several rigorous steps to ensure they are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. Before qualifying, candidates must complete a series of structured training programs, including attending mandatory courses that cover various aspects of workplace safety and legal compliance. Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the step-by-step process required for an individual to meet the qualifications and officially become an SSS or SHO.

Table 2: Steps to become a SSS and a SHO based on official course curriculum ^{[7][8]}

CRITERIA	SITE SAFETY SUPERVISOR (SSS) (Yellow Book)	SAFETY AND HEALTH OFFICER (SHO) (Green Book)
Application	Application for SSS may apply through NIOSH	Application for SHO may apply through NIOSH
Entry Requirements	Malaysian citizen, and possess a minimum of LCE/ SRP/ PMR/ PT3 or equivalent	Malaysian citizen, and possess a minimum of SPM/ SPMV/ MCE or equivalent
Course Duration	10-day(s) / 80.00 hour(s)	22-day(s) / 165.50 hour(s)
Topics	One (1) module	Four (4) modules
List of Reference Book(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 Factories and Machinery Act 1967 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 Factories and Machinery Act 1967 Trainee's Note for Module I,II,III, & IV
List of Teaching Aid(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> LCD Projector Computer White board with accessories Flip chart with accessories 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> LCD Projector Computer White board with accessories Flip chart with accessories
List of Classroom Activitis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture Discussion Presentation Site visit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture Discussion Practical
Note	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participant is required to bring along Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. Safety Boot and Safety Helmet) during site visit session on Day 10. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participant is required to bring along Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. Safety Boot and Safety Helmet) during site visit session on Day 21. Participant is required to sit for the first examination within one (1) year from the date of completion of the course.
Objective	<p>At the end of the course, the participant will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the OSH legislative requirements pertaining to construction site Conduct the risk management at the workplace Elaborate OSH requirements for site management Be a competent Site Safety Supervisor (SSS) 	<p>At the end of the course, the participant will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct the hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control Explain the OSH-MS Plan OSH programs Interpret OSH legal requirements Be a competent SHO (upon passing the SHO examination and registration with DOSH)

Conclusion

The roles of the Site Safety Supervisor (SSS) and Safety and Health Officer (SHO) highlight that workplace safety is not just a regulatory requirement but a vital element for the success of any construction project. While the SSS focuses on daily site practices and the SHO oversees broader policy compliance, both work toward a common goal which is a safe and hazard-free environment. Their combined efforts reduce risks, prevent delays, and ensure legal compliance, ultimately enhancing project efficiency and safeguarding worker well-being.

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