

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**13 November 2014**

**Recent Increased Fatal and other Incidents on Construction Sites**

The Council for the Built Environment (CBE) is a statutory body that was established in 2000, to oversee six Built Environment Professional Councils (Architecture, Engineering, Project and Construction Management, Quantity Surveying, Landscape Architecture and Property Valuation) for the purpose of instilling good conduct and best practice within the professions; transforming the professions; and advising the South African government on built environment related issues.

The CBE wishes to express its concern at the recent fatal and other incidents in the construction sector.

The CBE works closely with allied stakeholders such as the Department of Labour and the Built Environment Professional Councils (BEPCs) who share common objectives of protecting public safety. It is a mandatory requirement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act for any workplace incident to be reported to, and subsequently investigated by, the Department of Labour.

Incidents that were recently reported to, and are currently under investigation by the Department of Labour include:

* A capsized crane at KHI Solar One site in Upington (Northern Cape), where six employees were injured and two fatalities reported when a Crawler Crane capsized during a freak storm and crushed three office containers on 03 November 2014;
* Reported structural collapse of two buildings in Gauteng during the last fortnight where there were no fatalities;
* The Meyersdal Structural Collapse Incident following the collapse of a house on 18 August 2014 in Meyersdal (Gauteng), that led to the deaths of seven workers and the hospitalisation of nine. The Enquiry was conducted from 29 October to 07 November 2014;
* The Tongaat Mall Commission of Inquiry following the structural collapse of the Tongaat Mall (KwaZulu-Natal) on 19 November 2013, killing two employees and injuring 29. The Section 32 hearing, instituted by the Department of Labour in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act, is currently underway; and
* The collapse of one of the Coal Silos at the Majuba Power Station in Mpumalanga with no fatalities.

In each of the above instances, once complete, the Department of Labour will issue a report on its findings and recommendations. The CBE awaits the outcome of these enquiries, in order to adopt these findings and recommendations in advocating best practice and regulating the built environment.

Parallel to this public interest oversight, the CBE is working exhaustively to improve health and safety in the built environment. Earlier this year, in March 2014, a Construction Health and Safety Accord was successfully signed by the Departments of Labour and Public Works, Organised Labour, Organised Business and co-signed by all six Built Environment Professional Councils that regulate the built environment professions. The CBE, in terms of its oversight mandate over the BEPCs, is overseeing the registration of Construction Health Professionals by the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions. In a related endeavour, the CBE is working closely with Higher Education Institutions to review their built environment academic programmes to ensure adequate health and safety coverage in these curricula.

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