

**Speech by Er. Chong Kee Sen, President, The Institution of Engineers, Singapore, at the
“Design for Safety” Seminar on Tuesday, 19 January 2016, at the Lifelong Learning
Institute**

Distinguished Guests;

Members of IES;

Fellow Engineers;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning.

1. Welcome to the inaugural ‘Design for Safety’ seminar. I am happy to see so many of you here this morning as this event is an important step in Singapore’s journey to improve its Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) performance.
2. In Singapore, raising workplace safety and health standards has been a key priority both for the country and for the industry. Over the past ten years, concerted efforts from the Government, industry and other stakeholders have reduced Singapore’s overall workplace fatality rate from 4.0 per 100,000 employees in 2005 to 1.8 in 2014.
3. However, the construction industry is still the highest contributor to overall workplace fatality. To achieve a breakthrough in WSH performance, the Government together with the different stakeholders in construction have identified upstream risk management as a key approach moving forward. This has led to the gazetting of the Workplace Safety and Health (Design for Safety, or DfS) Regulations on 10 July 2015.

4. Engineers have a big role to play to realise the goals of this new regulatory framework. Indeed, our responsibility is not just in ensuring that buildings and structures are safe for the people who use them but also for the people who build and maintain them. If we are able to incorporate safety features or risk control solutions into building and structure design plans upfront at the design stage, we can help the industry to achieve safer buildings, facilities and machineries for the workers who build and maintain them.
5. Such enhancements in the design process are crucial to minimise the number of accidents at construction sites. It will mean a lot to the families and friends of workers at such sites. Well-planned designs will ensure that they do not have to go through the pain and suffering of losing their loved ones and give them the peace of mind that they deserve.
6. By organising today's seminar and the workshops over the next three days, IES aims to assist engineers in the built environment industry to fully grasp the new mandatory Workplace Safety and Health (DfS) regulations, ahead of its operational date on 1 August 2016. This is the first major platform since the gazetting of the new framework, focusing on helping engineers understand the new requirements and equipping them with the relevant DfS skillsets and competencies. Our aim is to help you play your roles better, so that you can help to bring about significant progress in workplace safety and health.
7. Today, we are very privileged to have Mr. Graham Hayne, a DfS expert from the United Kingdom (UK) with us at this event. Having witnessed first-hand the implementation of UK Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, Mr.

Hayne will be able to share with you valuable lessons gathered from the UK experience as well as opportunities presented by the Singapore regulations. You will also hear case studies, practical advice on DfS management and latest DfS from many other local and international field experts.

8. At this juncture, I would like to thank the Ministry of Manpower, the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) for supporting this meaningful seminar. I would also like to thank JTC, Frasers Centrepoint and E-Force for their sponsorship that has made this event possible. My appreciation also goes to all the seminar speakers for sharing with us today, as well as the IES Health & Safety Engineering Technical Committee for their efforts in putting this event together.
9. This seminar forms part of IES' commitment to encourage safety and health at the workplace. We aim to help our engineers make the fundamental shift to not just consider structural safety but also safety of workers in their design. In addition, we also want to equip our engineers with the capabilities to bring about better workplace health by, for example, eliminating the use of chemicals, or improving work environments to prevent workers from getting diseases. Currently, IES is developing a WSH competency building framework for engineers, encompassing a comprehensive range of DfS courses to cater to different professional needs. We hope that you will continue to leverage on these programmes to upgrade your skills and knowledge to achieve better WSH outcomes.
10. I wish everyone a fruitful seminar and a pleasant day ahead. Thank you.