

Speech by Er. Chong Kee Sen, Immediate Past President, The Institution of Engineers, Singapore, at the “Design for Safety, Design for Life” Seminar on Tuesday, 10 January 2017, at e2i, Devan Nair Institute, Singapore.

Distinguished Guests;

Members of IES;

Fellow Engineers;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning.

1. Welcome to the ‘Design for Safety, Design for Life’ seminar. I am pleased to see so many engineers and other professionals joining us this morning for this morning’s event, as each of you play a critical role in improving workplace safety and health (or WSH) outcomes in the construction sector.
2. In 2016, a total of 67 workplace fatalities occurred in the construction sector. This is a devastating number and one that is worth our every attention, not just because it is the highest in recent years, but because every life matters and every death is one to many. As engineers, architects, designers and developers, it is not just our responsibility to design and build Singapore into a beautiful city, but to go all out in ensuring utmost safety for those who actually put these structures together with their hands.
3. To raise WSH standards, the Government has gazetted the WSH (Design for Safety) Regulations in July 2015, and these regulations have taken effect on 1st August 2016. This is a colossal and vital step in bringing about greater workplace safety in Singapore. Design for Safety (or DfS in short) requires stakeholders in construction projects to identify and manage foreseeable risks all the way from the design and planning stage of a building project, to the construction and maintenance phases. Adoption of such regulations has led to significant reductions in accident and fatality rates in countries such as UK and Germany.

Their successes attest to the effectiveness of upstream intervention in stimulating better planning and coordination that will in turn reduce downstream issues during the building's construction and maintenance phases.

4. But the WSH (DfS) Regulations will not make any difference without concerted efforts and absolute commitment from the community. We are not going to save any lives with half-hearted efforts, a going-through-the-motion attitude or by procrastinating actions to a later date. Every stakeholder in the built environment needs to focus on and be dedicated to the key intent behind these regulations.
5. As the national society of engineers in Singapore, IES has placed raising WSH standards as one of our priorities. It is our steadfast commitment to support engineers and key stakeholders of the built community to continually enhance WSH outcomes. Today's seminar represents part of our on-going efforts to spur the industry to make conscious and collective efforts to achieve the desired effect of the new regulations. It follows our inaugural seminar in January 2016 that saw more than 160 local engineers and other industry professionals from over 50 companies in attendance.
6. Through this seminar and ensuing one-day Master Class, we aim to strengthen the industry's understanding of the new DfS regulations and their responsibilities under the regulations. We are very pleased to have with us today, many distinguished speakers, including Mr. Philip Baker, a renowned authority in prevention through design from UK. UK is a country that has significantly enhanced workplace safety and health through the implementation of their Construction Design and Management Regulations and the support of industry-developed compliance guides. Today, you will get the valuable opportunity to draw from the UK experience to improve WSH standards in Singapore.
7. In closing, 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 and engaging seminar. I would also like to thank all our distinguished

speakers, as well as the IES Health & Safety Engineering Technical Committee for their efforts in putting this event together.

8. IES hopes to continue to work with all of you to raise WSH standards in the sector. I wish everyone a fruitful seminar and a pleasant day ahead. Thank you.