



THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS
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Case Study

Mr Saif Es Al Meskiri BSc MSc MIFireE

Mr Saif Es Al Meskiri MSc MIFireE is Head of Loss Prevention at Dubai Aluminium (DUBAL) in the UAE where he manages a team of 47 staff. He was recently awarded Member (MIFireE) grade membership of the IFE.

How did you begin your career in Fire Engineering?

Upon graduating from high school in 1984, I immediately pursued a career in healthcare by joining the New Dubai Hospital as a Clerk as all my family members were employed in hospitals at that time. My job always kept me busy, preventing me from pursuing higher education while on active duty. As a result, my applications for several management positions were repeatedly denied due to a lack of college education. I eventually left the Healthcare industry in 1999 to join DUBAL as a Security Fireman.

What education did you undertake to develop your career?

Raising two children continued to keep me too busy to take any courses at college or university. I nevertheless continued to dream of completing a degree in Fire Engineering – my ultimate goal being to do what I love and provide a better life for my family. Work commitments and the non availability of a Fire Course in Dubai proved real obstacles, however in 2004 I was motivated by a colleague to enrol for a Masters degree in Quality Management through the University of Wollongong in Dubai and duly attended classes twice a week on a part time basis. As a 41 year old this was the biggest challenge of my life. The balance of family, work and study was very difficult at times, but I truly believed that my experience matched with a degree would give me an advantage over most. Although Quality Management was a totally new subject to me, I began to find it interesting as time progressed and I graduated in 2005. Since then I have attended short courses in Fire in the UK and the USA so as to enhance my professional standing. To further my academic career in Fire, I spent the 2005/6 academic year completing a BSc in



Mr Saif Es Al Meskiri

Fire Safety Engineering at UCLan. I then enrolled for an MSc in Fire Safety Engineering in 2010 and completed the same in September 2011. My main area of research interest was a review of the effect of wind on compartment fires.

How have you progressed to your current role at DUBAL and what does the job entail?

I first joined DUBAL in 1999 and spent four years as a Security Fireman. I then made a return to the Healthcare industry to take up a management role as Head of Health & Environmental Safety as Dubai Health Authority. In 2007, I returned to DUBAL to take on the position of Head of Loss Prevention. It is a privilege to lead a progressive, customer driven department with such a dedicated team. We respond to emergencies plant wide across the 4km x 7km site and in 2012 dealt with 600 fire calls. Another vital activity within our mission is to prevent fires and accidents from occurring, which is accomplished through proactive fire prevention efforts and education programmes.



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What have been your career highlights so far?

During my time at DUBAL I have made major contributions in developing, establishing and championing the implementation of Fire and Safety Management Systems, EHS policies and procedures to achieve legal compliance, safety leadership and competitive advantage for the company.

I have been responsible for the Fire Training Ground Development Project at DUBAL which was completed with the opening of the state of the art facility in 2012. The importance of properly training personnel in the Fire Services can never be overemphasised and from the initial phase of employment each employee is trained in Fire Safety and procedures. Hence, realistic training environments through superior design, efficiency, and value to our customers is the way forward. The 30,400-square foot facility was built to train fire fighters as well as employees in a variety of real-time fire scenarios they could encounter in day to day life.



The new Fire Training Ground at DUBAL

The structures comprise of an area of 1500 sq foot Fire Fighters Endurance containers, an area of 900 sq foot High Tech Fire Simulator, an area of 320 sq foot 'L' shaped container and Vehicle, Acetylene, Bulk Fuel Tank (BFT) Fire Simulators. The Environmentally-Friendly Fire training Simulator features the latest technology and resources to conduct hands-on instruction and exercises so that

Firefighters can experience realistic training including heat and fire simulations.

The facility features props for live-fire simulations, including sound effects simulation and can simulate heavy smoke conditions produced through a smoke generator.



Kitchen Fire Simulator

What attracted you to IFE membership and how did you find the application process?

I joined the IFE to assist with my career development and to have the opportunity to learn from others. Previous to gaining my MIFireE, I was an Affiliate member of the IFE and I attend the annual conference every year to benefit from the seminars and to network with other professionals. I found the application process very smooth and my employer has been supportive throughout.

What are your future goals within the industry?

I would like to gain more knowledge in fire safety engineering and fire training structure design. I've always believed that a person is never too old to learn, that education and knowledge are good things and that it's a good policy to try and learn something new every day.

Do you have any advice for potential IFE members?

Please join the best (if you want to be the best) to enhance your career.