



**Announcer**

It's time for the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

**Enzo Garritano:**

Welcome to this podcast series on IHSA, who we are, and the services we provide. I'm Enzo Garritano, President and CEO of IHSA, and in this episode, we'll be joined again by host, Michelle Roberts, Director of Stakeholder and Client Engagement, and by Greg Williamson, VP of High Risk Activity Training and Operations.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Thank you, Enzo. In the previous episode, you did give us some information about high level, who we are, our vision and mission, and our brief history. So Greg, we would like to hear from you a little bit more on specifically the high risk activity training and operations. So can you talk and expand on do companies need to enroll with IHSA in order to become members?

**Greg Williamson:**

Companies and their employees automatically become members of IHSA by registering their business with the WSIB [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board] and paying premiums in one of the rate groups IHSA serves. Members get access to our health and safety training products and services at no charge or at a reduced price, and as part of the provincial health and safety system, members can be sure that our services adhere to the regulatory requirements and compliance standards established by Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development and prevention office.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Okay, thanks. Can you tell us more about IHSA's members? Like who do we serve, the size, etc?

**Greg Williamson:**

IHSA's membership is approximately 170,000 member firms, which equates to about 780,000 full-time employees in Ontario. IHSA's membership is largely made up of small businesses, which are companies with less than 50 full-time equivalent staff, FTEs. In fact, 95 per cent of our member firms have fewer than 20 FTEs.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Okay, so a large portion of the businesses are small, which is great to know. And as your title indicates, you oversee the department of high-risk training and operations, so can you tell us about the different kinds of training IHSA offers?

**Greg Williamson:**

Sure. IHSA offers over 75 sector-specific training courses. They range from general awareness courses for the different sectors we serve to highly technical hands-on instruction for high-risk activities. All of IHSA's training courses are recognized by our industries as the standard, and many of our courses were developed in collaboration with representatives from those industries. All of our trainers must acquire specified competencies before being allowed to deliver our high-risk training programs. For example, in order to deliver IHSA's *Working at Heights* program, all trainers must have at least five years of industry experience and must successfully complete IHSA's three-day Foundations of Facilitation training and learning workshop and must complete IHSA's competency survey.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Okay. So you said sector-specific high-risk training, so can you just expand on what some of those courses are that we offer?

**Greg Williamson:**

Sure. IHSA has some unique expertise and credibility in managing the hazards of high-risk activities. We hire our trainers and consultants directly from the industries we serve, which allows us to provide our members with job-proven expertise and integrity. Our high-risk activity training can include suspended access equipment, working at heights, our powerline technician apprenticeship, and transportation and dangerous goods.

**Michelle Roberts:**

And that's just an example, like you said, of the many different programs we offer if there's 75 different sector specific, so thanks for that. Could you tell us a little bit more of the powerline Technician apprenticeship program? Enzo mentioned that in the first episode as one of the unique deliverables from IHSA.

**Greg Williamson:**

We're very proud of that program. IHSA is one of a limited number of training delivery agents designated by the Ministry of Labor, Training and Skills Development to provide the skills-based training for all four levels of the power line technician apprenticeship program. Each level covers all relevant theory and practical topics, including work techniques and the legislation regarding safe work. Apprentices learn from highly experienced professional trainers and then demonstrate their newly acquired skills by using well-tested and evaluated safe work methods. It's a unique transition from classroom to practical field applications, and all four levels of the apprenticeship are taught at our Skills Development Centre in Mississauga, which features modern facilities and top-of-line equipment. The training center features a confined space simulator, an energized three-phase underground yard and two energized overhead lines.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Okay, thanks for expanding on that. Enzo mentioned that of the courses we offer, we provide services across Ontario, so can you expand a little bit? Where does the training take place?

**Greg Williamson:**

Well, our mandate is to provide services to member firms across the province of Ontario. So we have the ability to provide both training at one of IHSA's head offices or via a satellite office that is strategically located in a local community. So we have three designated skills-based training centres: our Voyager Court location, which is the head office; our Skills Development Centre in Mississauga; and then in Ottawa we have the Ottawa Skills Development Centre. We do have satellite training centres, and we continue to expand around the province, some of which are in Kingston, Bowmanville, Sudbury, Timmins, Thunder Bay, Hamilton, Niagara, Sarnia, and we continue to look for more opportunities. These satellite locations are offered in partnership with key collaborative relationships such as Cambrian College and various union halls and First Nation groups, and we continue to look to grow our network of partners.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Okay, thanks. In addition to providing training at one of the IHSA facilities or a satellite facility, do you provide services directly at firm locations?

**Greg Williamson:**

Yes. Clients can arrange for at-customer facility training, which is delivered right at their location, provided there's a suitable learning environment and equipment. We've also recently converted some of our programs to virtual delivery, which is provided remotely via a virtual platform but with a live instructor.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Well, that's interesting and that's a big adjustment, probably due to COVID pandemic as well. So what programs are currently available in the virtual delivery format?

**Greg Williamson:**

Currently, some of the programs would be *Basics of Supervision*, *Traffic Control Temporary - Work Zones*, the EUSR or *Electrical Utility Safety Rules* book. We anticipate in adding more programs in the future. We also have a suite of eLearning self-paced programs that are available. Please feel free to check out our training offerings at [ihsa.ca/training](https://ihsa.ca/training).

**Michelle Roberts:**

Okay. So let's expand a little bit more outside of the training. What other services does your department provide?

**Greg Williamson:**

Our subject matter experts, the field trainers and consultants, also provide consulting services which range from general health and safety awareness review to site specific hazard based consulting to customized consulting. Our field staff will go out on site to evaluate work site hazards, for example, on construction sites, or perform in-vehicle coaching or evaluation or skills-based assessments on high-risk tasks. Last year and 2020, we assisted with over 600 site inspections to help ensure that firms were COVID compliant and keeping their workers safe.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Well, thanks for that, Greg. Thanks for expanding on the information and the details and the solutions and the services that your department provides.

**Greg Williamson:**

Happy to do so.

**Enzo Garritano:**

Thank you for listening to us on this series on IHSA, who we are, and the services we provide. In our next episode, joining us will be Vice President Paul Casey of Programs and Strategic Development to expand on the consulting and health and safety management systems services we provide. Be sure to like us on our podcast channel, hit subscribe, and visit us for more health and safety resources and information at [ihsa.ca](http://ihsa.ca).

**Announcer:**

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