



Announcer

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

Enzo Garritano:

Welcome to this podcast series on supervisors. I'm Enzo Garritano, president and CEO of IHSA. This episode is hosted by Ken Rayner, IHSA's Vice President of Customer Relations Market Development and Labour Relations. Joining Ken today will be IHSA Health and Safety Consultant Alex Hernandez, as they discuss training requirements for supervisors and workers.

Ken Rayner:

Thank you very much, Enzo Garritano. Welcome to the podcast, Alex Hernandez. So for the thousands of training participants that would've had a class with Alex, you're missing out on probably the most vibrant smile at IHSA, which you don't see in the podcast, but I can tell you-

Alex Hernandez:

That's right.

Ken Rayner:

He's doing it right now. So great to have you with us, Alex. Maybe Alex, for those people that haven't had the opportunity to engage with you before and been part of one of the classes that you're teaching, could you just give us some of your personal experiences with supervision and a little bit more about your responsibilities at IHSA?

Alex Hernandez:

Absolutely. Well, first of all, I want to say thank you for having me here today, and I'll share a little bit about me, my background. So again, my name is Alex Hernandez and my background is actually construction. I started in construction at the age of 16 years old with my father actually and my three brothers. I did that for 16 years, and I was actually one of the first that was able to get the Red Seal at the union hall. And after that I worked in the field, I became a journeyman, subforeman, foreman, supervisor.

It got to the point that I had over 50 guys working for me at one point. I've completed many projects in downtown Toronto. I've done high-rises, I've done tunnels, subway extensions. I spent five years working at the oil sands in Alberta. I have a lot of field experience, so I became a supervisor. And yeah, I started working with people every day and I've enjoyed it, great experience. And now here I am. Now, I am a health and safety consultant for the IHSA, and we help workers go home safe every day. And I really enjoy it. I find that this is my passion and I wouldn't have it any other way. So thank you so much for having me once again.

Ken Rayner:

So Alex, we're going to talk today about supervision and training in particular, and this is for some employers to sort of wrap their arms around training requirements. It can be a daunting task. And appreciating that we've got about 15 minutes on this podcast, where do you suggest we begin with understanding workplace training requirements in particular for supervisors?

Alex Hernandez:

You know what? That's a great question. Well, the very first thing that I think that we should discuss again is that employers need to make sure that when they appoint a supervisor, they must be competent. And again, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, it says that a competent person must have knowledge, training, and experience. So all three requirements must be met. And having said that, a program that I would highly recommend you to take, it would be obviously *Basics of Supervision*. Now, the industry that you work in doesn't matter. Why?

Well, because all supervisors, management, we all perform the same tasks. All supervisors, all managers, we need to make sure that we're planning, organizing, directing, controlling, so industry doesn't matter. *Basics of Supervision* will help supervisors get familiar with their health and safety responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. And then of course, we're going to provide them with some skills to meet those responsibilities. And of course, we're going to show them how to influence workers to work safe on the job. Because again, we have to make sure that we think "safe production", not "safety versus production".

Ken Rayner:

So we started there. Now we've got an understanding of who do you need to look to a point from a supervisor perspective. Now that person's been appointed the supervisor, what are some of the things that they should start considering for the workplace, not only for themselves, Alex, but also for the workers under their care and control?

Alex Hernandez:

Well, first of all, again, we have to make sure that they are familiar with the health and safety responsibilities. Because most people out there, they are supervisors and a lot of times they don't even know that they are in that position. Because again, some of them, they will call themselves foremans, lead hands, skilled men, skilled worker. And again, all of those titles are a supervisor. Though you are a competent person under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, because again, it says that a supervisor is a person that has authority over a workplace or over a worker.

So the moment that you start directing other workers, again, you should be familiar with your health and safety responsibilities under the Act. So first of all, you should come and take Basics of Supervising. So this way you know what you're responsible for. And if you're a worker, you should come and take a health and safety Awareness program. And again, we'll discuss your responsibilities also. But as a supervisor, again, we need to make sure that you are familiar with the responsibilities under the Act.

Ken Rayner:

Alex, can you go into a little bit more detail about the Basics of Supervision course? I know that you've taught arguably hundreds if not thousands of participants in that course for IHSA. Why is it seen as the go-to course for supervisors in the industries that IHSA supports?

Alex Hernandez:

Basically, I would recommend a supervisor to take *Basics of Supervising* because we're going to, again, A, we'll make sure that they are familiar with the act and the regulations. We're going to give them skills on how to work with the workers, how to plan, how to organize, how to direct, how to control the activities. All supervisors should know those tasks. Now, myself, I tell you this right now, as supervisor, I remember taking basic supervision with the IHSA. And when I went to work, I felt like I had new tools in my belt, if you will. And now that helped me perform my job better.

I was able to motivate workers. I was able to again, understand points of view from them. And if you haven't taken *Basics of Supervising*, I'm telling you right now, you are missing out. You have to come and take *Basics of Supervising*. I guarantee you, by the end of the day on day two, you will leave with new tools, new resources. And if you ever have any questions, you can contact us at the IHSA and we will be glad to help you. Our goal here at the IHSA is to make sure that every worker goes home safe to their families at the end of the day.

And we will help supervisors again to achieve those goals because that is the concern. We need to make sure that everyone goes home safe to their families. We need to make sure that you keep your promise to your family. It's very important. So come and take basic supervision. I guarantee you, you will not be disappointed. This is one of the best programs that we have. And we will prepare you as a supervisor to perform your health and safety duties competently. Now we have basics of supervision for construction, and we also have a federal program that you can attend. So again, like I said, the industry that you work in does not matter because all supervisors perform the same task.

We all have to communicate hazards. We all have to inspect the workplace, we have to investigate incidents, and of course we have to enforce the rules. These are all topics that would be discussed through our program, through a series of discussions. And of course, there's exercises that we're going to provide you for two days to make sure that you leave with a lot of knowledge again, to go back to work, and hopefully you can apply it and improve your health and safety in your workplace. And before you know it, you will start to see the levels of production going up through the roof. So always remember safe production, not safety versus production.

Ken Rayner:

We're talking about tools and you're talking about having a more productive site, Alex. What are some of those tools that participants who come and take the basics of supervising class, what are some of those tools that they would leave with. And appreciating that they're not going to be experts at being able to necessarily give a safety talk at that point, but they've been given some foundational knowledge on some of those tools that are going to help them when they return to the work site, if they begin applying them right away, moving them towards a competent supervisor. So what are some of those tools that people will, that participants in the *Basics of Supervising* class will walk away with after two days?

Alex Hernandez:

The first three key things that I would say is, number one, you're going to walk up with a lot more knowledge, that's for sure, a hundred percent. Number two, we're give you some new skills. And three, we are going to motivate you to make sure that you go back to work with a better attitude. Those are three key points that as a supervisor must have, I believe. Then throughout the program, we're going to get into improving your knowledge in regards to your health and safety responsibilities. We're going to provide you with the skills to meet those legal responsibilities. And then of course, we're going to give you some skills on how to influence the worker's attitude in creating a health and safety environment for the workers.

Ken Rayner:

So looking at some other tools that the IHSA has, Alex, in regards to training and what supervisors, what can help them along in understanding their requirements and what they need for themselves and what they need for workers, there's a free download on the IHSA website for a Training Requirements Chart. Could you maybe speak about how potentially supervisors could leverage that tool for themselves and for their workers as well?

Alex Hernandez:

Go to our website. I highly recommend everyone go to ihsa.ca. Please visit our website. And on our website, you're going to find the tab that says "Training Requirements" or "Training." Go to the tab and you will find all the training that we offer. Now, most employers, the moment they start paying into WSIB, they become an IHSA member. And the moment that you become an IHSA member, you are eligible to get free training from us. There's about 18 courses that would be offered to the employer at no cost to them.

All they have to do is contact one of our Customer Service Representatives, register for training, come and see us, and we will give them that training. Now, we can offer training in trenching, hoisting and rigging, traffic control, joint health and safety committee, part one, part two, defensive driving, you name it. Any training that you need out in the field to ensure that your workers are successful, we will provide you that training. We will give it to you. And if we don't have it, well, we'll see you if we can make it for you or create it for you. But there's so much training available to you, all employers definitely should take advantage of it.

Ken Rayner:

So Alex, I mean, if anybody listening to the podcast the entire time would expect the way you're promoting this, that this course to be a couple thousand dollars for two days. But that's not the case. And I think that the participants or employers that go to our website and take a look at the cost of our courses on supervision will be pleasantly surprised that their premiums that they pay into WSIB is giving them back something, which is training at a very affordable cost that they can get their supervisors in on a two-day course, whereby four to five thousand participants a year in Ontario are taking it.

And I think this is one where if you're not aware of it today, go to our website, take a look. Alex, for me, it's some of the best money you can spend for a new supervisor or even a supervisor that has been in

the field for a while and wants to really quote-unquote "Sharpen the saw" in terms of getting their skills honed again. Yeah. So any other thoughts on that?

Alex Hernandez:

Well, for the cost of the money that you will spend on the training, I guarantee you right now that you will get every penny worth. You will get your money's worth, I guarantee you. Because again, supervisors will be able to go back to work and apply all the skills that they have learned for two days with us. And as an employer, again, you will see a healthy and safer workplace.

And before you know it, you will start to see production levels going up through the roof. I guarantee you that every single penny that you spend, you will get your money back again in the future. You will be able to achieve, again, a safer workplace, highest levels of productions. And one of the most important things is that the workers will feel motivated. They will feel like, "You know what? My employer, he or she, they do want me to go home safe at the end of the day. They do care about me." So they will feel motivated and everyone will feel like they're part of the team.

Ken Rayner:

There we go. It's the Alex Hernandez guarantee.

Alex Hernandez:

If you haven't taken Basic Supervision, you need to come and take it. I promise you, you will not be sorry. You will live with more new tools in your belt and you will see, you will start to see you will have the highest levels of production in your workplace. I promise you, come and take Basics of Supervision. You will not be sorry.

It's one of the best programs we have. And again, our goal here at the IHSA is to make sure that you guys go home safe at the end of the day. That is our goal here at the IHSA, to make sure that you keep your promise to your family. So come and see us at the IHSA. We will provide you with some new skills to make sure that you have the highest levels of production in your job. And again, we will always be there to assist you the entire way.

Ken Rayner:

Amazing. And for all of our listeners, I think you can absolutely feel the passion in Alex's voice. So the next time you have an opportunity to get to the IHSA website and take a look at the courses that are being offered, in particular, those that are applicable to supervisors, I hope you'll see the value that Alex has talked about today and join us for an upcoming course. So Alex Hernandez, thank you so much for being with us. We appreciate you sharing your knowledge on training and supervisors today. It's been a pleasure.

Alex Hernandez:

Well, thank you so much for having me. And again, everyone, please remember, visit our website, ihsa.ca. We are the number one Health and Safety Association in the province of Ontario. So when you

think of health and safety, think IHSA. Come and see us, we will help you. We will meet all your health and safety needs. Thank you so much for having me. It's been fun. It's been my pleasure.

Ken Rayner:

Thank you, Alex.

Enzo Garritano:

Thanks for listening. To hear more in this series, join Ken Rayner as he speaks to other IHSA subject matter experts at ihsasafetypodcast.ca. Thanks for listening. I'm Enzo Garritano.