

Health Safety Resources for Small Business (Part 1)

Host: Ken Rayner

Guest: Jennifer McKenzie, Enzo Garritano



Announcer

It is time for the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

Ken Rayner:

Welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. I'm Ken Rayner, and I'm your host. And joining me for this series on health and safety resources for small businesses are Jennifer McKenzie, IHSA's regional Manager, Operations - North and East, and Enzo Garritano, IHSA's President and CEO. Our purpose for creating this series of podcasts for small businesses is that under Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, also known as the "Green Book", small business employers have many of the same duties as any other employer, even those that have hundreds of employees, including some of the following.

So a small business is expected under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to do everything they reasonably can to protect their workers in each situation. They're also required to inform their workers of hazards, instruct them on how to control the hazards through safe measures, and to supervise those workers to ensure that their health and safety is protected. And lastly, to make sure that every worker and supervisor takes the required training, including basic occupational health and safety awareness training, and keep record of all that training.

So while many of the same duties as other employers apply, we very much know that small businesses may face challenges in creating a safe and healthy workplace, and this is how IHSA can help. In fact, this is what we're funded to do. So I'm very pleased to bring on our president, Enzo Garritano. Enzo, Maybe you can assist and share with these small businesses that aren't familiar with the IHSA, what they can expect to us from a resource perspective.

Enzo Garritano:

Well, thanks Ken. And first off, as you mentioned earlier, we know small business owners do have some challenges, where they wear a lot of different hats, they may be doing work directly, but they're also hiring, they're also doing the payroll potentially, or they're looking for new business opportunities. So health and safety may not be the topic that is top of mind for them, and how to manage it may not be also top of mind like they manage their other activities like banking, or scheduling, ordering materials. So there are those challenges, and the reality is that they also may not be aware or understand their responsibilities in the Act, or the applicable regulations, whether it's provincial or federal, again, depending on the sectors they're in.

So again, at times, small business may not know how to manage our health and safety until something goes wrong, and that's where, again, we come in. And where we come in, part of our mission is to be a trusted resource for health and safety across the province of Ontario for the sectors that we serve. So we're not here only to increase awareness of obligations, but to provide them with tools and resources to

help them understand really those foundational pieces of what it takes as a small business, and what is required as a small business. So that's what they can expect from us, there are a lot of materials, resources, whether they want to take them at their own pace or whether they want us to direct them through them, but we have the content there that will help them be successful in their small business.

When we look at some of the risks, again, that these businesses are involved in coming from the construction, transportation, and utilities sectors, these are high-risk activities. And sometimes a company may say to us, "I just say you're making a real big issue out of making me understand what my responsibilities are, but I haven't had any issues. I'm a small business, I've been around for a while, and I don't really see the issue, I haven't had any injuries or illnesses. And what are you talking about?" But the reality is on the scale of all the small businesses in Ontario, and their risk is probably once in every six to eight years of having a lost time injury. And that's an injury that requires one to seek medical help and be off the next shift.

So we want to help businesses succeed and manage that risk because one in eight, I think even at one in eight, still a big risk. And we don't want companies even at that risk point to do nothing about it, we want them to be active. Not we, as I just say, but we feel that they need to do that for their success moving forward as a business. No one wants to have an injury or an illness in their workplace. And it also aligns with our vision, really, it's about health and safe workplaces free from injury, illness and fatalities. And that means there's something active going on within the company.

So again, for those who are starting a small business or are a small business that came from maybe a larger business, a business that had a lot of structure in place, they may come forward and knowing what some of their obligations are, but for many, many small businesses, this may be their first time starting business, may not have had a lot of activity on health and safety within the businesses they were employed in. So we really want to reinforce that they need to get that necessary information to start off right as a business. And once they register an employee with WSIB [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board] or as an employer with WSIB, we are their health and safety association, and we have that content and we have that relationship with them as they become members with us automatically when they register. So we'll chat a little bit about that later, but again, they can use our content at their own pace, or they can use us in delivering training and consultations for them.

Ken Rayner:

Jennifer, I know when we were preparing for the podcast and we were talking about it ahead of time, you had talked how important it's about the trusted resource, and Enzo mentioned that as well. Is there anything you wanted to add on that in regards to the trusted resources, and how small business should be perceiving IHSA?

Jennifer McKenzie:

Thanks, Ken. Yeah, so we are a trusted resource. And we really are a trusted resource because we have industry experts who have been there, they've been on the job sites, they understand the hazards, they understand the risks, but they also understand the controls and how to ensure that your health and safety management system is protecting the workers. So by coming to IHSA, you're ensuring that you're getting that expertise from us. And we're really there to support and to give you what you need for you to be successful, and to have a healthy and safe workplace as well.

Ken Rayner:

Amazing. And we're funded, that's a big part of this as well, we are funded to do this job, right? So where a small business in transportation, construction, or electrical utilities need some assistance, isn't sure about something, not sure how to handle a hazard, not sure about a certain type of legislation. They have a trusted resource they can turn to, and that's a big part of this podcast and our outreach and our promotions for small business, is making sure that small businesses in Ontario know who they can go to as a trusted resource when they need occupational health and safety information.

Okay. Jennifer, we want to talk about some free resources that we have for small businesses. The first one we're going to talk about is one that you were involved in, and that is a webinar for construction small businesses that features Brian Barron from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Tyler Beauchamp from WSIB, and yourself. So in that you talked about the services that are available, and some information from each of those entities. Yeah, share with our listeners a little bit about that webinar, and why would it be important to watch?

Jennifer McKenzie:

Thanks, Ken. Yeah, so the free 45-minute webinar, which is titled *Health and Safety 101: An Orientation for Small Business Owners* was developed to provide small business owners an understanding of who the Ministry of Labor, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, the Workplace Safety Insurance Board, and the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association are. And it's really about giving you a high level overview of what each of these associations has, and the resources we have to assist. And then also, it's really meant not to overwhelm that small business owner, it's really about giving you the high level details of what information do you need, and where can you go to get it.

So for example, Brian Barron from the Ministry reviews his experience as a small business owner and his experience as a new worker. He reviewed him coming right out of college and getting onto a construction site, and his experience, and what he didn't know, and how he learned what the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the regulations were. He talks about and reviews why health and safety legislation exists today, why it's so important, what is the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*? And talks a little bit about the construction regulations. And then he also briefly overviews the health and safety responsibilities for employers.

Then we have Tyler from WSIB who reviewed the legislation, which is the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, and how they oversee and implement it. They also look at how they can fulfill their mandate by promoting health and safety in the workplace. He talks about the facilitation of re-entry into the workplace after an injury, and how compensation is provided. In addition, Tyler speaks to the services that are available online, including their compass. It's a platform where employers can complete injury and illness reporting, and find premium payment information amongst other items. He then closes with a review of the Health and Safety Excellence program and the rebates that are available to businesses such as yourselves that participate.

I then close off the session about who IHSA is, how we fit into the prevention system in Ontario, and our dedicated small business webpage, which has many resources specific to your sector and your business size. I then wrap up with the overview of our consulting and training services that are available to our member firms, either at a reduced cost or some that are even free. There's also some products available

for purchase and download from our website to assist small businesses with meeting their posting and communication requirements. In addition, we discuss how small businesses can stay up to date on health and safety by following us on Twitter, or LinkedIn, or Instagram, or even through our podcasts.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent. So Jen, this particular service that we provide must be \$100.

Jennifer McKenzie:

It is free.

Ken Rayner:

It's free. Okay.

Jennifer McKenzie:

It's free!

Ken Rayner:

Free. There are no barriers. There are no perceived barriers except for time. And it is on demand, it can be launched whenever you want, whether it's after hours, whether it's on the weekends, whether it's a rainy day and work's not getting done. It can be done any anytime. And the link to this is on the podcast channel. So if you're looking for it, please just go to our podcast channel and take a look at that free webinar. So thank you very much, Jennifer McKenzie.

Enzo Garritano:

And it is so critical. I mean, if a small business is going to learn anything, it needs to learn about the health and safety system that is available to them, including the ministry, the WSIB, and ourselves as the health and safety partner, or association that is allocated to service them. So definitely something that we encourage everyone to take that 45-minutes, even if you're listening in your vehicle at lunch or some other time, definitely take that time to do so. Thanks.

And Ken, I'm going to turn the table and ask you a question here because we've also recently launched a great resource for small business, and it's called *Basics of Health and Safety for Small Business*. It's an eLearning course, and again, barrier free because it is for free for a period of time, and it can assist small business owners achieve compliance with health and safety regulations in Ontario. So maybe give us a bit of an overview on that program, Ken, if you can?

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, very complimentary to the one that Jen talked about. So Jen's webinar, you've got three presentations, one from Brian Barron, one from Tyler Beauchamp, one from Jen McKenzie. In this one, it is a eLearning module, you've got a voiceover, and you proceed through various segments. It's about 20, 25 minutes long, and as we mentioned, it is free, F-R-E-E, no cost to a small business owner to take this

course. And it really goes over three main objectives. We're talking about giving an owner a sense as to what happens if there's an injury. So we get into an example where someone's carrying some materials along a path, there's not great housekeeping on the site. So there's clutter and there's a trip, and there's a twist of a knee. And all of the factors that go into that, all the costs that go into it, what does that look like if we're not proactively taking care of health and safety on a job site? So that's the first thing that they get into.

The second is, identifying the responsibilities of an owner and an employer under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. So there are various responsibilities by role within the *Occupational and Safety Act*, certainly for owners and for employers, for supervisors, for workers. It's important, if you are an owner of a small business to understand your responsibilities under the Act, so we get into that a little bit. And then the last thing is identifying some of those control measures so that you can implement a healthy and safe working environment for all your workers. And that's really based on some of the major hazards that we see across all the industries that we support. And just giving some examples on the hazard, and then how potentially that hazard can be controlled. So again, a 20-minute, 25-minute eLearning course comes with a certificate of completion, and it is no cost, F-R-E-E, free.

Enzo Garritano:

And we can find that on our eLearning page, Ken? Is that where you'll find it?

Ken Rayner:

Thank you, Enzo. We can find that on the eLearning page at the top of the IHSA website. You go along that banner, click on eLearning and you can find it, everything there is listed alphabetically. You can also find it, we'll have a link to that particular training on our podcast channel as well for this particular podcast.

It's almost like IHSA is a library. You have a choice, you can go to Indigo and you can buy your books. And if you want to go down that road, please feel free. But we're letting you know that there's a library in town with a whole bunch of free resources, and it's set up for just that. That is what we're funded for. So come to the IHSA website, take a look at some of those resources before you go and purchase or spend any money to see if the membership that you have in IHSA provides you with resources you need for free, F-R-E-E, to keep your workers safe.

Thank you very much for listening to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*, and this series devoted to highlighting health and safety resources for small business. On our next podcast, we'll continue the discussion on various free services from IHSA, and how they can assist small businesses create safe and healthy workplaces. Be sure to subscribe and like us on your podcast channel, and visit us at IHSA.ca for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

Announcer

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