

## Episode 50:

Health and Safety Resources for Small Business

**Host:** Ken Rayner

**Guest:** Enzo Garritano, Jennifer McKenzie



**Announcer:**

It's 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 part three of this series on health and safety resources for small business 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*, or the "Green Book", small business employers have many of the same duties as any other employer, even those that have hundreds or thousands of employees. Now, did you know that not only are small businesses in an integral part of Ontario's economy, but they also make up the majority of IHSA's member firms? Our member firms include over 150,000 Ontario employers, with over 90 per cent of those firms with fewer than 20 full-time equivalent employees. So our membership includes over 150,000 employers, and over 90 per cent of them have less than 20 full-time employees. Over 80 per cent of those firms have less than five full-time employees. So if you're a small business out there right now listening to this podcast, know that you are not alone and IHSA has resources that can help keep you and your workers safe.

IHSA recognizes the challenges faced by small businesses when it comes to investing in health and safety. That's why we provide free tools and resources to help you protect your workers and meet your legal obligations under Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. So the first free resource we're going to discuss today applies to all businesses, regardless of whether you complete work under provincial legislation, such as a construction project, or under federal legislation such as cross-border transportation company. You and your workers require training so that tasks and work can be completed in a healthy and safe manner.

So Enzo, on IHSA's website we have two training charts posted for work conducted under Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, or the Green Book, and the *Canada Labour - Code Part II*. Now, what would be the value of a small business owner downloading these free resources and referencing it on a regular basis?

**Enzo Garritano:**

Thanks, Ken. When a small business hires workers, the bottom line is that they have an obligation to the health and safety of those workers, and they also have an obligation for the overall health and safety of the workplace and all the workers included if they're in control of a project or deemed the constructor. So these charts really, really key in on or focus on the main subject areas of risk that's associated with your business so you can really see or easily see yourself in those topics.

So as you go down the chart, you'll see things such as, do I use a chainsaw? Do I work in a confined space? Do I use scaffolding? Do I designate a supervisor or have supervisors? Do I use an elevating work platform or do I work in a trench or on a road or heavy? Or do I use heavy equipment or do I need a signaler on my projects or in my workplace? So the chart is made so that you can easily see what the work is and then get into what is the requirement and which regulation and what part of the regulation applies. So it can really allow you to focus in on the things that you in particular do in your small business.

And on the federal side with the *Canada Labour Code*, again, the chart does the same thing but in alignment with the code itself. So again, what are my duties as an employer under the federal requirements? What are the expectations in specifying or using personal protective equipment? As another example. And there's also some overlapping issues around confined space, use of equipment, ergonomics, those kinds of things as well under the federal code. So depends again, where you reside and which regulations apply to you. Those two charts will help you very quickly get into and identify where your work is and then what the applicable regulations are.

**Ken Rayner:**

So when a small business owner is listening to this right now, they're probably pulling out their wallet and getting their credit card ready to pay for this download.

**Enzo Garritano:**

Yeah, again, as you've said in the past, it's free to download these resources and this is again, part of IHSA's mandate is to make our resources, health and safety-related resources, accessible and available to small business. And that means making them available for free for the most part in a lot of these resources on our website, free to download, take a look. And again, you can download it to your own device or you can access it at [IHSA.ca](http://IHSA.ca). And again, having these resources available and for referencing and review really helps them become more familiar with their responsibilities. So again, you can work with your staff, work to minimize risk, work to be more efficient and effective as a small business. We want you to succeed as a small business. Part of it is, again, working to at least the standards of the requirements of the regulations that apply to you and hopefully beyond that, but definitely to minimize the risks and make sure everyone gets home at night.

Also, referring to those and really knowing them, those charts, what's in those charts and what are the requirements for the work that you do, allows you, again, to do the work more efficiently and effectively. And that's going to help you attract workers, make sure that retain your workers and be able, again, to be more effective and efficient in your work as a small business. It's just like the other specifications you may learn when you do a construction project or in the requirements, in the federal requirements and the transportation company of knowing what the road rules are. Those are things that become second nature, and we want the information on the charts to become second nature for the work that you do directly.

**Ken Rayner:**

Excellent. Thanks, Enzo. So free charts, helping federal and provincial employers be able to better understand what training is required for certain tasks and certain responsibilities. So that's fantastic.

Jennifer, let's talk about something that arguably in the past six to eight years has been the most talked about, promoted health and safety training in Ontario, and that's working at heights, particularly in construction. So it's been established for several years and I find it hard to believe that there's still some understandings regarding what's required. I can remember last year speaking to a roofing company who their owner told me that they'd taken all their training online for working at heights, and I felt so bad to let them know that that training didn't meet the standard and was not adequate for being able to train their employees. And you know what? They believe they were doing the right thing. So it's hard to believe that misinformation is still out there, but it seems to be.

IHSA is arguably the de facto expert on this training standard, I'm glad that we are. We played a significant role in the development of the working at heights training standard and led the province and training participants, boy, with hundreds of thousands of training participants put through the training since the standards release.

So Jen, what information could you share today with the small business owners, particularly those whose work includes working from heights about the resources available from IHSA to assist them work safely?

**Jennifer McKenzie:**

Thanks, Ken. So yes, you are correct that there is still some misinformation out there about the requirements under the construction regulations about who is required to have working at heights training. So under Section 26.2, subsection 1, in the construction regulations, it does specify when an employer needs to ensure that workers may use a fall protection system, then they would need to have the working at heights training, and the working at heights training is the standard training put forward from the Ministry of Labour.

So for example, if I'm going to put on a harness for any reason while working in construction, I'm required to have working at heights training. Therefore, it's up to the employer to ensure that the training that they're providing to their workers meets that standard. And they can do so by checking the Ministry of Labour's website where there is a full list of those approved providers. And then in addition, it's important to note that the standard does not allow training to be completed fully online. That there is that practical component that must be completed in person.

So as sometimes it can be difficult to interpret exactly what the legislation requires, IHSA has developed many guides and resources to assist employers and workers with working at heights safely, including an entire webpage. You can find it at [www.ihsa.ca/falls](http://www.ihsa.ca/falls). On this webpage you'll find information on the working at heights training standard, the results of a recent root cause analysis that was completed on falls in the residential roofing sector. Quick reference guides, which are quick, easy ways to find out is my harness fitted properly? Is that guardrail built properly? It also has forms such as fall protection, work templates and sample rescue procedures. It also has our Falls Awareness Toolkit, which includes forms, checklists, safety talks, posters, articles, and other advisories. These resources can help employers develop site-specific working at heights training and can educate their workers on how to protect themselves from fall hazards.

**Ken Rayner:**

So Jen, this would be a good example, would you say, of IHSA being a trusted resource. So information that's floating around out there, that may not be a completely in compliance with the training standard just coming. If a small business owner has a question, if they've got something in their mind that they're uncertain of, coming to IHSA and validating that information or validating that understanding would be a good step, would you not agree?

**Jennifer McKenzie:**

Absolutely. So again, we have our subject matter experts. So the ones that have worked in working at heights, they've sat on CSA [Canadian Standards Association] committees, they've completed and performed the work. They've also looked at the working at heights training and they assisted in the building of the working at heights training and resources, in combination with also the Ministry as well as other sector employees.

**Ken Rayner:**

All right, so that's working at heights. Great overview on that. Thank you very much. And that webpage that you mentioned is going to be on our podcast channel as well, so people can access it through there.

Enzo, let's go back to you one aspect that's, again, consistent amongst all the sectors we support, and we've been trying to do this on these podcasts is touch on some resources that are applicable to the electrical utilities, transportation and construction. It's not always possible, but in this particular case it is because we're talking about supervision. And it's typically understood that across all legislation that a supervisor is a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker. So incredibly important that that person is competent and has the training required to be able to keep that worker safe. It's a critical role that requires experience, knowledge, and expertise.

The role of the supervisor is a critical component for creating a health and safety working environment. They identify hazards. They instruct and train workers on safe methods. They follow up on the work. They encourage compliance and sometimes, when it's needed, just like sometimes with our kids, you got to imply discipline because sometimes when the encouragement isn't there, the discipline to correct that behavior has to come into play. And many supervisors do not receive formal training on their duties and responsibilities. So IHSA has developed and has had in place for many years a basics of supervising course for both provincial and for federal supervisors.

So Enzo, what do small business need to know about this training and other resources that IHSA provides on health and safety supervision?

**Enzo Garritano:**

Thanks, Ken. Yeah, and as far as what you mentioned now, the supervisor is so critical to the operations of a small business, to projects and workplaces in general, regardless of, again, the sector that you're in. You mentioned identify hazards, instruct and train workers, follow up on the work, encourage compliance and discipline. Those things though, aren't just automatically known by everybody, and we need to guide them through some best practices and help create that knowledge and expertise in the part of the health and safety side.

So *Basics of Supervising*, in our case, is a significant program, it's been around for many years and been altered throughout the years to be more applicable and valuable to the user. So small business, if there's one course that they put their supervisors through, we strongly advocate that it is this. Whether it's in, for the most part, the construction utility sector, the *Basics of Supervising* or for the federal one, again, it's the basics of supervising on the *Canada Labour Code*. Those two programs really, again, help supervisors clearly understand their responsibilities, how to navigate the rules and the regulations that apply to them.

Again, the *Occupational Health Safety Act and Regulations for Construction Projects* in our case for the construction sector in Ontario, and the *Canada Labour Code - Part II* for those under federal regulations. Again, ignorance of the law or lack of knowledge and the responsibilities under the Act and Regulations, not an excuse, it's not going to fly. So very important that your supervisor, who's your representative as a small business or you yourself, you might be the supervisor, you need to understand your requirements and have knowledge on the specifications or the requirements under the Act and regs.

No different than you're going to have probably very good knowledge again on the specifications of the work that you do directly. Whether you're an electrician and the *Ontario Electrical Code*, or in the plumbing or in other sectors that you serve, again, or in transportation on the rules of the road and the *Highway Traffic Act*. You need to know what your obligations are and how to manage them through the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations. *Basics of Supervising* course helps that. It's a two-day program. They are a two-day program, and again, very good on setting the foundation for a supervisor. But beyond the foundation is what's required because your supervisors do more than just the basics. And again, when you get into items like discipline, how do we encourage compliance? Those are other skills that you're going to learn through other programs that we have.

And again, many of these programs are available. Some are for free. Again, *Basics of Supervising* is a free program to the sectors we serve and other programs here such as our communication program or incident investigation or hazard identification and control. These are other programs that can assist the supervisor become more effective in their role, be able to go a long way in helping the employer become more effective in, again, attracting and keeping workers. Because again, who doesn't want to work for someone who looks after their well-being while they're at work? Someone who demonstrates as a supervisor, as the key person from that small business that is giving me the confidence that they want me to get home every day from work.

So, very important that these programs are taken advantage of. Again, businesses start out, small businesses with a competent supervisor, knows how to communicate, knows how to identify hazards, knows how to encourage compliance. And remember, again, many small businesses start off with employing friends or family or others that they know. And how good is that when you encourage their development in the most important part, which is getting home healthy and safe? So, very important programs, we really encourage their use.

**Ken Rayner:**

So Enzo, two things. One, I'm really glad you mentioned that an owner can also be a supervisor, so making sure that they understand that that could be their responsibility if they haven't appointed someone else. And two, you mentioned that if a small business owner wants to come in and take our

*Basics of Supervising* class in person at an IHSA facility, again, how much does that cost, whether it's provincial or federal?

**Enzo Garritano:**

Yeah. Again, basics of supervising, whether it's provincial or federal, is a prepaid or a free program for companies who are under our membership or who are registered as an employer under WSIB.

**Ken Rayner**

Excellent. And Enzo mentioned that we have free programs or prepaid programs as we like to refer to them because you have prepaid for them. If you are part of our membership, you are paying your employer remittances to WSIB, and that funding is coming over to the prevention system and funding the prevention system. So you are a member of IHSA when you are paying into WSIB and the rate groups and the sectors that we support. So come in and take advantage of your investment. Because that's what you've made with us, an investment for you to take when you need it. Here's one more piece of information that we hope encourages you to enroll in our free *Basics of Supervising* course.

**Announcer:**

Workplace supervisors are critical in helping prevent workplace incidents that cause injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. That is why each year supervisors from across Ontario register for *IHSA's Basics of Supervising* training course. This course helps supervisors understand their legal health and safety responsibilities and effective ways to manage risk at work. Register for *IHSA's Basics of Supervising* course today by visiting [IHSA.ca](http://IHSA.ca) or calling 1-800-263-5024. That's [IHSA.ca](http://IHSA.ca) or 1-800-263-5024.

**Ken Rayner**

Thank you very much, Jennifer and Enzo, and thank you to the listeners who are listening to this podcast on 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 business, create safe and healthy workplaces. Be sure to subscribe and "like" us on your podcast channel and visit us at [IHSA.ca](http://IHSA.ca) for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

**Announcer**

The *IHSA Safety Podcast*. For more episodes, tips, and all things safety, go to [IHSA.safetypodcast.ca](http://IHSA.safetypodcast.ca). Thanks for listening.