



**Ken Rayner:**

Think your workplace is doing enough to prevent motor vehicle incidents (MVIs)? Think again. Even the most experienced drivers face risks every day, distracted driving, fatigue, poor road conditions and unexpected hazards can all turn an ordinary trip into a dangerous one. But there's good news, you have the power to reduce these risks with a strong road safety program, and that's what we're discussing today on the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

**Announcer:**

It's time for the IHSA Safety Podcast.

**Ken Rayner:**

Welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. I'm your host, Ken Rayner. On today's episode, we're discussing part two of "Preventing Motor Vehicle Incidents through a Road Safety Program". In our last episode, we covered the foundation of a road safety program in the "plan" and the "do" phases of the Plan-Do- Check-Act cycle: identifying hazards, assessing risk, identifying controls and building policies to eliminate or at least reduce the impact of the hazards. And today we're going to take it a step further. Very happy to welcome back to the podcast Michelle Roberts, one of our transportation health and safety specialists at IHSA, who's going to help us walk through the "check" and the "act" aspects of the program, which is communicating your road safety program to employees, ensuring they're trained on how to control and manage your applicable hazards, vehicle maintenance and inspections, and monitoring the performance of your program and improving it to keep your employees and your fleet safe. Welcome back, Michelle, great to have you here.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Thanks again, Ken, for having me on and I look forward to continuing this journey with you.

**Ken Rayner:**

All right, so let's keep going on the road safety program. So, you know what I think we determined in the last episode is that irrespective of what industry you're in and the industries that we support, so whether you're in transportation, construction, aggregates or electrical utilities, this podcast and this information is applicable across the board. Everybody has to be focused in on this. So whether you manage just a few company vehicles, a few pickup trucks, or you oversee an entire fleet of vehicles, these insights from Michelle could make all the difference. So Michelle, let's hit the road. All right, Michelle, in regards to driver training and communication, so this is really like the rollout phase, what would be some of the best practices for ensuring training is effective?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Yes, so that is a major control, training and the communication, but we need to make sure that what we're offering is effective. So you need to consider things like, what is the best training format for delivery? Is that in-person, eLearning, virtually led—lot of employers can benefit from having interactive training or varying the different method of training. When you're looking at skills-based or experience, hands-on driving assessments is important, maybe utilizing simulators or doing scenario-based training and then not just thinking that this is a one-and-done. Often a lot of times, we need to incorporate refresher training, but one of the best ways to assess if the training is effective is to regularly do assessments with your drivers.

So we have a whole section on the Road Safety Solutions page about how to assess driver qualifications, how to assess their skills and whether they are driving to the correct standard. So if you've trained them, for example on defensive driving, we talk about all safe practices and skills in defensive driving, then are they demonstrating that when you're doing an assessment to make sure that they not only understand but their driver behaviour reflects that. And then in that driver assessment procedure or form itself, there's a whole companion tool that says, "Okay, how do I assess someone's driving and what are the types of things that I'm looking for to say, "Hey, are they safe? And is what I'm seeing while they're behind the wheel, are good practices or not?" So the companion tool is a great resource because it describes what should you be seeing.

And when we talk about key driving safe practices like scanning and eye lead time and mirror checks and safe following distance or yielding the right of way or what is safe and smooth acceleration or safe and smooth braking and adjusting your speed for the conditions and reaction time and defensive driving, there's that formula of the reaction time of being able to see a hazard, process it and then react as well as other common skills for a defensive driver being able to assess and respond to other people's driving behaviors and being able to react. So this companion tool that we have kind of describes what are those things that I should be looking for to evaluate Ken to know that he is applying those defensive driving skills.

**Ken Rayner:**

Okay, so I'm going to guess that in all of all this different segments and industries within our membership, so construction, electric, utilities, the aggregates and transportation, in many cases they don't have in-house the resources maybe they need to be able to address the hazards related to driving. Can IHSA help with that?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Yes, so we can help in two ways. We have training that we can offer ourselves either at your facility, through eLearning, those virtual formats or in a classroom. So training is an option that we can help with. And then from an assessment point of view, you can adopt those assessment tools. We also have a program that creates the skills for an evaluator to do an assessment or from a consulting standpoint, IHSA could do driver assessments as well. We do offer a lot of tip sheets and resources in addition to the training that would support evaluating the effectiveness of it.

And one other key resource that I want to touch on here is geared to supervisors or your fleet manager or your employer is an eLearning course that we designed on preventing motor vehicle incidents. And this walks through various steps on the Plan-Do-Check-Act, how to implement that, but also those elements you need to assess drivers, including, as we mentioned, a ride along, a companion tool, doing an assessment, giving feedback, there's scoring criteria if you're doing that assessment. So that's all included as well as additional resources that are in that eLearning program. So we've tried to package this in a way that allows you to meet you where you are at on your journey, can you do it yourself, or do you need assistance from IHSA from a training or an assessment standpoint?

**Ken Rayner:**

All right, so let's get into the... So we did the plan and the do, let's get into the "check" and we're going to talk about vehicle maintenance and inspections. So what part does vehicle maintenance and inspections play in a road safety program, Michelle?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Yeah, so I mean obviously if your employees are driving for work, we need to be confident that the vehicles that they are using are mechanically sound and that they're ready for safe transportation, either transportation of your staff or maybe the products that they're delivering as well. So proper maintenance prevents mechanical failures, can reduce the likelihood of an incident or a collision and it's really important that they're proactive inspections, so pre-trip inspections but also that vehicle scheduled maintenance is also being performed and that's all with the intent of making sure that those vehicles are roadworthy and safe.

**Ken Rayner:**

Yeah, I love it. So you really touched on in the first episode or part one about the driver and making sure they're in the right frame of mind and that we've identified the hazards that could impact them and we've trained and communicated all of that information to them. Now we're talking about the vehicles in part, ensuring that they're roadworthy as well. So what type of frequency would you recommend for vehicle inspections?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Well, I think you need to consider factors that might be unique to the vehicle itself and where you're driving and what conditions you're being faced with. So things like severe weather conditions, rugged terrain, are you using a lot of gravel roads? Those types of factors would potentially make it a requirement to inspect more frequently. Maybe also from the driving behaviour, maybe your driver is a little heavy on the gas, hard on the brakes, maybe aggressive. So that obviously creates more wear and tear on the vehicle or the routes that you're using may also be a contributing factor. So maybe you're in an urban area with lots of stop and starting, which is obviously harder on the vehicle and those are factors that you need to think of, okay, what is unique to our operation which may drive the need for a different frequency of inspections for different types of vehicles and different applications?

But obviously the major ones that we want to encourage is pre-use inspections. So before you're doing your job or using the vehicle, do a pre-use check, recommend that you do post-trips if you can. Weekly

checks are important and then obviously we really want to be in compliance with what the manufacturer's recommendations are for that type of vehicle.

So we do have several tips and templates that can be used to be customized, like what are the elements I should be checking routinely on my vehicle? And there are also, some people are like, "Well, I'm not really sure how to do a proper inspection of my personal vehicle." So there is a lot of online resources out there to help, how do I check my oil, how do I check top up my fluids? Those types of things to help perform those basic vehicle, what we'll call maintenance items when you're doing an inspection.

But it's really important when we're talking about vehicle maintenance to also know limitations. When do I need to get a qualified mechanic or technician to perform that work to ensure that it's meeting all safety requirements? So regular checks are very important. And I want to emphasize here that if you are noticing something seems a little off with your vehicle, report it early, notify your supervisor, if you've got a fleet where you've got a mechanic on site or maybe you need an external service, but an early detection gives you that chance to be able to schedule it in and be a little bit proactive, but really think of anything that's potentially a defect or a condition that might make the vehicle unsafe that you do need to report that and then work through to get it repaired.

**Ken Rayner:**

I love that section you just shared about how the vehicle's been driven, where it's being driven. I never even considered that as aspects to include in terms of how the frequency of your inspections and what you need to be looking for. Wow, that's a great tip, thank you. Moving into, so that's the check aspect. How about the act? So we want to monitor, see how this road safety program is progressing. Is it meeting the need? There's an intention to say, "Hey, we want it to do this," is it doing that? So this is the act piece. What about the performance monitoring within a road safety program? Michelle, what does that look like?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Yeah, I mean monitoring any type of program is really checking if it is actually working—are we achieving what we want to achieve? Are the trends showing that we're seeing maybe a reduction in motor vehicle incidents? Have we have less exposure to some of those problem areas that we identified earlier on in that hazard assessment? And obviously the monitoring allows us to go, do we need to make changes? Do we need to make informed decisions that we need another step or we need to revise something? So that monitoring piece is really key in the program to make sure that it's working and do we need to adapt it or be flexible and continuously improve it?

**Ken Rayner:**

And if something's not working, we all know that it's based on something that's going on in the workplace right now that workers are following. So if we make any changes, it's going to require change, which sometimes can be a challenge in a workplace because people are going to have to do something different and get used to a different habit. So are there some best practices for implementing changes to the program based on feedback and data collected that we can implement for a road safety program?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Yeah, absolutely. So from a best practice perspective, you talked about the data, it tells a story, it's the facts. So if we do need to make change, a lot of people are asking why, well the facts from the data, let us evaluate what's working or not. And then also an important piece and change is digging into the root cause. We don't want to just go to, it's a driver error or vehicle error. What are the contributing factors? So if we could dig into the root cause, understand it, maybe the policy's unclear, did we not roll out the training effectively or was it lack of training? Is there other controls that we should be considering that might do a better job?

And then of course with that change process, we always want to reset realistic goals. We want to be able to improve over time, take baby steps, not try to fix everything at once. So that's the best practice is kind of prioritizing and chunking the changes needed. And then setting new goals that are targets, they need to be realistic. We want to be able to make sure that people buy into them, that they're encouraging continuous improvement, but importantly that they're not too overwhelming for everybody to understand and to follow. And so a key practice here with the change is making sure you're prioritizing what resources that you might want to focus on.

And when you think of prioritizing where should I start? You obviously want to start with the most pressing safety threat. What is the highest risk that we have? And if you're using those templates that we talked about in part one of this podcast, where you've got a chart to follow through, you can rank those risks based on the likelihood of the severity and we'll come out with what are the higher risk. We'll use that to inform your decisions on changing, we're going to tackle the one with the highest risk, the highest scores. And then that allows people to go into a sequence where it's not changing everything all at once, we are taking in a planned approach.

And then another part of the change is to not necessarily always focus on what's not working, but let's celebrate what is working. And if certain policies or procedures or training method that you've used has been successful, then how do we adopt that and apply it more frequently?

And then another piece with the best practice when it comes to changes is you need to be prepared to constantly change. Your program is going to need to be revisited and updated on a regular basis. We know things like the regulations change all the time when it comes to road safety. We have new risks that may emerge. We have fancy new vehicles, technology, safety features on vehicles and then even routes and the roads that we're using and the infrastructure is constantly changing. So you need to be prepared to regularly review that, your program, and then adjust and know that that is a key to success.

And also in this part of the cycle, we definitely want to make sure that we are reinforcing. So supervisors play a really key role here in making sure that they are monitoring and looking at, are rules being followed, behaviors being followed, and then reinforcing what they've learned in training, but also what the practices and policies and procedures are.

And another way to help with the change management and evaluation is looking at reports. So we talked at the very beginning about data, you could use collision reports, near miss reports are really important. And then also speaking directly with the drivers themselves, get feedback directly from them on what's working and what's not and how do we make improvements.

I just wanted to expand a little bit on the near miss piece because the difference between a near miss and an incident is sometimes just luck. And the near miss can really be an eye-opener, and let's learn

from this lesson now and prevent a potential incident. So it's really important that you have a near miss reporting process, and we do have templates for that as well, that's available on the road safety solutions to encourage drivers to report near misses. And we mentioned already one of the key successes in the implementation, the act, the change phase is involvement and collaboration. So it's really important during this whole journey that you are checking in with the workers, utilizing if you have a safety rep or a joint health and safety committee, those that are on the front line, your dispatchers for example, and what can we do different? And that helps with the change. If you get more people involved when you go to make a change, they see themselves in it, they've been part of that decision, they're going to stand behind it and then they're going to follow it. So that's really important.

And you can do a lot of those methods in different ways. You might want to be creative, whether you're having face-to-face meetings, maybe you're doing a one-on-one assessment with the driver themselves. Maybe you do an online survey, you pull in a small group, even just coffee room chats or the water cooler chat might help. Maybe you're hosting tailgate meetings or even you've got a suggestion box where you want people to drop in ideas. These are all different ways that you can engage with those employees and get their feedback for improvement. So I think it's important that as we cycle through this process we know it's continuous improvement and we're always going to be reviewing it and being prepared to change.

**Ken Rayner:**

Amazing and some great, great advice. And can I just add something to that if I could and maybe I can get you to walk people through. So we've mentioned on... We've certainly spent a lot of time on podcast one talking about road safety solutions, just want to emphasize this again, the Road Safety Solutions page is full of free resources from IHSA to help you construct a road safety program. So you don't have to do this on your own. Even when you're sort of at maybe the end of what you believe you can do within your own organization, leveraging all your own employees, certainly look to turn to IHSA to see if we can supplement something else to that.

And Michelle, I want to give you a lot of credit for that road safety solutions page because not only is the information there, items and resources that IHSA has compiled, but you worked extensively with our partners in British Columbia at WorkSafeBC to make sure that we really had some best practices, some really leading information that could really help our members create a road safety program and stay safe on the road. So do you want to emphasize any more of those resources that are on the road safety solutions page?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Yeah, so we talked about customizable templates, sample policies and procedures on that page. You'll also access what we recommend are the top training solutions as well as maybe eLearning programs. We also have safety talks and we've picked different toolkits. And so those top hazards are also broken down, so if we mentioned at the beginning some of the hazards you need to consider like distracted driving, we have a whole toolkit for distracted driving, including awareness and communication, training, policies and procedures. We also have subjects like on fatigue management. We know drowsy driving is a high risk. So we've broken it down not only from the toolkits based on topics, but also we have a plan, a sample road safety plan and the steps that you need to take and you can go in to learn

more and navigate through that and see all of those valuable resources that are available. And again, as you said, thank you to WorkSafeBC for helping us develop those. But also, again, there's no barrier here in the cost. What you're seeing on there is at no charge. It's free to download.

**Ken Rayner:**

And that's some fantastic collaboration because without WorkSafeBC, maybe we wouldn't be able to provide those resources at no cost to our members. So certainly check out that page. Michelle, thank you so much for being a part of these two podcasts on preventing MVIs through a road safety program. Any closing thoughts from Michelle as we wrap up this series?

**Michelle Roberts:**

Well, I think we emphasize that it's an ongoing process, so an ongoing journey. But what I want to emphasize, if you take action with the right policies, implement training, adopt these resources, we can create that safer driving environment and ultimately prevent MVIs and ensure that everyone who drives for work gets home safely at the end of the day to their loved ones, and that's obviously our mission is preventing those incidents and getting everyone home. And so I think, don't be deterred by the sense of, "Wow, this seems like another big hazard." It's manageable and we have those tools to guide you along the way. So we're happy to help and we would encourage you to explore all those resources and get on the path to a safer destination on your road trips, but also with your road safety plan.

**Ken Rayner:**

Amazing. And the journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step, and if you need help with that single step, visit [roadsafetysolutions@ihsa.ca](mailto:roadsafetysolutions@ihsa.ca) because we'll get you going in the right direction. Michelle Roberts, it's a pleasure having you on the podcast. I always appreciate all the information you share with our members to help keep them safe as they are on Ontario Roads, so thank you so much for being here today.

**Michelle Roberts:**

Thank you.

**Ken Rayner:**

All right, and thank you to our listeners for listening to our series on preventing motor vehicle incidents through a road safety program. 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:**

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