



**Ken Rayner:**

Today we're taking a closer look at safety in Ontario's construction industry. Not just the regulations and inspections, but the culture, the collaboration, and the commitment it takes to send every worker home safe at the end of the day. So whether you're on the tools, managing a crew or leading a company, get ready for insights you can use to make your workplace healthier, safer, and stronger.

**Announcer:**

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

**Ken Rayner:**

Welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. I'm your host, Ken Rayner. Joining us is someone who knows Ontario's construction industry from just about every angle. Brian Barron, CEO of the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS), a former Construction Health and Safety Inspector with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development, and someone who was also the owner of their own small construction company. Brian has spent his career at the intersection of policy, practice, and people, helping to build bridges between government, labour, and industry. And in this episode, we're going to explore how the OCS works to strengthen Ontario's construction industry, the role a unionized environment can play in fostering a strong safety culture, and the innovations that could shape the future of workplace safety. So at this time, I'm really happy to welcome to the podcast Brian Barron. Brian, great to have you here.

**Brian Barron:**

Thanks so much, Ken. It's a pleasure to be here.

**Ken Rayner:**

Awesome. All right, so we've had tons of conversations. We've known each other for a long time, and I'm really happy to have you on here as someone that really understands construction health and safety in Ontario, again, through multiple lenses. So you really have a unique perspective, and I'm glad we're going to be talking about this today. So you've had a long and accomplished career, Brian, as I just said, you had time as a construction health and safety inspector with the ministry. How does all of that experience shape your perspective on the challenges and the opportunities that we face in Ontario's construction sector today?

**Brian Barron:**

It's an interesting question. I started in construction when I was 16 years old. I started with a small demolition contract, or moved on to residential and roads and then finally into the ICI (industrial, commercial, and institutional) sector before joining the ministry of labour. And one of the things that always struck me is really kind of a sense of pride was kind of the ability to do more with less. It was the ability to perform in adverse conditions, being able to take something from effectively nothing to building something. And it was something that I took great pride in. And then you sort of fast-forward to 2000 and I was hired on as a Construction Health and Safety Inspector with the ministry of labour, and I was parachuted into the health and safety world. And what became very apparent very quickly was that same ability to do more with less, that same ability to adapt on the fly didn't translate as well into the health and safety world.

And one of the things that really kind of shines true even to today is that health and safety is intentional. You have to be very intentional about it. You've got a plan, you have to have the resources and you have to have the right mindset on job sites to be able to effectively carry it out. So when I take a look at the challenges and opportunities coming up, it's really kind of taking a look at that, the health and safety culture on sites. It's changing the mindset of the workers. They still very much are. And I think it is a cornerstone of construction, that ability to work in conditions that aren't ideal. I mean, you're not going to find any other sectors that really face those same sorts of challenges, but it's then shifting that mindset to really be intentional about health and safety, really do those hazard analyses, really understand what you're up against.

And even in terms of how to communicate that between the supervision and the workers. So I think that's kind of the primary challenge that I saw over my almost 20 years with the ministry was really that communication of the culture and that buy-in of the workers and that sort of stuff. And I think it's not all kind of doom and gloom. A lot of people talk about the injuries and fatalities and those are obviously the sad stories that we see, but there's a lot of headway that's been made. There's been a lot of advancement. I look at something as simple as hard hats. When I started in 2004 with the ministry, it was not uncommon to see sites that didn't have hard hats at all. And today you don't see that anymore, and that's just one small change. So there are movements being made, it's heading in the right direction. But I think that that opportunity really is changing that worker's mindset now, that I think is probably the key.

**Ken Rayner:**

Yep. Love that. I love the fact that a commitment to health and safety has to be intentional. It's not going to happen just by accident, pardon the pun, or anything else. You have to intend to create a safe and healthy workplace. And there are now so many resources out there to help people that if they have that intention, they're going to be able to get it done or at least move it forward, right?

**Brian Barron:**

Absolutely. Yeah.

**Ken Rayner:**

Fantastic. All right, so a big move happens sort of like the beginning of this year where you were one of our mainstays at the ministry. You were certainly guiding a lot of what was going on from the construction standpoint and strategies and their compliance campaigns and initiatives and the likes for construction. And you made a move from the ministry to OCS. So maybe just tell us about that, sort of what motivated that and yeah, how did that happen, Brian?

**Brian Barron:**

I did. So it actually started a little bit further back. So I've been at the OCS now since February of this year, 2025. About a year prior to that, I was asked to go on as a director on their Board of Directors. And I honestly wasn't as familiar with the labour relations side of things. The OCS is far more involved on the labour relations side versus the health and safety side. So it was a pretty steep learning curve for me to get up to speed as to what that looked like. But one of the things that I really noticed as one of the directors on the board was the commitment between the labour or the union side and the management side to make things better, to really streamline the industry, get them working better together, and ultimately levelling up that training aspect for workers, the quality of life, so fair wage, that kind of thing.

And it was actually really inspiring to see it. It was something that I'd always kind of known had gone on behind the scenes. Construction unions were not something that was foreign to me by any stretch, but to see that level of organization and to see that commitment to making the industry better was something that was just inspiring. And then the position of CEO opened up and I instantly thought something, I think I can help here. I think I can kind of put my talents to use within the OCS, and it's been phenomenal. It's been an amazing change. Fortunately, I haven't left the health and safety world, I still get involved from that side. So I still get to keep that side of my life alive and active, but then also get this labour relations side as well, which has been an interesting transition.

**Ken Rayner:**

Well, I can appreciate how you would be really motivated and interested in that because as we both know, having had the involvement Section 21 committees for health and safety, particularly in construction, when you have management and labour working together in unison towards solving an issue, addressing a concern, solving a problem, it's a fantastic feeling. It really is when everybody is sort of working towards the same goal. Boy, it is a great feeling. I can imagine when you saw that as a member of the board of directors, how that could be very inviting to you in terms of wanting to be a part of it more.

**Brian Barron:**

Absolutely. Yeah, no, there's something nice about it when you've got those common goals that everybody's working towards. Definitely.

**Ken Rayner:**

Hey, Brian, what about a little bit of an overview for our listeners, again that aren't familiar with the Ontario Construction Secretariat? What could you fill in for them as an overview in terms of what it is you're focused on? We talked a little bit about... You mentioned labor relations and research. What else is OCS really focused on?

**Brian Barron:**

So the OCS was actually started in 1993 when province-wide bargaining came into effect. So basically the three-year bargaining cycle that you see or collective bargaining cycle that you see today started in 1993 and the OCS was brought on and it was brought on with really a three-part mandate. So the first one was to help facilitate collective bargaining. So we provide a lot of the stats, the information, the background information to folks, especially things around, like, the economy and that kind of thing. The second part was really providing opportunities to network, to attend conferences together and really build that relationship between labor and management.

So getting sort of the employer counterparts together with their labor counterparts so that the collective bargaining process wasn't the first time, that bargaining table wasn't the first time they were meeting. They meet throughout the year, they've got a common understanding of what's happening and that sort of stuff. And it was really based around communication. And then the last part of the mandate is the advancement of unionized construction in the ICI sector. So it's really trying to promote some of those best practices. So things like the safety study, the investment in training, things like project labour agreements, that sort of stuff. It's really trying to educate the buyers of construction and really the public at large as to what some of the benefits to unionized construction are.

**Ken Rayner:**

Amazing. So you mentioned the health and safety report. Is there anything that you can touch on in regards to how OCS maybe gathers and utilizes research to influence policy or health and safety programs or industry best practices in that regard?

**Brian Barron:**

Yeah, so that's a really big part of our mandate. We've got Katherine Jacobs is our director of research. She does a phenomenal job of really being able to tease out different pieces of data, information, and research from other jurisdictions and take a look at how it impacts our industry within Ontario. And the safety study is something that was done a few years back. We're actually in the process of engaging with the Institute for Work and Health again, to really revise this, to update it, look at a couple more aspects to the safety study. But it was really looking at the union effect on health and safety and trying to understand, is there a difference between a unionized work and a non-unionized worker and their health and safety performance? And what they found was that union workers were 31 per cent safer. There's a significant reduction in musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), that sort of thing.

So it was really trying to understand, does that union affect transfer over to how the worker works? And what they found was that it did. Now we're in the process of updating that and just try to see are we at that same level? Are we doing better? That kind of thing. And how do we maintain that momentum? But then also looking at things like compliance related data. What types of orders are being issued to unionize companies versus non-union companies? Do they look a little bit different? What can we do? And I think that becomes really important in terms of really understanding prevention related activities for folks to be able to say, "Hey, listen, you may not be part of a union. You may be an open shop employer, but here's some areas where we think work has to be done. Here's where we can learn from what some of the union contractors have done over the years."

So all of that research, and we do a fair number of reports every year. We've got a fair bit on the docket coming up. We've got two different committees running where we're reaching out to our stakeholders to kind of get their input as to where we need to go in the future. But really the idea is we're just trying to better inform the industry. We're really trying to better understand it so that we know where we've got some work to do and where we can help to influence the rest of the industry as well.

**Ken Rayner:**

Absolutely. And training is such a significant and foundational part of occupational health and safety and keeping people safe. And the unions, certainly from what I've been exposed to and what I understand, certainly do a phenomenal job of really having structure to their training programs, making sure their members go through it, making sure they're work ready by the time they get to the site. And obviously that has an impact based on the research. I think that those are all contributing factors that would indicate why a workplace is 31 per cent safer.

I mean, sort of similar to the research we find with COR®, right? 28 per cent safer compared to non-certified companies. And it's because there's a system there. It's not like the people necessarily are better. There's a system you can rely on to be able to train workers or to identify hazards or to ensure that policies, practice and procedures as controls are rolled out, communicated, and people are trained and you're evaluating that. And if it's not working as well as you intended, then you're going back and correcting it and fixing it and making it better. There's a system in place. So I don't think that's a big surprise to me.

**Brian Barron:**

No, and it goes back to even that earlier comment around being intentional, right? Is that intention towards making it safer? I mean, one of the things that I found amazing was, as soon as I came on to the OCS, I started going around to some of the training facilities, the union training centres. And what I didn't realize is that they were jointly funded between labour and management. So both put money into it because it's that commitment to the training. It's the commitment to having workers show up on the site job-ready and not ultimately learning on the fly or learning by mistakes. They're going in with that higher skill level and with the understanding, especially around things like health and safety prior to actually getting to the site. They understand what they're supposed to be doing, they understand how to recognize those hazards, and they understand what they need to do to prevent that hazard from ultimately impacting them or another co-worker. So there's definitely that intention behind making that worker safer and ultimately more qualified to do their job.

**Ken Rayner:**

Right on. Okay. So let me ask you, Brian, and we're going to start getting into maybe some big questions in terms of asking you to solve all the issues within Ontario health and safety. From OCS's perspective, from your perspective as the leader at OCS, what's your take on one of the biggest health and safety priorities facing Ontario's construction industry right now?

**Brian Barron:**

That's another interesting question because it's highly dependent in most cases on the type of project you're on. I mean, if you're dealing with, say, something really technical like a shutdown at Nanticoke, or you're working on some new battery plant that's got really high-tech stuff in it, heavy duty equipment or a huge tunnel, there's going to be, obviously, technical aspects to it versus say something like a residential subdivision where it's largely the same sorts of practices that are going on, but we're seeing the same types of injuries and incidents on those sites. But I think the one thing that holds true right across the board, and I mentioned a little bit earlier, was that commitment to health and safety culture. It's really trying to sort of understand what everybody's roles and responsibilities are really getting that buy-in. A little while ago, I saw this interesting slide saying, "We expect..." And it was somebody doing sort of a presentation on this total worker health model, but, "We expect every worker's behaviour to change," but there's no culture to support that.

So we turn around and say, "Make sure you tie-off, make sure you do all these other things," but you don't have that supervision behind it saying, "Wait, hold on, you're not tying off. Why aren't you?" Or even going a step further—and this leans a little bit into your guys' "see something, say something" campaign—is even the concept of a worker making a mistake. Let's say they just forget to tie-off. They're getting into that routine, they're kind of moving through the day. Their mind may be very task-oriented kind of thing, and they forget that one step, but having sort of the freedom from those other workers to kind of say, "Hey, you forgot to tie-off," or, "Hey, you forgot to put your hardhat on, or you forgot whatever kind of thing," without any sort of negative feedback coming back from that worker, or having a bit of that freedom.

So it's really looking at and investing in the health and safety culture on your sites to really make sure that that is your top priority. Everybody understands that, listen, you're there. You're there to get a pay cheque, you're there to build a building and that kind of stuff. But ultimately, none of that's worth anything if you're not going home in the same condition that you went to work in. So it's really kind of investing in that culture side of things. I am not sure how many of your listeners are aware of the internal responsibility system. I know through a lot of your podcasts, you've certainly brought it in different sort of elements, but the concept being is everybody has this inescapable role to play. You can't contract it out.

You can't turn around and say, "That's not my job." It's everybody's job, everybody has a role within it, and it's really making sure that that's carried out in a way that makes sense on the site that everybody buys in. So I think that that's really kind of... I mean, you could tease out little things depending on the type of job that you're doing, but I would say that if you could get that internal responsibility system working and a strong health and safety culture within that workplace, all those other challenges start to take care of themselves.

**Ken Rayner:**

Very, very, very wise words and the intention and putting that emphasis on the employer, on the supervisors, knowing that they're the ones with the care of control and the ability to direct the work and the worker ensuring that they're following the prescribed policies, practices, procedures, regulations, applicable law, all those things. But it's the employer and the supervisor where it has to start, right? We're talking about culture, it's got to start there. Boy, it's really hard for a worker to drive that from the

bottom up. It's almost... I don't want to say it can't be done, but boy, that's just near close to an impossibility.

**Brian Barron:**

It's interesting. So years ago, I used to use this example all the time as I was going out and on my speaking tour talking about health and safety. And I remember there was this one company and they were out of Burlington and they had sites a few blocks apart. They were residential sites, and exactly the same company, same basic buildings. I mean, they were just townhouses kind of thing. It wasn't like there was any significant change between them. But the one main factor that changed both of those sites was the supervisor. And I remember going on to the one site, I shut it down. I shut down the entire site because there was no guardrails. There was equipment moving without any procedures in place. I mean, it was ripe for a major incident happening. And then I remember driving over, and it was within, I don't know if it was the same day, but within the same couple days kind of thing that I went over to the next site and I remember driving on and I saw this one townhouse block that had caution tape right around.

And I go, "Oh, man, what am I walking into here? This isn't looking good." So I walked into the job site and I said, "I'd like to speak with the site supervisor." So he came out and I said, "Can you explain to me what's going on with the tape?" And he said, "You know what? I have talked to those guys over and over and over again. I have tried to get them to put guardrails back. I have tried to get them to do all these other things." I've had to send them home because he goes, "Somebody's going to get hurt because they're not taking their responsibility seriously. So until they go back and start to take this seriously, they're not going to be working here anymore." And sure enough I walked the rest of the site and I mean, no site is immaculate, but it was pretty darn good.

It was amazing to see it. And this is the exact same company with the exact same policies and procedures, but the one factor that was different was that supervisor, and it was that commitment. So when you take a look at that, yeah, you're right. It is hard as a worker to try and change that going up. It's that supervisor, that leader of the job, they're the ones who really have to drive that. But you've got to have that commitment of the workers too. The worker has to take it seriously. It's their health and safety. They've got that role to play as well.

**Ken Rayner:**

Absolutely. Absolutely. And it sounds like that supervisor you were speaking with was very intentional to keep using that word, Brian, in terms of ensuring that those that were working under his care and control or their care and control was, if you're not going to work safely, then I can't have you, clear conscience, I can't have you working here. You need to go home today.

**Brian Barron:**

Absolutely.

**Ken Rayner:**

And come back when you're ready to follow the directions as required or as prescribed. So that's a big one. So, Brian, if we could maybe go back to the studies that you were referring to earlier that suggests that unionized workplaces can foster stronger health and safety cultures. From your experience and from OCS's research, what factors do you think really contribute to that? And I know we've probably touched on it a bit, but just honing in here, what are those factors that you think really contribute to that?

**Brian Barron:**

So in my mind, anyway, there's two significant factors, one of them is the training and the commitment as part of an apprenticeship. So when you are an apprentice, there's that strong mentorship type program. It's very structured within the unions where they go through, there's called a "work term" sort of thing. So they're basically at working, they're applying their skill, but then they're coming back to do the educational side of things. So there's this constant kind of applying what you've learned and coming back and there's this constant check-in with how people are doing and you're working with journeypersons at the same time and that sort of stuff. So you've got this very structured learning environment that helps to support health and safety. It helps to reinforce those good habits that are there. And again, there's sort of that commitment right from day one is it's really looking at that human element and making that a significant priority.

And I think that is probably, first and foremost, the most important starting or point to start at. The second part of this comes down to the representation. So very similar to what you would see, or at least the intention behind a health and safety representative or a Joint Health and Safety Committee or even a worker's trade committee, is you've got this group of people, this check-in, this ability for a worker without fear of reprisal to come forward and say, "I have a concern. I need something dealt with." And they're not doing it alone. They're not acting just by themselves. You're acting as the collective. So when you take a look at that perspective and somebody feeling secure enough to be able to go forward and say, "I've got a legitimate concern that I need to have addressed," there's a lot of power in that. And that was really the intention behind that, within the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and then also how the regulations were really built.

But the idea being is there is that representative, that person that can stand kind of behind you and say, "Yeah, we've got a problem that we want it addressed," and the union does that as well. So there is that voice, there's that collective voice to say, "No, I'm sorry, you can't operate this way." A little while ago, there was a situation out at one of the big shutdowns in the Hamilton area, and it came down to worker monitoring as part of the confined-space work that they were doing. And the company, to their credit, was trying to find better ways to do things, but they had sort of bypassed a couple of really critical steps. And the union played this really critical role in being able to say, "Listen, we're in full support of innovation. We want to see things get better and that sort of stuff, but we have to make sure every step is in place to make sure that our workers who are working in confined space aren't put at risk."

And they played a critical role in being able to stand up for those workers and say, "No, I'm sorry. We're not going to accept that." And I happen to be going to get involved in that from my previous role as well. But it really showed that advocacy side of things. So just having that voice similar to what you would see in a Joint Health and Safety Committee that's there to say, "No, we've got a concern. We need it addressed." So there's that check on the system. So I would say that those are the two main factors that



you see where there's a difference between somebody having to really advocate for themselves or that larger collective.

**Ken Rayner:**

Love it. Okay. So that being said, maybe you can fact-check me on this. I want to say that when you look at the construction industry in Ontario as a whole, unionized makes up more than half, just over half. Is that right about, Brian? Am I right on that?

**Brian Barron:**

Yes. Yeah, I believe it is. It's actually a tricky number to come to because each trade is a little bit different in terms of what they have. But those are the same stats that I'm seeing.

**Ken Rayner:**

So just over call it 52, 53, whatever, 54 per cent unionized, 46 per cent, say, non-unionized. So it's still a fairly large number when it comes to the non-unionized workplaces. And I think it's not realistic to say that, "Hey, one way to solve all this is to turn all those into unionized workplaces." That's not necessarily going to happen. But how could non-unionized workplaces learn from some of those benefits of health and safety practices that seem to be common in the unionized environments? What are some things you think a non-unionized environment could apply? What learnings could they apply from unionized workplaces that would help them out without necessarily having to be part of a collective agreement?

**Brian Barron:**

Broadly I would say that virtually all of everything from the quality of life that we have today and a lot of the safety standards, wages, that sort of stuff that we enjoy today in the construction industry are thanks to really kind of the labour movement and the unionized side of things really pushing that. So overall, I think the foundation is there and has helped to influence both union and non-union as to how work is done. But I would say the next easiest way would be by adopting an advanced occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS), something like COR® that really kind of puts that framework around health and safety.

It puts that intention and it's audited. That's the other bonus to it, is it's not just somebody doing sort of a paper or a pencil-whipping exercise just to say they're in compliance. It's something where there's a genuine commitment to it. It's audited. They're scored on it, and it really is something that is integrated into everything that they do. And I think that's probably one of the best ways. Now there's other companies out there, and there's certainly companies that have done a phenomenal job because they have a genuine concern for their workers. But I would say the best formalized way to do that is an advanced occupational safety management system.

**Ken Rayner:**

I would agree with that 100 per cent. And you know where I stand on that too, so absolutely you're putting in a system because we just sort of talked about that difference between the unionized environment in terms of their training. It's really a system. It's something that is very much operating all

the time without being based on one person. It's a system operating as opposed to a person doing it. Same with any type of occupational health and safety management system. You're not relying on one person, "Oh, that supervisor left. They decided to retire, they went to another company, and everything now is in shambles," not if you have a system, right?

**Brian Barron:**

Exactly.

**Ken Rayner:**

That continuity can continue, and you get away from the, well, I have one supervisor on this site that does everything great, and I've got another supervisor on another site that is not quite the same. Well, do you have a system in place that's driving that consistency across both of them? If not, then you're probably going to continue to have those challenges.

**Brian Barron:**

Well, yeah, you're kind of taking it out of the hands of an individual and putting it into really kind of... It's the company ultimately directing exactly what they want to see happen and holding people accountable to that, which I think is critically important.

**Ken Rayner:**

And I keep coming back to that word, Brian: intention. I think when an employer decides for the right reasons to move ahead with all good intentions to implement a system, it's going to work.

**Brian Barron:**

Absolutely.

**Ken Rayner:**

There may be trials and tribulations, and it may not be the easiest thing to implement. There may be work that's involved, but if there's intention, it's going to get done and it's going to improve the work site.

**Brian Barron:**

You got it. Yeah.

**Ken Rayner:**

Right on.

**Brian Barron:**

That's exactly right.

**Ken Rayner:**

Okay, Brian, I'm going to put a little pressure on you. I'm asking you right now to sort of blow the dust off that crystal ball that you have sitting in your office so you can do some predictions for us. I'm just going to ask you a tough one. So you're looking ahead, what do you think, what's your vision based on all your experience and all your perspectives? Because you're a really interesting person to ask this question to from my side. Where do you see the state of workplace health and safety in Ontario's construction industry, say, five to 10 years from now?

**Brian Barron:**

So I think it's important to sort of set the stage here. So a little while ago, we had done this, and this is when I was still at the ministry, but we had taken a look back at stats, and it was funny because we would get a lot of pressure saying, "You've got roughly..." And it averages about 22 fatalities a year, and critical injuries sit around 340 a year or something like that. They said, "That number doesn't really seem to change." And it was sort of seen as almost this failure or black mark on behalf of the industry. But what people weren't looking at is how much the industry has grown. So since 1990, it basically doubled in size, which effectively means a halving of that rate, that fatality rate, to critical injuries are a little tougher to do that same analysis with because the definitions change over time and that sort of stuff.

But what I would say, and I want to preface all my comments with this, is it is getting better. We are seeing improvements. There's a collective effort on behalf of labour, management, government, and then IHSA is a major driver of that sort of thing as well in terms of the information that can save there, the training that's offered, even the implementation of COR® and that sort of thing. So we're seeing a construction industry that is evolving into a much safer industry as time goes on. There's certainly work to be done as there always will be, but I think that overall, we're headed in the right direction. I think people should take some level of comfort in that. That's not to say that you should take your foot off the gas and say, "Hey, we're just going to rest on our laurels and keep going," because there's a lot of work that has to be done yet.

But I would say that in five to 10 years, really what we're going to be looking at is more dedication towards the internal responsibility system. I think there's probably going to be a much higher focus on really holding people accountable to those roles and responsibilities and looking at health and safety as something that needs to be trained. It needs to be mandatory training, not just something where it's kind of like, "Hey, are you aware of the Act and the regulations?" But really getting back to that concept of competency. So when you look at the Act and the regulations, it's defined as having knowledge, training, and experience, right? It's not just turning around and saying, "Hey, I know you got to wear fall protection on something," right? You got the knowledge that it's there and maybe you've even been trained, but do you have that experience?

Do you have the ability to really understand how that's applied and really what some of the struggles are that the workers are facing while using it? So it's really kind of having that understanding and being able to apply the regulations in a way that makes sense, but it's having that strong knowledge base. When we look at, for the past 20 years, I've responded to...I don't even know how many coroners inquest recommendations and the concept of mandatory entry-level training for construction. The concept of mandatory supervisor training comes up over and over and over again, and for sure there's a regulatory burden in doing that. It's very difficult for businesses, especially small businesses to take time out of their busy schedules to come in to do that training. But getting everybody at that same level of

understanding and not just kind of this cursory overview of it, but a real dedicated understanding to how health and safety applies to them and on their work site is going to be something that I think we're going to have to get to.

We're going to have to get over that hump and just say, "No, we're doing this." That's all there is to it. Similar to what we saw with the working at heights training, there was a significant change back in 2013 going from sort of that *Basics of Fall Protection* to *Working at Heights*. And yeah, there was some growing pains with that for sure. I think we're going to see the same sort of thing, but I do think that it's a critical step. I think it's something that we have to do to really see that next change. I mean, you and I both know we're fortunate enough in construction to have a regulation that's very prescriptive. If you follow that regulation closely, chances are nothing's going to happen to you. It's that other side. It's that knowledge buy-in and that sort of stuff that becomes critically important that I think we really have to shift our focus towards and really invest some time and resources into it.

**Ken Rayner:**

I agree 100 per cent. And those resources, I think, Brian, certainly from what IHSA is investing in and what we're looking to build up to in the next few years is really tackling that awareness aspect of it. I remember someone that you and I both used to work with, Sophie Dennis, former Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Labour, used to say this was kind of grouped into three categories. You had the "make me" category, that cohort that says, "Look, you're going to have to make me do this." You had the cohort that said, "Hey, show me how to do this. I'm interested in doing it, but I don't know how to, so show me and I'll do it." And then you had the last bucket, which were the high performers or the converted that said, "Watch me. You've shown me what to do. Now watch me flourish. Now watch what I can do."

And I think now about what we really need to get to is that is those two. So the "show me" and the "make me." The "make me" cohort have got to be converted in some way. And if we can continue to do these type of podcasts where we have small business or newly registered businesses that can access this information whenever they have time to in from just about wherever they want to in the world. And the same thing with videos that we're producing, just being able to pique people's interest. We're doing two videos this summer that have moved into post-production right now, and both of them have significant elements on the competent supervisor and how important that is. And my hope is that there's going to be some set of people out there that are doing supervisory work that will see those videos and say, "Oh, I really do need more training."

I don't have all the training and the knowledge and the experience required really to deem me competent. I need more training. I need more information so that I can better understand the hazards and I can recognize them, and I can keep the workers safe through proper controls." That's really important. So I think from my perspective, that's where I think I'm saying the same thing as you did, that awareness piece. We really have to work on that. And the nice thing is we have opportunities with technologies. 20 years ago, we would've had to produce something as a DVD or maybe even a VHS and send it out, and it would've cost a significant more money to be able to distribute information. Now we post it on YouTube and we can make it available to anybody, and they can watch it just about anywhere they want to. It's becoming so convenient. So it really does provide those small businesses with all the

tools and resources they need to be able to better understand what their responsibilities are and then what they need to do to act on them and to improve upon them, right?

**Brian Barron:**

Exactly. Yeah.

**Ken Rayner:**

Right on. Okay, so last question for you, Brian. I just want to make sure that our listeners are aware in terms of if they want to learn more about the Ontario Construction Secretariat and all the resources you provide to the construction industry, what would you recommend?

**Brian Barron:**

Yeah. Well, I mean, the easiest place to start is our website, [iconstruction.com](http://iconstruction.com). You can see the banner in behind me here. If you go onto our-

**Ken Rayner:**

Well, they can't see it. We're not putting video up.

**Brian Barron:**

Oh, okay. Right. Well, [iconstruction.com](http://iconstruction.com). We're also on all social media platforms, but if you go onto [iconstruction.com](http://iconstruction.com), you'll actually see, obviously our website, but you'll see all of the reports that we produce. A lot of the information that we do. Now, we do have a member section that has some of the collective bargaining type stuff that's in there that wouldn't be accessible through just somebody just attending our website. But then also our podcasts are on there as well as links to other helpful resources, even to our EBA partners, so our employer and employee bargaining agent partners as well. So that's probably the easiest place to start. There's a wealth of information on there. The OCS has been providing research for really the past 25 years, pretty significantly. So there's a lot of information on there.

**Ken Rayner:**

Amazing. And, Brian, there's a lot of information in your head, and I appreciate you sharing it with our listeners today, because again, as I stated earlier, you've got a very unique perspective in all of the different aspects of work that you've done over the course of the past quarter-century, at least in terms of looking at it from different angles and seeing it from different angles and wearing different hats. So really appreciate you coming on the podcast and sharing those perspectives and your wisdom with our listeners. Really pleasure to have you.

**Brian Barron:**

Well, thank you very much. And it's humbling to hear that. So thank you. It's my pleasure. And I hope I can always provide that level of information and insight to the industry as well. So thank you.

**Ken Rayner:**

Amazing. Thanks, Brian. Thank you. And thanks very much to our listeners for listening to this episode on the Ontario Construction Secretariat with Brian Barron. Be sure to subscribe and like us on your podcast channel and visit us at [ihsa.ca](http://ihsa.ca) for a wealth of resources and information.

**Announcer:**

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