



Holly Baril:

Heavy equipment is at the heart of every aggregate operation, but it also presents some of the industry's greatest safety challenges. In this episode, we explore the essential role of equipment safety in creating safer, more efficient quarry and plant operations. Whether you're an equipment operator, supervisor, safety professional, or industry leader, this conversation offers valuable insights into protecting people while improving productivity across the aggregate sector.

Announcer:

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

Holly Baril:

Welcome to "Crushed It: Equipment Safety and Aggregates". My guest today is Ryan Smith, health and safety consultant with IHSA, based out of Kingston. Ryan has a background in civil engineering technology, and prior to joining IHSA, Ryan worked in the construction, surface mining, and industrial sectors, eventually becoming a health and safety professional for those sectors, totaling over 10 years of experience. Welcome, Ryan, and thank you for doing this podcast with me on equipment safety and aggregates, because I am not an aggregate specialist. So, equipment safety, I think we all can figure that out as safety trainers, but I'm sure it's got to be a little bit different in the aggregate sector.

Ryan Smith:

Yeah, sure. Definitely some niche differences there for sure.

Holly Baril:

So, what are some of the biggest changes that you've seen in heavy equipment over the past decade, we'll say?

Ryan Smith:

Sure. I mean, heavy equipment is constantly evolving, whether it's to improve power, efficiency, ergonomics, and of course safety. Some of these changes include emissions restrictions. We have electrically powered heavy equipment now, indicators that warn if machines are too close to workers, facial and body language recognition to identify fatigue.

Holly Baril:

Oh, wow.

Ryan Smith:

We have autonomous equipment that just runs itself. Huge changes over the last few years for sure. Absolutely.

Holly Baril:

Oh, wow. That's interesting. Maybe I should go visit some of our quarries here in Sudbury.

Ryan Smith:

Especially you go to some of the larger sites. There's some interesting innovations, new technologies.

Holly Baril:

Which piece of equipment is the most misunderstood in terms of risk?

Ryan Smith:

Oh, well of course all equipment has risks. Some mistakes workers have made regarding surface mining can include approaching large machines without the operator indicating that it's safe to approach first. So, I like to mention that. We always need eye contact before approaching equipment. Approaching machines with a boom or arm from behind on the side, which restricts the operator's view. So we should not be approaching, for example, an excavator from the right-hand side because the boom is commonly on that side, and operators can't see you back there. We should be approaching on those machines typically from the left, unless a different machine with an opposite configuration. But you need to approach opposite the side of the machine with the boom. You need to get eye contact before approaching even one behind. Try to get their attention so that they signal it's safe to approach from the mirrors.

Holly Baril:

So not to interrupt you, but when you talk about not approaching a vehicle from that side because of the boom, do you think workers that are new to the sector, maybe never worked around equipment before, do you think they're getting told this really important information?

Ryan Smith:

A great question. Unfortunately, I'd say often not. People just assume that you should know better. And of course, if you've never been around that equipment before, how could you? Well, something I always encouraged when I was on site with newer and/or younger workers. If you've never sat in a machine before, it's always a good idea to just sit in it so you can gain perspective of what the operator can and can't see. I'm not saying that you get to play with it. They probably will take the keys out.

Holly Baril:

But you're right.

Ryan Smith:

It's good to get that perspective, right? Absolutely. And even better yet, could be part of, we'll say a mining orientation, have workers sit in different machines and then have someone walk around the machines so that they can see what is actually visible. Because you'd think being that high up in a lot of

these machines, you'd have great visibility. Not necessarily true at all. Especially at the sides and behind the machine, including in front of it, you could be standing right in front of it, still not at all be visible to the operator, depending on how close you are to that machine.

Holly Baril:

Interesting. All right. Sorry, keep going.

Ryan Smith:

Other misunderstood equipment. We commonly find, I'll say entry-level machines have the highest rate of incidents. And now of course that could be because they're newer and more inexperienced operators, but a lot of it has to do with, again, that same thing. We look at skid steers, for example. Smaller machine, fantastic mobility. People think it should have great visibility because you've got windows on the front and sides, not necessarily true at all. The arms commonly restrict visibility from the sides, depending on the height of the load. Obviously you want to keep your bucket as low to the ground as possible while traveling, but still obstruct your visibility. And the fact that those machines can turn so quickly, the fact that their mobility is so great actually increases the probability that we could bump something or someone for that matter if we get too close, if someone doesn't know we're approaching, for example.

So always give all machines a wide berth. And I will point out again, heavy equipment has the right of way in mines. That is always the case. It is everyone else's job to stay out of their way. So that includes equipment that has right of way. It could be loaders, could be skid steers, could be packers, could be trucks hauling materials. All of them have right of way. Pedestrians, passenger vehicles, it is our job to not get in their way and to stay out of it or to move out of their way if we see them approaching. Additionally, some things that we should be aware of, a lot of equipment in mines articulates in the middle. So the front wheels don't turn. Don't obviously put your body anywhere near pinch points or you could be crushed for that reason.

A lot of the equipment is portable. Surface mining, foldable portable crushing spreads. Well, a lot of this equipment folds up so that it's easier to transport or so that we meet road regulations and we're allowed to transport it. Never put your body between a folding part, no matter what circumstances.

A common mistake is not realizing that heavy equipment has right of way. Always look for equipment-only areas. So there will be areas listed where it's heavy equipment only. This is common, I'll say, between the blast rock, otherwise called the muck pile, and the crushing operation. So there will be loaders constantly going back and forth from the blast of rock to the primary crusher. Commonly no pedestrian foot traffic there. You are not allowed in that area because the machines are moving so quickly, backing up constantly. It's just easier to keep people out altogether.

Holly Baril:

And they're focused on their job. So if it's a no-pedestrian access, they're not even thinking that someone's ever going to be there because you're not allowed. Yeah. Like most workplaces, but aggregates as well, is following those signs or those requirements that say no pedestrians or the right of way is the equipment, make eye contact. Sounds simple again, but you got to practice that.

Ryan Smith:

Well, and on the note of signage, mines are required to have traffic plans as well, just like a construction project, for example. So they will use road signage to give you additional information in the mines themselves as well, commonly including one-way roads. Again, it's easy to build haulage roads and stuff designed for one-way traffic, and that way we don't have vehicles passing each other in opposite directions, especially when there's steep grades and visibility may be impaired for any reason, one-way road. So keep your eyes open for things like that. And another key note, don't go near stockpiles. Do not stand on them, do not park near them. If you're a QC technician who needs samples for gradation, stuff like that, for approvals, talk to your mine operator and they will get you the materials you need. You can watch them obtain the materials from the pile you wanted to sample if you're worried about that, but never go on top of a stockpile.

Holly Baril:

Interesting. So what skills would separate good equipment operator from a great equipment operator?

Ryan Smith:

So some key notes. I mean, of course, a great operator needs to be smooth. They position themselves well for the task. The equipment positioning can be something to master on its own depending on the work that's being performed. They operate with efficiencies in mind. Now this is what your employer is going to be most focused on. Of course, how can we reduce fuel consumption? And so how can we operate this machine as efficiently as possible? Shorter paths to reduce time, things like that. They need to maintain and inspect the machine regularly, but also need to be very vigilant of their surroundings, which could include powerlines, other traffic, pedestrians, other machines, infrastructure, ground stability, and the limitations of their machine, the limitations of whatever they're operating. Everything has limitations. You don't have to find those limitations to know what they are necessarily.

Holly Baril:

Yeah, yeah. It's like, oh, I guess I can't do that. Too late. So what are some common mistakes that maybe a new operator would make?

Ryan Smith:

Commonly, inattention to their surroundings. They think that they're far enough away from things but maybe aren't. Some machines are not as, I'll say, tight as we want them to be. They swing a little farther than we anticipated them to, which could cause us to strike something or someone, especially if we're operating in a tight area. Maybe more commonly in mining, misjudging ground conditions. Ground conditions can commonly change, especially on stock piles and things like that. The ground may have been stable yesterday and then rain—or drought for that matter, depending on the material you're working with—causes that soil to weaken, or we have pockets open up, or we have washouts that we weren't expecting that occurred from water flow overnight. Whatever that might be, causing the machine to upset. So, we run into these ground conditions and tip. It was not uncommon in mining to see haulage truck drivers tip their trucks while dumping material, especially material that is wet, whether it's mud or sticky like recycled asphalt, especially when it gets hot, that material can hang up in

the front of the box. And as you're tipping, all of the weight of the entire machine is now being transferred to rear one or two axles while the ground may have been stable to support four to six axles, but now that all that weight shifted to one or two on the rear, the ground can't support that load over such a small contact point, for example.

Holly Baril:

Interesting. Okay. You talked a little bit about technology, but how has technology improved operator safety and productivity in the aggregate sector?

Ryan Smith:

Some newer equipment has, as I noted, built in facial and body language detection to warn of fatigue. So, it will alert the driver. Sometimes we'll alert your supervisor if you show too many signs of fatigue, depending on how it's set up. Some newer machines, again, typically in larger mines with bigger budgets, can be equipped with GPS devices that warn if they're too close to fobs. And then you can put these fobs in vehicles and other machines and of course on workers. The little screen would show you the blips on your screen and would warn you if you get too close to one of those fobs so that we avoid equipment and pedestrian contact.

Holly Baril:

Now, is that something that, first time I hear of it, but maybe. Is that something we could use on construction sites or is it being used and I just don't know?

Ryan Smith:

Yeah, you know what? My first time seeing that was on bridge construction project now, huge bridge, almost \$200-million project. So, obviously they had a bit of a budget, but that was my first time seeing it. And then I came to learn, of course, that technology came from mining first. So it is being used, I'll say, in construction and mining, but it is still very rare, of course, because of the expense. Commonly these devices, not only is there an upfront purchase cost, but then there's a membership fee or maintenance cost kind of idea. So hopefully they become more common in the future. Hopefully prices come down and the equipment becomes more accessible.

Some other technology improvements. Now this is far more common at this point, but I'll say most heavy equipment, many haulage trucks and things like that now have HEPA filtration in their cabs to reduce worker exposures to silica, for example, which of course is a common issue in mining. Just cab and air filtration can reduce worker exposures to designated substances, because of course silica is one of the 11 designated substances in regulation 490/09. Hopefully bring you below acceptable thresholds, which are defined in regulation 833. And then simple things like communication devices, whether it's CB or two-way. The challenge here is, I'll say every haulage truck driver should check in with the scale house or point of contact at the mine in general, see what they use for communication, CB two-way, what frequencies, what channels, and then make sure you're on the right channel for that mine so that you can receive directions and warnings and instructions appropriate.

But often we forget to check in. Maybe some signage is out of date on site. They'll tell you that they're using one channel, but for whatever reason that they can't, whether there's blasting going on, stuff like that, maybe they can't use the communication devices for that reason. They don't want to interfere with blast signals and stuff like that. Most, again, modern equipment has emergency escape hatches. So unfortunately we just assisted with a coroner's inquest to a machine that slipped into the swampy area and the operator was unable to escape. Most modern equipment has an escape hatch where you can pop a window out or pop a hatch off the top. Then you can freely escape from that machine.

Holly Baril:

So right away I start thinking about training. It's great to have that. Are the workers being trained? Do they do a mock? Okay, you're underwater, pop the window.

Ryan Smith:

Yeah, no, that's a great question. I'd love to say that we could do some practical there. The downside is when you pop these windows out, they often shatter.

Holly Baril:

Oh, okay.

Ryan Smith:

So then there's an added expense to train them that way. I will say as far as training goes, mining in general, no matter the industry in Ontario is one of the most regulated industries for mandatory training. So before you can enter a mine, you should have your *Surface Miner Common Core*. Well, that's for surface mining. Of course, there's different common cores for different mines. There's underground, there's diamond mining. Everything has their own common core, entry-level, basic entry-level training. But beyond that, then you need to be trained on every machine you use and it's now regulated by the Ministry of Labour. So if you want to operate an excavator, there's a specialty module for that. If you want to operate a haulage truck, you may have your AZ, DZ, whatever, but there's a haulage truck module. So above and beyond the standard MPO training, you now need that haulage module in surface mining.

So I would like to say that most mining training programs include information like that. And if they don't, perhaps they should. It might be something that mine operators want to revisit if they're thinking to themselves, well, we just make sure that they operate smoothly. There should be more to it than that, of course. Limitations to the machine, safety features, et cetera. Yeah, absolutely.

Holly Baril:

Okay, awesome. Anything else to add to the technology?

Ryan Smith:

Again, pretty common now in modern machines, perhaps not older machines, but auto-greasing equipment. So instead of having to manually grease every moving-point machine, you can get auto-

greasing equipment that greases those points for you, which prevents workers from having to climb into perhaps difficult areas to access on the machine, but also obviously reduces the time because now to grease a machine could take, I'll say up to 15 minutes depending on how many points there are to grease. So if you don't have to do that, that's great. I will specifically mention though that doesn't negate the requirement to inspect that your auto greasers are working, because they can plug up. And of course, grease is the lifeblood of these machines. If a critical wear component is not receiving grease, it will wear out quickly. Then that's downtime for the machine and the added expenses and employers are not going to be happy with that.

Holly Baril:

It's good you mentioned, that because I was going to ask you about pre-shift inspections. Why are those so critical? So number one, I'll remember that. And then what else is there about the pre-shift inspection that's critical? And then what do you think is the most commonly overlooked maintenance issues?

Ryan Smith:

Pre-shift inspection is not only required, but very important. Our machines in mining are subjected to some of the most harsh operating conditions, dust and grit and debris get into moving parts, which accelerates where they have extremely demanding workloads. We're pushing these machines, I'll say to the limits. We need them to work as fast, as quick as possible so that we can produce and sell and distribute our aggregates. So we need to make sure our equipment is functioning and in good condition before each use to prevent component failure, which introduces additional risk. I talked about some machines not being perhaps as tight as we want. They swing a little too far when we move the controls or there's slop in the connections. Well, again, that's going to come down to poor maintenance. If we aren't ensuring that those areas receive regular greasing, we solely just rely on the fact that the auto greaser should be working. We don't check it out for ourselves. Increases risk to everyone else around you as those machines start to wear out. And I mean overlooked maintenance issues. Of course, checking fluid levels is vitally important. Fluid levels need to be maintained at your manufacturer's recommendations. One tip here, checking machines for leaks, and this is pretty common. I'll say any operator who's been doing it more than a day probably understands this, but every morning when you show up to site, look underneath your machine, see if there's puddles or drips or something like that. And then that should give you an idea where that leak is coming from, what that fluid might be. Something most people don't think of, but is a quick, easy thing to do during your routine inspections, looking for leaks like that. Of course, mechanics will keep harping on grease points and double checking. And in my experience, not as many operators as perhaps should understand how to perform brake checks, for example, which is simple. And we all think, well, you just hit the brakes and it needs to stop. There's a little more to it. Regulation 854, of course, for mines and mining plants, requires that any vehicle be able to stop while loaded on any grade or ramp in the mine. So commonly what we're looking at here is you need to load your machine to its capacity and then stop on the steepest slope. It needs to hold that without any movement, without any play. Now I remember years back the ministry did a blitz on this, just on equipment inspection in general. And the number of operators, unfortunately, in my previous mines who didn't understand how to do that made the Ministry of Labour question whether or not we had competent operators, for example.

Holly Baril:

Does it say how often that that has to be done?

Ryan Smith:

That probably should be done at the start of every shift. You do your basic inspection and then as you start to operate...

Holly Baril:

Just stop.

Ryan Smith:

Load your bucket, load your vehicle, whatever it is, and ensure that it can hold that load on the steepest slopes, especially if you're going to be operating in that area. If you have no reason to access that area, well, then check the steepest slope that you will be operating on, but ideally the steepest slope in any mine because you never know what you might be asked to do later in the day.

Holly Baril:

Okay. How does preventative maintenance improve both safety and productivity? It's almost like preventative maintenance is... I know with the COR® audits when I'm helping companies, it's like preventative maintenance. I don't know why they struggle with that one so much, they really do. So how can this improve everything? Yeah,

Ryan Smith:

Of course it's a struggle to do preventative maintenance because perhaps in my opinion, it's not productive, so to speak. That's the way it'll be viewed. Of course, that's not the way it should be viewed. Doing regular preventative maintenance will reduce downtime, improve safety, improve the life of that machine, of course, in general. So it's tough to do, but I can also appreciate sometimes there's an upfront cost to preventative maintenance. Say you got some downtime maybe in the winter, whatever it is, and you're maintaining your crushing spread. Everything that you're going to have to do is going to be expensive. And of course, when you're spending money during downtime where you're not producing, it's hard to see the benefits. But of course, it's better than being shut down because you didn't do the maintenance during a productive season.

Holly Baril:

Yeah, to me that seems like that would make sense. It's busy, but my equipment doesn't work, so that's not good.

Ryan Smith:

Yeah, exactly.

Holly Baril:

If I was a new operator, what should I know before I start any machine?

Ryan Smith:

Great. Every operator, no matter how long you've been doing it, needs to review the manual for the machine they're operating. Now you might think a loader's a loader. How different can they be? They can be very different. They can have completely different systems, completely different expectations from the manufacturer. Different maintenance intervals, different inspection tips and tricks, and requirements. Now I know that that can be a little daunting as well. You look at the owner's manual and often they are quite thick. At least review inspection, maintenance, safety. Go to the table of contents, figure out where those pages are, review the basics. Yet again, maybe there's a slight lull between loading trucks or whatever your task is that day, maybe read a page or two. But even still, information from the owner's manuals in the mines you're operating in should be built into that standardized training, specialty module training in regulation 854.

Just because you've been trained in the surface mining specialty module for the machine you're operating doesn't mean we know the requirements and limitations of each machine of the same type. Whether that's an elevating work platform, they can reach different heights, they have different operating parameters, they have different wind speeds they can operate in. There's so many parameters. It's important to understand your manufacturer's expectations for operating that machine.

Holly Baril:

Yeah, and they're intimidating. Some of those machines are, whoa, large. I've been around them on sites. I'm always, you say, make eye contact. Oh, listen, the eye contact is made. This person knows that I'm coming there. I'm not interested in being part of their tires. So yeah, they're very intimidating. So definitely if I was an operator, I'd be very nervous first of all, but definitely never taking for granted that.

Ryan Smith:

It can be amazing how powerful these machines are, especially if you never operate one, you sit in one. These machines will move the world. And many of them, of course, depending on the size of the machine and other parameters, you get very little feedback. You move a joystick up or down and you're moving tens of tons of material and you barely feel it. It's amazing what they can do. It's scary if you don't know what you're doing.

Holly Baril:

So we talked a little bit about technology and cameras and autonomous and semi-autonomous equipment. But again, are you seeing that technology is becoming more common in the aggregate sector?

Ryan Smith:

Definitely becoming more common. A slower uptake yet again because of expense and just availability in general. Where it's implemented, we see reductions in incidents. Of course, the last thing I want to say is let's go fully autonomous mines, because then we're taking away jobs. They do exist, for the record, things like those fobs. So the machine beeps at you if you're too close to a fob, which will at least make you look down at your screen and see where that fob is. Depending on the size of your mine, fatigue indicators, facial recognition can be very beneficial. If you are driving for continuous periods of time down into a mine very deep, very large, wherever that might be, it doesn't hurt to get some feedback once in a while to ensure that everyone operating is fit for duty. And of course, checking out with your workers can help with that as well above and beyond technology, just making sure that everything's okay in general. But they're slowly becoming more common and they are reasonably effective at preventing incidents.

Holly Baril:

Okay. So how would you say that this data is helping improve equipment reliability, worker safety? Have you seen or do you know of any technology that hasn't lived up to its expectations?

Ryan Smith:

Sure. Now of course this'll be subjective in general. We do see of course huge improvements over years or decades to lubricants, to fuel economy within machines becoming very much more efficient. Power output, they're constantly becoming more powerful. There are systems that cause headaches as well. You talk to many operators and/or mechanics for that matter, and they'll have varying opinions on diesel exhaust particulate filters, regeneration processes with those filters. But of course we are learning continuously how harmful exposure to diesel exhaust can be. Now, of course, we got rid of high concentrations of sulfur in diesel because that was causing all kinds of issues in workers, but still harmful, still toxic, especially with prolonged exposures to higher concentrations, which is why underground mining has to limit the amount of diesel exhaust emissions. Some of them are switching to electric vehicles for that reason.

But in general, we see improvements in the training and education. In my opinion, workers are coming to the workplace better educated, better capable of recognizing hazards, better understanding of their rights and responsibilities, which I think is all great. Better communication, discussions around mental health, and workplace cultures, which ties directly to equipment operator ability expectations in that regard.

Holly Baril:

So what hasn't lived up to its expectations, do you think?

Ryan Smith:

Well, so largely I'll say most people are going to complain about the diesel particulate filters, especially if the machine doesn't have a chance to enter regen or operating in particularly harsh environments. There have been situations where those machines just completely become inoperable for extended periods of time because now it's just shut down the power altogether and it is solely operating in regen mode, which you're basically just burning fuel idle on the machine, except it's extremely high idle to try

to burn off the particulate buildup in that filter. And then of course those filters will need to be served and replaced. So now it's just additional maintenance. It's not that there's no reason for those filters. We're reducing worker exposures, but poses its own challenge.

Holly Baril:

Right. Okay. Yeah, I guess like you said, an operator will know if that's something they don't like. Like you said, if that's a common mistake or a mistake complaint, then that technology. But again, we know what the hazards are for occupational illnesses. So what do you think is the biggest safety challenge facing the aggregates sector today?

Ryan Smith:

Excellent question. I mean, it's difficult to pick one safety issue. Of course, the leading cause of mining-related death is exposures in general to different substances, whether that's silica, diesel exhaust we know is causing illnesses. Trying to reduce worker exposures to these substances subjected to regulation 490/09 on designated substances. Which means employers have to regularly test for the potential of worker exposure to designated substances like silica and build a control program if the test concludes that workers are or could be overexposed in certain parameters. These control programs should also include, we'll say, worst case scenarios. You ran out of water on your sump because we're going through a drought. Well, if you're going to continue to operate, you need to know what worker exposure is with no water suppressing dust, either that or not operate. And of course that's not an option for many operators.

So we need to plan for things like that. Leading cause of critical injuries has been identified to be slips, trips, and falls, largely attributed to poor housekeeping, water, and ice hazards, uneven surfaces, and inadequate PPE. Now, of course, for more information on any of these topics, I'd encourage people to check out IHSA's root-cause analysis on slip, trips, and falls and our podcast on slips, trips, and falls in mining as well. We also have a number of silica resources, including our silica control tool, which has been adapted for use not only in Ontario, but in surface mining. So there's now a version of it to be used in surface mining. In Ontario specifically, it's our legislation. We're looking at compliance in our province. So very handy tool. For the moment, it's free. Check it out.

Holly Baril:

Well, maybe we can add these to the podcast links.

Ryan Smith:

You got it. Yeah.

Holly Baril:

Then my next question is probably in all industries or sectors, but how do companies address labour shortages without compromising safety to the workers or?

Ryan Smith:

Yeah, I agree. This is a challenge in all sectors. Of course, mining is not immune to labour shortages as well. I'd say it's important for mine operators to have a good orientation program. Of course, *Surface Miner Common Core* is mandatory entry-level training. In surface mining, for example, we can always go above and beyond the minimum expectations. Often those programs are quite basic. It doesn't hurt to expand. And really part of the expectation of those programs is for mine operators to address their specific mines, their specific operating conditions and hazards, not just generic information for example. Beyond that, of course, training on the specialty modules. Ideally, yet again, part of the expectation here is you're not training workers generically in, here's an excavator, we'll get you certified on mini X. Meanwhile, you're operating much bigger machines in the mine. They should be trained on and educated on the equipment that is actually being used in the mine as well as, as I noted, the manufacturer's expectations on operation, maintenance, inspection, stuff like that.

Site-specific training in general is essential to ensuring each worker has the knowledge to recognize hazards and implement effective controls. Open lines of communication of course are also important to ensure each worker feels comfortable bringing concerns to their supervisor or employer.

Holly Baril:

Yeah. Workers, if they feel safe at work or comfortable bringing up concerns, they tend not to leave, which helps our labour shortages in the aggregate sector, in every sector really.

Ryan Smith:

Absolutely.

Holly Baril:

When they're trained properly, they have the right PPE, they have the confidence to perform the task safely. They have the confidence in their supervisors to protect their health and safety. Yeah, people tend to stick around.

Ryan Smith:

You got it. Yeah. And I like to say we're almost always better off building a better worker from one we have than losing them and having to replace them. Opening up lines of communication, having a strong functioning internal responsibility system is vital to a good workforce in any operation, of course, including surface mining.

Holly Baril:

Well, and we see that. We deal with a lot of companies throughout the province and we see which ones have a strong IRS and which ones don't, which ones' cultures are good and which ones aren't and training. So, we do see that and those are the companies that maybe aren't suffering so much from labour shortages because people are sticking around, right?

Ryan Smith:

I agree with that. Yeah.

Holly Baril:

So, if you could leave every operator, supervisor, plant manager in the aggregate industry with one piece of advice about working safely around heavy equipment, what would it be?

Ryan Smith:

One thing I say regularly, I suppose, not to pass a hazard without doing something about it. If you see a hazard and you can fix it, then do something about it. If you can't, report it up the chain of command. This is especially important with equipment operators, because you often see parts of the mine that other people don't. Your supervisor may not have seen that the far corner of your mine operation experienced a washout or something of that nature. When you see those things, you might think, "Oh, well, it's the back of the mine. No one else is back here." They might. You never know what someone might be asked to do through the course of the day. So if you can address it, do something about it. If you can't, bring it up the chain of command so that at least people are aware of it and the hazard can be addressed.

Supervisors know how to better instruct workers around those hazards. In reality, even seemingly small hazards, huge consequences if someone wasn't able to recognize the hazard like you were, do everything you can to address those hazards, protect yourselves, protect your peers, protect anyone who might enter that mine, including often we'll say clients are less capable of identifying hazards in your operations because they're less familiar with your work.

Holly Baril:

Okay, perfect. Well, thank you very much, Ryan, for doing this podcast with me. Hopefully we've left our listeners with some new information. I certainly know I've picked up a few things and I've spent time around heavy equipment so this is good. Thank you very much.

Ryan Smith:

Perfect. Thank you for having me.

Holly Baril:

Thank you for listening to our podcast. I'm your host, Holly Baril, and be sure to subscribe and like us on your favorite podcast channel and visit us at ihsa.ca for a wealth of health and safety resources and information. And remember, your health, your safety, your future. Protect all three.

Announcer:

The *IHSA Safety Podcast*. For more episodes, tips, and all things safety, go to ihsasafetypodcast.ca. Thanks for listening.