



Ken Rayner:

Every day, thousands of commercial vehicles travel Ontario's roads, delivering products, serving customers, and keeping our economy moving. Most of us only see the driver behind the wheel. What we don't see are the systems, policies, decisions, and people working behind the scenes to ensure those drivers return home safely at the end of the day. Safely managing a fleet requires much more than maintaining vehicles and meeting delivery schedules. And today, we're going behind the scenes with someone whose job is to put that commitment into practice.

Announcer:

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

Ken Rayner:

Welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. I'm your host, Ken Rayner. Joining me on today's episode is Courtney Foster, Logistics Supervisor with Salit Steel. And while commercial drivers spend their days on Ontario roads, creating a safe fleet begins long before a vehicle leaves the yard. In today's conversation, we'll explore the role of fleet safety management, discuss the most significant risks facing transportation companies, examine how technology is reshaping fleet safety, and identify practical steps employers can take to better protect both their drivers and the motoring public. Courtney, welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Courtney Foster:

Thank you, Ken, and I appreciate the extremely kind introduction.

Ken Rayner:

I'm excited to get into this because I can say I've never, although seen and been a part of lots of transportation activities, seen them on the road and the likes, never really had a behind the scenes look at what goes on in logistically managing a fleet. And I think that's the same with most people, Courtney. When most people think about transportation, particularly health and safety, they're picturing the driver behind the wheel of a truck, but they're rarely thinking about the people working behind the scenes to ensure that every trip begins and ends safely. So to start us off, how about you share with us what a typical day looks like for a logistics supervisor such as yourself?

Courtney Foster:

Typically, a day involves for me a balance of proactively monitoring things, as long as driver support. My morning kind of starts with pre-trip logs, monitoring daily telematics, touching base with my dispatch team, and understanding the start of the day and what they've been going through from the early morning start, and then moving on towards one-on-one coaching opportunities that maybe happen throughout the night or early in the morning, ensuring all of our loads have gone out during the day, we're going to be on

time, and supporting the team wherever they need support based off of our daily needs.

Ken Rayner:

So you just mentioned a whole host of things, but what role specifically does a logistics supervisor play in really shaping and sustaining a company's health and safety culture? And as I'm asking you that question, I want to ask you another one. So maybe we can do the two because talking about maybe what Salit Steel's fleet looks like in its entirety might help as well as you're answering the question about maybe what Salit Steel's fleet looks like in its entirety might help as well as you're answering the question about a health and safety culture. So let's start first maybe with what Salit Steel's fleet looks like. Give us just an overview on that and then maybe we can get into what role your job as logistics supervisor plays in shaping and sustaining that health and safety culture.

Courtney Foster:

Our fleet, I like to say—because a lot of the times when I'm part of the Fleet Safety Council or PMTC and the IHSA—we are a unique fleet because we are an in-house fleet. We're not a trucking company, so we're kind of unique in what we do. We have a fleet of about 35 trucks. We have a fleet of about 200 trailers of our own, a mix of 40-footers, 48-footers and 53-footers, and around 40 drivers. So on a day-to-day basis, we're managing all of those. And those are across Ontario, down from all the way to Chatham up to Bowmanville and everything kind of in between, which takes a lot. But in saying that, I believe when it comes to that fleet, my main job as the logistics supervisor is to really bridge the gap between company policy, dispatch, and the drivers on the road and how I can blend those all together.

I don't believe in policing the situation. I would much rather come at it from a supportive role, ensuring enforcement of our safety standards that we have. Compliance, MTO standards, and just making sure that everybody is supported and able to do their jobs as safely and as efficiently as possible.

Ken Rayner:

And just going back to something you mentioned at the beginning of your response, Salit Steel is only transporting its own product, right? That's what you were mentioning before is that the difference is you're not transporting other companies' cargo, doing it for someone else. You are only transporting your cargo from point A to point B. Gotcha. Now, so we just talked about the term safety culture or health and safety culture. It's a term that seems to be widely used these days. In practical terms though, what would you say a strong health and safety culture looks like within a transportation company in Ontario?

Courtney Foster:

That's a great question, Ken, because you hear these trigger words all of the time. What does health and safety culture look like? And everybody can tell you, but from my learning experience, and I've been at Salit almost 10 years now and they've done a really good job of creating that culture, but how that culture looks is open two-way communication where drivers feel comfortable reporting near-misses to upper management or to supervisors. Where drivers feel comfortable saying, "You know what boss? I'm probably more fatigued today than I should be. Is there anything we can do? What can we do about

this?" And being supportive and having that open two-way communication really supports that culture that we like to have at Salit, which is safety is always first.

Ken Rayner:

I agree with you 100 per cent. I think it's because even if an organization has open communication channels but is not taking action on what's being asked, the communication's going to dry up. So you really have to have a health and safety culture that you just described, not only do you have to have curiosity from upper management to really delve into the issues with a desire to address them, you've got to have that atmosphere where workers are going to feel extremely comfortable bringing issues to management's attention. So it has to work both ways.

Courtney Foster:

Yeah. Salit is a family-owned business and has been since its inception, and I feel like they've done a great job working that into the culture as well. So everybody feels as though you're part of the Salit family and there's open communications. It's never going to fall on deaf ears. And to your point, Ken, if that doesn't happen, the communication breaks down. So, continuing that is very important.

Ken Rayner:

Good. I'm glad. I'm glad to hear that that's the health and safety culture at your organization. Let's talk about maybe a little bit about managing risk. So when you go about assessing risk across an entire fleet, I think you said about 35 trucks and you've got over a hundred trailers of different sizes.

Courtney Foster:

Two hundred, yeah.

Ken Rayner:

Two hundred. Okay. What are the most significant health and safety challenges facing Ontario transportation companies today, especially of someone that has got a fleet about that size?

Courtney Foster:

For us, doing what we do and delivering where we deliver, most of our rebar is in downtown Toronto. Our service centre business is kind of everywhere, to be honest. But when you talk about the rebar side, the biggest risk honestly comes down to severe congestion in southern Ontario. We've all driven on the 401, we've all driven on the QEW. When you're in a tractor trailer and you're hauling 88,000 pounds of steel on top of it, they don't work like cars do. And I think sometimes civilians around don't quite grasp the scenario. And I think that that congestion can really lead to an unsafe environment for everybody around if we're not treating trucks with the respect that we should treat with them on the road. Very

Ken Rayner:

Fair. Very fair.

Courtney Foster:

There's other things. There's the weather in southern Ontario. It could be sunny one minute and then disastrous snow the next in the winter. Something we all deal with, whether it's car, truck, tractor trailer, distracted driving. And I always fall on that hill. Distracted driving is one of the biggest things. And my drivers come to me a lot because they're so up high, they can see a lot of the times when they're doing their scans and stuff like that and they come to me, you would not believe how many people are distracted driving out there. And with that many people on the road, it becomes an issue.

Ken Rayner:

And you were very kind when you were talking about our highways, the QEW and the 401 and the 400, because what I was expecting you to say is we've all been sitting on the QEW and the 401 as opposed to driving on it.

Courtney Foster:

Yeah, that's very true.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, very kind of you. So, I think it's fair to say, Courtney, that every transportation company wants to move products efficiently and meet customer expectations, but how do you ensure driver health and safety remains a priority when there are these operational pressures and deadlines, and the deadlines increase due to the things that you just talked about, whether it becomes inclement weather or the congestion around the Greater Toronto Area? How do you balance those?

Courtney Foster:

I think it goes back to the questions that we previously talked about, Ken, and having that open two-way communication. I would never expect my drivers to put themselves or anybody in a situation that they're uncomfortable with. Having non-negotiable safety baselines as a company I think is what really establishes that right from the training period that you're in and our driver trainers establishing that in our new hires and it trickling upwards and downwards. We have a really good training period and we try to instill that from a very, very early stage of our drivers. We're strict on our hours of service, we're strict on our ELDs, adherence to speed limits. Everything that you can imagine from top to bottom is our utmost importance. Nothing is the least important when it comes to safety.

Ken Rayner:

And the abbreviation for those that aren't in the transportation industry for ELDs?

Courtney Foster:

Electronic log devices, sorry.

Ken Rayner:

That's okay. Just want to make sure everybody knows what you're speaking about. Okay. So, Courtney, you've already mentioned distracted driving as one, more so I think from a driver who is part of the general public as opposed to a commercial driver. What sort of driver behaviours, meaning commercial driver behaviours, concern you the most from a safety perspective? And how do you coach your drivers to manage those risks?

Courtney Foster:

Yeah. Again, talking about the highways and stuff like that, I think hazard recognition is a big one that we like to instill in our drivers. Just always scanning, always keeping your eyes on the road. Defensive driving techniques, it's one of the things that we teach in the first two weeks that you're with us and the first two weeks that you're training with us. Again, yes, distracted driving predominantly for the civilian cars around, but also for my own drivers. I know they have phone calls coming in or text messages during the day from family and this and that. So we're quite strict about that as well. And I will say my drivers are very, very good, but it's always a concern. Technology is just a concern no matter how you slice it. But I think those are kind of the main aspects.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. So let me throw another one out there that I've heard about, which is driver fatigue, which seems to be talked about as a significant risk in the transportation sector. So how about fatigue when it comes to driver behaviors? And then how do you recognize and monitor and help manage driver fatigue within a fleet operation?

Courtney Foster:

Yeah, that's a great point. So our monitoring system that we use, which is Samsara®, we have inward-facing cameras, and it actually has fatigue recognition. So if that two-way communication that we talked about previously didn't work for some reason, the driver didn't feel comfortable, or maybe he just didn't even recognize that he was tired. He got in a truck, then he started driving on the 401 and he's not driving anymore, he's sitting, then the fatigue starts sitting in. So we rely on our electronics now to recognize that that driver is fatigued. So we will contact them, my compliance coordinator will contact them. But previous to that, we're again, very strict on our hours in between shifts and how many hours they work on shift and just being proactive about their fatigue or that thereof.

Also, my company, so in the logging system, a lot of companies will run 70 hours as their cycle in the week. Our company policy is actually that our drivers only work 60 hours. So they do not work more than 60 hours. We don't follow the cycle-70, we cut it off by 10. And that's because we believe what these drivers do day in and day out is stressful enough without working that many hours as well. Especially towards the end of the week, people want to start getting into the weekend, maybe you check out a little bit. We just think it's best that 60 hours is our math.

Ken Rayner:

And Courtney, I mean for some people listening, I'm sure that may be a shock because in many workplaces it's 45 hours, it's 40 hours and someone's going, "Oh my God, you're limiting it to 60? Wow,

that's a long time." So I can appreciate that fatigue is real important. So if I was coming in near the end of my week and maybe I've already put in 50 hours, I didn't have a really good sleep last night, maybe I didn't make some good choices when I was eating either last night for dinner or this morning, maybe I ate some food that was low in nutrition value, and I don't have a lot of energy today, I don't come in necessarily and proactively tell you because maybe I felt okay when I started my shift, but what is the device in the truck going to start picking up from me as signs that I'm fatigued as I go through my day?

Courtney Foster:

Absolutely. So it tracks eye movement and head movement predominantly. So the nods where maybe you're not up at a 90 degree angle and you're scanning and looking, but you're a little bit down or it tracks the eyes where maybe your eyes start to close a little bit more and it's not just blinks anymore, it's slower blinks and it actually times it for us.

Ken Rayner:

Wow. And if that's the case and you notice, "Hey, you know what? Ken looks like he's really fatigued, the metrics are showing that there's some issues with his head nodding and his eyes closing and the likes," what do you do then? What would you say to me if you contacted me?

Courtney Foster:

Yeah, so I would just say, "Hey Ken, we've noticed on the Samsara® cameras that we're picking up a little bit of fatigue. How are you feeling?" So we'll give the driver the first opportunity to talk about it. If you said, "You know what? I'm actually getting a little bit more tired than I thought." I said, "Understandable." And we would just simply have them pull off at the next safest exit on route or wherever the next safest place that you can park a truck and trailer may be. And we would have a driver come and meet them and we would have that driver bring them home or we can Uber them home and send out another driver to go and pick up the truck and the trailer.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent. Okay, great. So I mean, I know for me, if I'm doing a very long drive, if I can pull off into a rest area, put the seat back, have a 15-minute nap, I certainly feel a lot better. If I can get out and get some air, walk around, take a break. But I guess at the end of the day, if I'm that fatigued, then bringing somebody else in to sort of pitch-hit for me per se, use a baseball term to take me out of the game and get somebody else in that's more ready to go is I take it the best for everybody.

Courtney Foster:

Yeah, I'm kind of gauging worst case scenario in here. Worst case scenario. There's tricks that a lot of our drivers will use, the windows and this and that, but I'm kind of just going to the end of the spectrum here.

Ken Rayner:

Yep. Yep. I appreciate that. And I'm glad to know that that's an option when you get to that point and your company's able to determine that fatigue is set into the point where it's going to be dangerous for the driver and potentially others in the general public, and there's an opportunity to do something about that, even though you can't be with them in person, you've got technology to be able to assess them in their fit-for-duty and ability to operate the vehicle. So that's good news.

Courtney Foster:

So, on top of having a safe fleet and delivering to our customers on time and to their satisfaction, my job also includes getting everybody home safe and sound to their families. That includes my drivers and the drivers on the road. So whatever does that, all three of those things at the end of the day is what we're going to do.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent. Okay. And so when you're hiring these drivers, what qualities or behaviours are you looking for beyond simply holding the appropriate license, which I take it for your fleet is an AZ, is it? Or do you even have... Everybody that's driving for you has an AZ license? Great.

Courtney Foster:

So yeah, we only hire AZ drivers. So kind of beyond the appropriate license, like you said, the first step is we look at the abstract and your CVOR, which is your commercial vehicle record. So we look at your personal and your commercial, and we make sure that you have a clean record for both of them. That's the first initial check right off the hot. Beyond that, we really look at trainability, attention to detail, good communication skills, and we also do a pre-hire road test. So your license looks good. We do the interview. We think you're going to be a good fit at Salit. We do the pre-hire road test before we hire you, obviously. If you pass the pre-hire road test, then all of those skills kind of fall into place, hopefully, and then you become a driver at Salit Steel. Once we've decided that you've passed the license, you've passed the pre-hire road test, and we think that you're going to be a good fit, we actually have a two-week training period at Salit.

So the first day, you're going to sit in the passenger seat, you're not even going to drive. You're just going to watch what our driver trainers do, the load securement. A lot of the sites are really tight, so we just let you watch for the first day, get your feet wet. And then after that, as long as you have more than two years' experience, you can drive the next day. And in those first two weeks, you'll also do defensive driver training, pre-trip training, and load securement training with ex-MTO officers that we work really closely with. And then we'll do a final road test with our lead driver trainer. And as long as all of those two weeks go fantastically, then you go on the road by yourself.

Ken Rayner:

And Courtney, just going back to the pre-hire drive test, are they taking a truck out on its own? Are they taking it out with a trailer? Are they taking it out with a trailer and a load? What does that look like?

Courtney Foster:

So, usually we send them out with a truck trailer and a singular piece of steel. We can't really give up an 88,000 pound load of steel. God forbid something happens and you don't have the experience that you said you did, that wouldn't be great. So we usually send a couple pieces of steel. It's an outside company that does it for us, and then we get the results back from that as well.

Ken Rayner:

So you get to that point after going through all the checks in the interview phase with the drive test and then going through that two weeks, the two week, I guess, initiation, you feel comfortable then after that period you've got a driver that can adhere to all of your fleet safety rules and regulations?

Courtney Foster:

Absolutely. And for some reason, if they don't and we feel that they have that trainability, attention to detail and all the skills that we're looking for, we will train them longer. It's just a point of finding the right candidates and doing what's best for them and the company. If you're a trainable driver and a good attitude, why would we cut it off after the two weeks? Is that kind of how we look at it, right? So let's get you trained up. Let's do what we do because again, we have very unique loads in the sense of it never looks the same. It's like a snowflake, I like to say. So you can order the same steel today tomorrow. It doesn't mean it's going to be loaded the exact same on the truck and the trailer.

Ken Rayner:

Does that feel different to a driver in terms of how they're pulling the trailer? Does it feel different if the load is done in a completely different way?

Courtney Foster:

So, yes and no. So because they have the parameters of weight that you can have on your axles and your drives and your steers, it generally feels the same because you're not overloading one more than the other too much. But when it comes to load securement, the way that you're going to secure that load is going to be completely different.

Ken Rayner:

Courtney, let's get into technology. You touched on it a little bit in regards to the technology you're using to ensure that your drivers aren't fatigued and they're awake and alert while they're driving. Technology is, I would take it, as years go on, is going to play an even more important role in fleet safety. What are some other aspects of technology that really has changed your job over the past few years?

Courtney Foster:

Yeah. If I think about it, what it's done for me over the last little while, especially in my role as a supervisor, was it's really broadened how we use technology from reactive to proactive. When we talk about the fatigue and stuff like that, I'm not doing a form on the technology after we've had an incident. We're recognizing the fatigue pre-incident and we're interjecting and we're stopping the behavior. We

were early into ELDs, electronic logs like we talked about. We have cloud-based cameras. We've tried to get ahead of everything as the technologies come out, but the biggest difference I would say is really taking us from reactive to proactive.

Ken Rayner:

And has there been one safety innovation that's taken you from reactive to proactive that's had the biggest impact?

Courtney Foster:

I would say just in my opinion, it would be our dash cams for sure. I mean, just like I said, with the technology that we have for fatigue awareness, lane departure, following distances, we're able to recognize behavior and address it and retrain before it becomes an issue.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. So you've got a camera on the driver helping with fatigue. You've got a camera looking ahead to, again, things, what's going on in front. And is there a camera in the back as well in terms of what's going on behind the vehicle?

Courtney Foster:

There's a camera facing backwards and then there's two on either side: driver and passenger. So we kind of have a 360 view of everything, which is great. And it helps our drivers too. There was a little bit of an uproar at first. Drivers were not initially too happy about the implementation of dash cams, but as we've gone through the program and we've dealt with it in a very mature way, I would say, having open conversations and explaining to the drivers why it would benefit them, how it would benefit them, they've really come around to having them and understanding when they will be used, when they won't be used, what we're looking for, what we're not looking for, and that we're not just sitting there watching them. That's not what it's about. It's a tool to be used when needed.

Ken Rayner:

And interestingly enough, we just did a podcast with Max Worth of Abrams Towing and he talked about, Courtney, something very similar in that a big safety innovation that he mentioned was them, again, and implementing the cameras into the dash, I guess dash-cam cameras, but not only that look out, but also look in and said the same thing. It took a little while, but now I think the tow truck operators really appreciate it, especially when they have somebody in their vehicle that they're maybe taking somewhere when they're pulling their car that they've never met before.

Courtney Foster:

Absolutely.

Ken Rayner:

And God forbid that person could have a medical emergency while they're driving and that driver's not all by themselves. They've got other people that can help as well. So I appreciate that that's a health and safety innovation that maybe wasn't looked upon by the drivers, those that it's intended to benefit right away, but a lot of them have come around to appreciate it now. And it sounds like it's similar within your fleet as it was within Abrams Towing. So interesting. You had talked about being proactive. What are those indicators that you monitor to identify potential safety concerns before an incident happens? Do you have anything like that, Courtney, at all?

Courtney Foster:

Yeah, absolutely. So we touched on a couple of the points earlier just with following too closely, fatigue, but then there's also other features where harsh braking, sharp cornering, speed conditions, lane departure. There's a multitude of factors that we look at and something that kind of rounds it all out that we utilize as well is a driver scorecard. So it kind of takes a synopsis out of all of those aspects and just tells us how our drivers are doing day-in and day-out and what we can help them work on. So I think taking all of those together, looking at them is really helpful and continues to allow us to be proactive in our training.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent. All right, let's get into maybe the concepts of building safer fleets. I'm going to just go back on some of the things you've mentioned. Obviously long hours, we've talked about transportation industry sometimes working more than 60 hours, 70 hours, traffic congestion, particularly when you're driving in southern Ontario, customer expectations when the traffic congestion plays a part on the delivery times, inclement weather, which we all deal with in Ontario and Canada, and time pressures, that can all take a toll on drivers. So how do transportation companies like Salit Steel better support driver mental health and overall well-being? Because I find in transportation, mental health has been a real point of focus over the last five to 10 years.

Courtney Foster:

Oh, absolutely. And I feel like a broken record sometimes when I talk about it, but I feel like fostering that open communication, a supportive culture. And reliable dispatch. I can't say it enough that having reliable dispatch day in and day out and knowing—our start times vary a lot of the time, so our dispatchers always make sure it's in an hour of within your start time from the day period, you're not going to be 7 a.m. one day and then 2 a.m. the next. Reliable dispatch leans into that a lot. And just making sure that management is not, I'm trying to think of the best way to say this, not uncontactable, but management is always reachable. You want to always make everybody understand or feel as though they can contact you with whatever worries they may have, whether it be familial issues, whether it be something even outside of work.

If they need time off or if they need some sort of support that the company can offer, we're always there. We have an open-door policy. Please come to us. We'd like to always work with our drivers, with our internal staff. It's very much a team environment, and I think that's important. And I think that will always continue to harbour the well-being of everybody. And I also think it'll continue to drive that

mental health talk because we have a annual driver's meeting where we bring all of our drivers together from every location that we have across Ontario. And it's always one of our talking points, is mental health, is fatigue, is sleep. We always like to make sure that everybody has the resources that they need to take care of whatever that may be.

Ken Rayner:

Courtney, let's change gears for a sec. Ooh, pardon the pun, changing gears. Okay. Okay. So let's come up with a bit of a hypothetical. So I've just won the lottery and it's been my lifelong dream to start my own transportation business. So I've purchased a couple of trucks. I've got 10 different trailers of different sizes and configurations, and I've just joined the Fleet Safety Council and gone to my first meeting in the Niagara Region. And you and I have just met up. And so I wanted to pick your brain. What practical steps would you recommend that I take first as a new transportation business looking, one, I want to be successful, but I also really care about keeping my drivers safe and keeping the general public safe when our drivers are on the road. So what would be those first practical steps you'd recommend for me to take?

Courtney Foster:

So this is very much an opinion-based question, and I think that...

Ken Rayner:

Well, keeping in mind, I haven't won the lottery yet, Courtney.

Courtney Foster:

Some people may agree, some people may disagree, but one of my most utilized tools in my job is our driver handbook. And having a very detailed, clear operating policy laid out into a driver handbook has come to save everybody's butt more than once. This is the standard procedure. All of our drivers have a copy of it in their binders in their trucks every single day so that they understand expectations both by the company and the MTO and the HTA. Having that laid out for everybody is very, very important in my opinion. Secondary would kind of lean towards now you need drivers. So you have your trucks, you have your policies. Having a strong onboarding program and training program once you have those drivers, I can't speak highly or more highly about the importance of that. Our HR department does a great job of it. Our compliance coordinator does a great job of it, myself and my manager.

Our onboarding program is great. And I think that that takes away a lot of worry, because you've now found the drivers that you want, you've trained them to the point that you're comfortable with them going on the road, and they're as safe as can be. That's kind of your secondary point. And then the third part, which was another big part that we talked about is your telematics. You have your telematics because now you can be proactive rather than reactive. So set your policies, find your people and then maintain those people would be my three points going forward.

Ken Rayner:

I think those are fantastic tips and they seem very practical to me.

Courtney Foster:

I'd like to think so.

Ken Rayner:

So. Say what you do, do what you say. Make sure it's consistent across all aspects of your business. And really the best way to do that is providing everybody the same documentation, make sure it's up to date, make sure it's timely, make sure it includes all the information that's required, make sure that it's in a medium that people will be able to digest and understand. And then be very mindful as you go through that process of recruitment. Really make sure that every step of the way that those potential drivers or your future employees are evaluated to make sure that they're going to be able to do the job and they're going to feel fulfilled, you're going to feel fulfilled. It's a win-win type scenario. And then making sure that you've got all the technology proactively to manage that driver safety and that load safety. Those sound like really good practical tips to me.

So I appreciate that, Courtney, because if the numbers come up tonight for the lottery, I'm ready to go. I've already got my first practical steps on what I need to do build my fleet.

Courtney Foster:

You just need a name.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah, I just need a name. Okay. So we'll go from there. And Salit Steel's, so it won't be that.

Courtney Foster:

Yeah.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. All right. Well, since you gave me the idea, I might have to go with Courtney's Fleet. We'll have to see. It'll be a contender for the name, let's just say.

Okay. So how about two more questions, Courtney? One, when you look at, and I appreciate you being a part of the Fleet Safety Council, which if our listeners out there aren't familiar with it, please look it up online. Type in Fleet Safety Council, go to the website, take a look what's being offered in your area. We have chapters all across Ontario that really provide a lot of education and insight and networking in terms of being able to interact with other types of companies that either a) have large fleets or are in the transportation business. So when you look at the healthiest and the safest companies, transportation companies, Courtney, that you've either worked with, excuse me, you've either worked with, that you've been associated with, that you've worked for, what would you say that all of them have in common?

Courtney Foster:

We did a seminar on this recently, a Fleet Safety Council seminar, and it was about safety culture. And what I'll say, Ken, is when I look at these companies, they share complete executive buy-in for safety across the board. And I can't speak to it enough that that is so important because it just trickles down. Everybody feels it. When you have complete buy-in on safety, consistency, and policy enforcement across all levels, everybody understands the objective and that safety and all of those companies have it.

Ken Rayner:

I agree with you 100 per cent, and I think that's transferable to every single industry. I really feel for anybody that is in occupational health and safety that does not have the full executive support and full managerial support that is required to be able to carry out what they need to do to send everybody home safe. Absolutely. That's a really tough position to be in. But if you're working in occupational safety, health and safety, and you have a phenomenally supportive and understanding and compassionate executive team and senior leadership team, boy, that makes your job so much more enjoyable, doesn't

Courtney Foster:

It does.

Ken Rayner:

Okay, Courtney, one more question. And since I'm winning the lottery here, sometimes on the *IHSA Safety Podcast*, we have this magic wand that we use. So, I'm going to give you the magic wand and I'm going to give you a wish and see what you would say. So, I'm granting you this wish, the powers vested in me and from the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. Courtney, if every transportation employer made just one change tomorrow that would have the biggest positive impact on driver health and safety, what would you wish for to make it... And it comes true by the way, just making sure this is clear. So be careful with what you wish for because it will come true as part of being on the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. So, what would that wish look like?

Courtney Foster:

I'm actually going to throw a curve ball here and it's not something that we've talked about yet on this podcast. It's equipment maintenance. When we look at the blitzes and we look at the MTO statistics, I wish that every company would take a long, hard look at their equipment maintenance and make sure that they're setting all of their drivers up for success when they go on the road every single day. I can't stress enough how important that equipment is both to the drivers that they have and the drivers on the road.

Ken Rayner:

And Courtney, if I'm not mistaken, you're speaking about when the MTO has an enforcement initiative and they're proactively pulling over fleets or commercial vehicles and then they're posting the findings in terms of, or the enforcement penalties per se, typically they're finding many things when they're pulling somebody over. It's not just a case of, "Well, I went over everything and I just found one small problem." There are a lot of things that are found, right?

Courtney Foster:

Correct.

Ken Rayner:

So is that what you're really speaking about is, it's happening, we know what's happening, we know when these vehicles are being pulled over, they're finding maintenance issues that should have been addressed before that truck even was allowed to go on the road. That's what you're speaking about, is it?

Courtney Foster:

Absolutely. Yeah. And I mean drivers are accountable as well. I mean, pre-trip and post-trip inspections are a huge part of what they do, but the company is not willing to fix the issues become the issue as well. When we look at a lot of these statistics, brakes, brakes come up all the time. Well, that's one of your most important mechanical features we need to be able to stop. So I mean the statistics are out there, the information is out there. So that would be my biggest change.

Ken Rayner:

I appreciate that. And you talked about when you were describing your perfect scenario for a health and safety culture, you talked about that leadership commitment, the communication. Well, if somebody is continually doing a vehicle check every time, pre-trip inspection, and they're noting issues that are wrong, that they've got, "Hey, this is a default. There's something wrong with this particular part," and they're running it up the food chain, and nothing's being done, why would that person continue to do that? It just seems like a waste of time. It's kind of the same with workplace inspections. If workplace inspections get done and just could be put into a file folder and they're never ever looked at by management, well, really what's the point of doing it? Why are we carrying out that act when it's just a check in the box, nothing's being done? And so I can appreciate that having an impact.

So, the two have to work together. And there's no way I believe in any way that a driver is willing to go out knowing they have a lot of deficiencies with a vehicle. I can't imagine anybody in their right mind would want to do that. So yeah, great one. That was really good. You did throw a curve ball at the end. I liked it.

Courtney Foster:

And like you said, it comes back to that executive buy-in because they are costly machines and they are costly fixes. Tires are not cheap, but that's what's running on the road. And we as the upper management and as the executives really need to provide our drivers with the safest equipment possible.

Ken Rayner:

And Courtney Foster from Salit Steel, our logistics supervisor, thank you so much for sharing with us a day in the life of what you do. I found it very interesting and I'm sure our listeners will too as well. So thank you so much for being part of the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

Courtney Foster:

Well, thanks for having me, Ken. I appreciate it.

Ken Rayner:

And thanks to everybody for listening to our episode on A Day in the Life of a Logistics Supervisor. Be sure to subscribe and like us on your podcast channel and visit us at ihsa.ca for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

Announcer:

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