

Frequently asked health and safety questions

IHSA's new video series shares expert advice for new construction small business owners.



When you're starting up a small business in the construction industry, health and safety might feel like just one of many tasks on your to-do list. But it's important for you to prioritize it from day one.

IHSA's experts are full of useful advice and resource recommendations that can make your health and safety journey easier. Our new video series, *Ask a Construction Health and Safety Expert with Deb and Dave*, teaches small business owners what you need to know about health and safety.

Workplace health and safety basics

Deb Moskal, IHSA's Manager of Regional Operations, North and East, and Dave Dametto, IHSA's Manager of Regional Operations, Central, have more than 50 years of combined experience in construction safety. Ken Rayner, IHSA's Vice President of Market Development and Communications, hosts the series by asking Moskal and Dametto common questions about health and safety.

Over the course of five episodes, they discuss these topics:

- 1. Mandatory training:** Find out what training is required and why it's significant to workplace health and safety.
- 2. Hazard assessment:** Learn why identifying risks and implementing controls through a hazard assessment is fundamental to any safety program.
- 3. Policy and program creation:** Learn why developing clear policies and programs will help you set expectations, establish roles and responsibilities, and formalize processes for inspections, audits, and corrective action.
- 4. Competent supervision:** Understand the knowledge, training, and experience requirements that make someone a "competent person" according to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and why supervisors are critical to keeping the crew safe.
- 5. Incident response planning:** Know what to do if an incident happens at work—before someone's life depends on it.

"These five topics represent critical pillars of workplace health and safety," Moskal says. "The episodes are essential viewing for any firm working toward a safe and successful future in the construction industry."

The information is especially helpful for new small business owners who may be learning about the health and safety responsibilities of this role for the first time. It gives you guidance on how to fulfill legal obligations, show due diligence, and protect workers.

"We cover a lot, but it's all stuff that new construction businesses run into pretty quickly," Dametto says. "We touch on health and safety legislation, but don't just quote laws. Instead, we explain what it really looks like from day to day when you're trying to run a construction business."

"We wanted to take all those big—sometimes intimidating—requirements and show how they actually fit into the everyday realities of a new firm."

A small business focus

IHSA is committed to supporting small businesses, which make up most of our membership. This video series is just one example of how we provide specific resources that help smaller firms achieve health and safety success.

Small business owners are responsible for protecting workers from injury and illness on the job. This is one of many responsibilities, such as securing financing, hiring staff, winning contracts, keeping clients happy, and staying on top of paperwork.

It's easy to understand why health and safety can slip down the list, but the benefits of staying on top of it are worth the effort: prevent injuries, reduce WSIB costs, achieve regulatory compliance, minimize work disruptions, and build a strong safety culture and reputation.

"We keep the conversation really straightforward in this series—just simple, practical things you can work into your daily routine," Dametto says. "Good safety practices aren't extra red tape. They can actually save you time, cut down on stress, and make you look more professional to clients."



“Our goal is to take some of the pressure off and show that safety can be manageable for any business, even when you’re juggling everything else.”

Expert advice for getting started

Dametto compares developing a health and safety program to building a house: you have to lay the foundation before you put up the walls. As a new small business owner, you might find it helpful to take small steps toward a health and safety program while you’re getting your business off the ground. He recommends picking a couple of safety practices that you can build into your daily routine and sticking with them. When you’ve adjusted to those changes, add the next piece.

He also suggests involving your workers in the process right away. This approach encourages them to support health and safety activities over time.

“Health and safety isn’t just about rules,” Dametto says. “It’s about people working together to make sure everyone goes home safely at the end of the day.”

Your destination for affordable resources

In each of the five videos, IHSA’s experts also introduce viewers to our affordable health and safety training programs and resources. The goal is to reduce a major barrier for many small business owners when it comes to health and safety: cost.

The first episode, for example, focuses on popular IHSA resources that can help you comply with training requirements, such as:

- *Basics of Supervising* training
- *Health and Safety 101: An Orientation For Small Business Owners* on-demand webinar
- *Hoisting and Rigging - Basic Safety Training*
- *Confined Space Hazard Awareness for Construction* training
- *Scaffold Users’ Hazard Awareness* training
- *Trenching Safety Hazard Awareness* training
- *Fall Protection Work Plan* (BR005)
- *Training Requirements Chart* (W001)

IHSA members can access many of our products and resources for **free** or **at a discount**.

“For those entering the construction sector, early engagement with health and safety resources isn’t just a box to check off,” says Moskal. “It’s a critical business decision that supports safe growth and long-term success.” ■



Watch the series now to get more expert health and safety advice for small businesses.



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