



Workplace Health and Safety Strategies and Solutions for Small and Micro Construction Firms

Presented in partnership with the University of British Columbia
(Presenters: Dr. Chris McLeod, Robert Macpherson, Suhail Marino and Chizitara Nkwopara)

Over 90 per cent of construction firms in Alberta are small or micro firms. These firms face distinct barriers and challenges in creating safe workplaces.

Building on over a decade of research and engagement with construction firms, regulators, and health and safety associations, the University of British Columbia's team at Partnership for Work, Health and Safety highlighted key findings and recommendations to help improve health and safety for small and micro construction firms.

Below is a synthesis of facilitated small groups discussions of various scenarios. These discussions identified challenges that small construction firms face in improving health and safety as well as strategies, approaches, and resources available to small firms.

Scenarios discussed in the workshop included: Road and heavy construction, high-rise residential construction, demolition/restoration, installation/maintenance, and roofing.

During the scenarios, participants addressed the following:

1. Identification and management of hazards and risks
2. Barriers faced in managing hazards and risks
3. Training, knowledge, and resources needed
4. What could be done to improve the overall safety culture/commitment to work safely
5. How industry partners can help

Key take-aways:

- Major barriers to managing the hazards and risks for small firms include time and budget constraints for completion, equipment access challenges, and managing and training.
- Removing the stigma associated with asking for help and resources is an important step in creating safety at work.
- Larger firms and industry can help/partner/support smaller firms in developing health and safety plans and streamline processes for accessing safety resources.
- The construction industry needs access to training that is more specific/focused on the construction industry or workers.