

## Contributors



### Jesse Marchand

Jesse is the managing editor for WorkSafe Magazine and has been working in publishing and journalism for nearly 20 years. In this issue, she covers risk management for small businesses (right), recent policy changes (page 16), and the resources and training available to understand the risks of using ammonia as a refrigerant (page 14).



### Sarah Ripplinger

Sarah is a marketer, writer, editor, and journalist, and the principal of Sarah Ripplinger Marketing Communication. In our cover story, she looks at the ways in which some employers manage health and safety for workers who need to drive for work (page 7).



### Marnie Douglas

Marnie is a West Kelowna-based journalist, writer, and communications professional who has written about a variety of subjects for WorkSafe Magazine, from exposure control plans to the Paralympics. In this issue, she speaks with Vancouver food truck owners about managing the risks of using propane (page 12).

## Ask an officer

# Improve safety at your small business with four easy steps



### Terry Bertram

Manager, Prevention Field Services

Region: Kelowna

You've worked hard to find the right staff for your business. Keeping them healthy and safe is not just your obligation under the *Workers Compensation Act*, it also makes good business sense. From employee retention to improved and streamlined service, research has shown time and time again that a safe and healthy workplace is a happy and productive one.

In 2022, Prevention Field Services officers will be engaging with employers on the basics of risk management. Below, Prevention Field Services manager Terry Bertram, who heads up the WorkSafeBC small business portfolio, answers some of the questions we often get about risk management in a small business.

### Q. What does it mean to manage risk in my workplace?

**A.** Managing risk in your workplace involves identifying the hazards that could cause harm to your workers and determining whether you are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm from happening.

To manage risks there are four basic steps:

1. Understand the level of risk in the workplace.
2. Implement appropriate measures.
3. Communicate policies and protocols to all workers.
4. Monitor and update measures regularly.

Remember the process you went through with the COVID-19 Safety Plan? The same four steps were used to help employers manage the risk of viral illness in the workplace. You can easily take what you learned there and apply it to the risks that are unique to your business.

### Q. How do I understand risk at my workplace?

**A.** One of the pillars of the risk-based approach is that it allows you to focus on the biggest risks or threats to your business first. Ask yourself

“What keeps you up at night?” or “What’s the one phone call you don’t want to get?” and start there.

You can also look at the history of your own business to see where previous injuries have happened. Next, talk to your workers and supervisors about their health and safety concerns. They should have first-hand knowledge about your day-to-day operations. Walk around your worksite and observe how workers are carrying out tasks and using equipment. Analyze the design and layout of the work areas.

The most important thing about understanding the risks your workers face is understanding that it’s a living process that requires ongoing communication and input from all your workers. Safety is not some binders on a shelf. You must own your safety program and check in on people every day.

### Q. How can I lower or eliminate risks at my workplace?

**A.** Start with the greatest risk first and go from there. The hierarchy of controls can help you select and implement effective measures for each risk. The most effective “control” (way to lower the risk) is to eliminate the risk. If you cannot eliminate it, you need to implement other measures to control the risk. Here are some ideas to get started:

1. Elimination or substitution: Is there a safer way to perform the task? Can workers use a less harmful product?
2. Engineering: Is there any equipment or other physical changes to the workplace that will make the task safer?
3. Administrative: Are there safe work procedures or practices that will reduce the risk?
4. PPE: After everything else, you can look at personal protective equipment (PPE). Is there PPE that will help protect workers? Can you use it in combination with other types of risk control?

### Q. How can I ensure my staff follow our safe work procedures?

**A.** Your risk management program should be a collaborative process. Your workers should be a part of your risk-assessment process, and you can also enlist their help with orientation and training of new staff. You will want to have regular safety meetings, create signage for common hazards, and ensure workers know how to report new risks.

Continue to monitor the effectiveness of current risk controls and identify new or changing hazards and risks through supervision, inspections, and incident investigations.

### Q. Where can I find out more?

**A.** Our website, [worksafebc.com](https://worksafebc.com) has several resources that can help you create your health and safety program. Search for the information sheet [Basics of risk management: Four steps to a healthy and safe workplace](#) to get started. For personalized advice, you can also ask to speak with a prevention officer or OHS consultant directly by calling the [Prevention Information Line](#) at 1.888.621.SAFE.

Looking for answers to your specific health and safety questions? Send them to us at [worksafemagazine@worksafebc.com](mailto:worksafemagazine@worksafebc.com) and we’ll consider them for our next “Ask an officer” feature. 😊

**UBSafe**  
Your safeguarding experts – from start to completion  
[safety@ubsafe.ca](mailto:safety@ubsafe.ca)  
[www.ubsafe.ca](http://www.ubsafe.ca)  
778.847.4047

Penalties, claim costs and downtime can be disruptive and costly for your business – contact us for a free consultation

WorkSafeBC prevention and investigating officers cannot and do not provide advice on specific cases or issues referenced in this article. WorkSafeBC and *WorkSafe Magazine* disclaim responsibility for any reliance on this information, which is provided for readers’ general education only. For more specific information on prevention matters, contact the WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 or toll-free at 1.888.621.7233.