



Gord Woodward

Gord has worked with more than 1,500 small businesses and has experience working with federal and provincial agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector firms. He interviews Doug Irving in “Ask an officer,” (right).



Marnie Douglas

Marnie is a Kelowna-based writer and communications professional who began her career in journalism. She presents our cover story (page 7).



Sarah Ripplinger

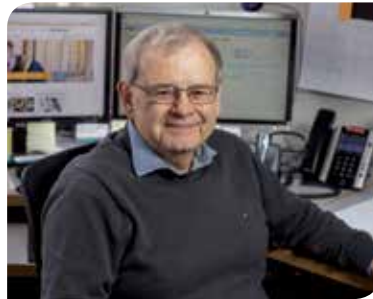
Sarah is a marketer, writer, editor, and journalist, and the principal of Sarah Ripplinger Marketing Communication. She speaks with the staff at Pacific Bolt in our “Safety spotlight” (page 11).



Gail Johnson

Gail has been working as a journalist since 1996. With a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in French and a diploma in journalism, Gail has earned national, provincial, and local awards and nominations for her work. She looks at the lighter side of safety in our “WorkSafeBC update” (page 20).

We're taking your calls



Doug Irving

Occupational hygiene officer

Region: Burnaby

Years on the job: 44

Occupational hygiene officer Doug Irving answers questions about our Prevention Information Line, a free phone service dedicated to health and safety in B.C. workplaces.

Q. What is the Prevention Information Line, and who can use it?

A. It's for anyone who needs work-related health and safety information or anyone who wants to report a health and safety issue. You can get information about how the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation applies to your workplace, request a worksite inspection consultation, report unsafe work conditions, and report a serious incident or major chemical release. You can report in almost any language, since we can get an interpreter for a three-way call.

Q. How can the line help me?

A. We can provide information that will help clarify a requirement or particular hazard to help employers stay in compliance. We can also help workers. Here's an example I dealt with: A person called in and said his employer was ignoring a specific concern the caller had about mould. We had a conversation, and I referred the issue to an officer who went and had a look. The worker called back later to let me know the problem had been resolved.

Another way we can help is by taking you through the website. Most of the time, the information people need is available online, but there's a lot of information there and we can help you find it.

If you're at all unsure about a health and safety matter in the workplace, definitely call. We'd rather talk with you now than later, after a problem has occurred.

Q. What kind of questions can I ask?

A. Anything to do with workplace health and safety. It's a long list. We get a lot of calls about first aid and protective equipment, and everything from

indoor air quality to office ergonomics, workplace violence, fall protection, traffic control, and controlling silica dust, just to name a few.

Q. Who answers the calls?

A. You'll always talk with a prevention officer. Depending on how busy we are, you might first reach our switchboard and then hear back from an officer. We have a list of subject-matter expert officers around the province. They have training in very specific areas. We can call on our bullying and harassment team, for example, or our crane team, or the asbestos team.

Q. Can you answer specific questions about my workplace?

A. It's hard to comment on something without seeing it first. So please don't call to ask for something like a hazard assessment over the phone. We'd refer you to an officer in your area for that. We can help clarify the requirements in the Regulation that apply to you, but we can't tell you what to do.

Q. Are there any questions the Prevention Line can't help me with?

A. It's not for people who have claims-related issues. For that information, you need to speak with our claims team (1.888.WORKERS). We sometimes get questions from employers about insurance

registration; for that, you need to contact our assessments team (1.888.922.2768). Also, some people may disagree with my colleagues' opinions and call for a second opinion. If you disagree with an order that an officer has issued to you, you must use our appeal process — see Review & Appeal on worksafebc.com.

Q. How can I contact the Prevention Information Line?

A. Call us from the Lower Mainland at 604.276.3100 or toll-free at 1.888.621.SAFE anywhere else in Canada.

For non-emergency issues, we're available Monday to Friday from 8:05 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our switchboard may need to take your contact information. We try to get back to you on the same day. Sometimes questions may require a little bit of research, so we may need more time.

If it's an emergency, such as reporting fatalities and serious injuries or to report a chemical spill, the line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us and your information goes directly to an officer, who will respond.

Looking for answers to your specific health and safety questions? Send them to us at worksafemagazine@worksafebc.com, and we'll consider them for our next "Ask an officer" feature. 🗣️

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.

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