

Groundbreaker

The Official Publication of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association

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Sarah Higgins, Training Coordinator, WORKSAFELY™

BY HEATHER HUDSON

How do you get the job you want?

You ask for it.

At least that's what a resourceful Sarah Higgins, the WORKSAFELY™ Program's Training Coordinator, did when she moved to Winnipeg a few years ago.

"I pursued MHCA when I arrived here. There weren't any job openings, but I kept in touch with Glen Black [Director, WORKSAFELY™ Education and Training] and when one opened up a few months later in early 2012, I interviewed for it and got it."

While safety is now a passion for her, it wasn't always that way.

She was an insurance broker for a few years before deciding it was not the industry for her. When she landed a new job with the Alberta Construction Safety Association, it was like she was home.

"Safety was one of those things that I didn't realize I liked until I was doing it. I knew I wanted to continue when I came to Manitoba," Higgins says.

It's this kind of thoughtfulness and temerity that helps her ace her role. As the gatekeeper for all training and education courses under the program, she oversees the scheduling, promotion, advertising and registration of all course offerings. She also maintains the WORKSAFELY™ training database and generates corresponding certificates of training from all courses and safety conferences.

With so many moving parts, Higgins says a clean desk is critical to staying organized and on top of the job.

"Before I leave for the day I make sure everything is put away and in order for the next day so that I can start fresh," she explains. "The first thing I do before I can start work is grab a coffee and turn my radio on."



“I like knowing that after a phone or email conversation I have helped answer any questions people may have and that I’m making the process as easy as possible for them.”

– Sarah Higgins,
Training Coordinator,
WORKSAFELY™

While the safety content of the courses she administrates is important to her, it’s dealing with people that really makes the job a pleasure for her. Interacting with new people every day in a different way is both fulfilling and interesting.

“I like knowing that after a phone or email conversation, I have helped answer any questions people may have and that I’m making the process as easy as possible for them,” Higgins says.

And while she’s helping others, they’re inspiring her, too. Higgins is in the middle of earning an occupational health and safety certification, which may allow her to do some fieldwork in the future.

In the meantime, she’s enjoying tackling the challenges that come with the training coordinator title. She’s kept on her toes the most during MHCA’s annual EXPO events.

“With such a large number of courses offered in such a short time, it’s really busy. I ensure that all materials are packed properly and ready to go for the instructors. I make sure the right books, handouts and tests are in order and that they have everything they need in order to deliver these courses,” Higgins says.

“This year was my third EXPO South and our first EXPO North. Things have gone smoothly and I think they’ll get even better each year as we keep perfecting the process.”

Higgins unwinds from her busy days at the office by taking her Boston Terrier, Tikka, for long walks. She also plays on a dodgeball team and is looking forward to summer so she can indulge in her favourite pastimes: fishing and hosting backyard BBQs.

While she waits for warmer weather to blow in, she’s got a lot on her plate with WORKSAFELY™. And that’s just the way she likes it. 