



**30** YEARS OF SAFETY EXCELLENCE  
**WORKSAFELY** MHCA

TECHNOLOGY TAKES SAFETY TRAINING AND DOCUMENTATION TO A **HIGHER LEVEL**

MHCA/Colin Corneau photo

**T**echnology is helping to drive early decision-making throughout heavy construction operations, which can reduce or eliminate costly errors that can lead to injuries or fatalities. Our industry has used technology to simplify safety program administration and improve effectiveness of training.

Within Manitoba's heavy construction industry, long-term trends show work-related injuries and fatalities are declining, overall. Part of this improvement is due to the rising importance of workplace safety and the increased use of technology to support it.

The MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ team turned to technology in 2012 to transform how it delivered safety programming to the heavy construction industry. WORKSAFELY partnered with SiteDocs, to move from paper-based administration of safety programs – housed in filing cabinets – to a digital platform. This helps construction companies shift their safety program systems to a mobile, more efficient and simpler platform.

Arnason Industries was one of MHCA's first companies to take advantage of the digital application e-COR, to improve the firm's safety performance.

Arnason's Robert Paige says he has seen huge success since integrating e-COR into the safety management process.

"More than just preventing mistakes and creating efficiencies, e-COR plays a key role in engaging our employees," Paige says. "Having e-COR on our phones or tablets allows workers to take safety management out of the office on onto the jobsite."

Whether workers are recording incident details, conducting audits or logging safety observations, the ability to replace paperwork with a digital platform boosts efficiency and participation, he explains.

"From automation to task management to reporting, technology provides the basis for our company's safety culture, creating an area of accountability to gear us to work towards our safety goals."

In addition to e-COR, WORKSAFELY and SiteDocs have created a digital platform for auditing safety programs called Easy COR. When it comes to doing your COR audit, the newly introduced Easy COR application can further simplify the audit documentation and administrative process.

Another line of progress for in construction is in virtual-reality training, putting students in the virtual driver's seat of heavy equipment.

For WORKSAFELY's safety and work-force training, technology has played a key-role, says Don Hurst, WORKSAFELY director of training and education.

"Workers now have the opportunity to get exposure to environments, such as driving a front-end loader or learning about confined space, in a controlled environment," says Hurst.

In 2013, the MHCA partnered with Brandt Tractors and Toromont Cat to change how they delivered heavy-equipment operator training by acquiring simulators that recreate the operation of four key pieces of heavy equipment: front-end loader, dozer, excavator and grader.

"We are very excited about the opportunities that this simulator-based training opens up for those looking to get into the industry as equipment operators," says Phil McDaniel, MHCA WORKFORCE program coordinator. "The simulators can be transported and that opens up the introduction to heavy equipment training to various areas of the province."

One of WORKSAFELY's key partners in bringing virtual reality into the classroom is Bit Space Development. Bit Space worked with WORKSAFELY to take its existing Roadbuilders Safety Training System (RSTS) to the next level.

"The original training was offered in class or online, over about eight hours," says Dan Blair, founder of Bit Space Development. "We worked with the heavy construction industry to create a virtual world for each one of the modules for RSTS, allowing students to get a sense of presence and a more realistic grasp with the content they were being taught."

Virtual reality allows you to place a student in the eyes of the storyteller, he adds.

"The technology allows us to give a level of understanding that we never could before in the classroom, regardless of what you are teaching."

Virtual reality does not replace on-the-job training, but it enhances the classroom learning and prepares students for entering the job site.

Although Blair acknowledges that simulations have become better, he feels the future will bring more incorporation of soft-skills training before replacing on-the-job training.

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