

# Staff Spotlight - Advisory Services

When working toward achieving a company certification or individual designation, SCSA safety advisors are there to provide you with quality safety advice. Everything from worksite visits to safety demonstrations; SCSA safety advisors actively assist you and your company with the implementation, monitoring, and improvement of your Safety Management System to achieve your safety goals.



## Meet some of our SCSA Safety Advisors!



### Bill Gessell, Safety Advisor (Saskatoon Office)

**STARTED WORKING AT THE SCSA:** JANUARY 2008  
**REGIONS YOU SERVE:** SASKATOON AND KINDERSLEY

**Background in safety/construction:** I spent 15 years working in the residential, and commercial/ industrial construction sectors prior to starting at the SCSA.

**Favourite safety topic:** Safe assembly and use of scaffolding. Next to ladders, metal scaffolding is possibly the most common item found on construction sites. Many projects – from small residential to large industrial – see a benefit with its applications; however, its use involves serious hazards, such as working at heights, so safe assembly and use are very important. Thankfully, in Saskatchewan we have a clear set of guidelines and requirements to use it safely.

**Favourite safety demo:** All of them. I was directly involved in the development of them so it's hard to have a favourite "child." If I had to choose, it would be the Safe Lifting /Back Safety Demo. It was one of the most difficult to develop but is one that has applications across all industries and occupations.

**Favourite part of your job:** Working with members and other partner organizations to promote the creation and adoption of a safety culture. I enjoy working with them to promote the value of thinking safely beyond compliance and beyond the workplace.

**A question you get asked a lot:** I receive many questions around program development and certification. It makes my day when a company gets past the fear and misconception of a safety program and realizes this is something they can achieve.

**Challenges you see in construction safety:** To overcome the stigma with the workers that safety is nothing more than signing paperwork and wearing personal protective equipment. It needs to be a part of how they react in real-time to every situation on a jobsite.

**Current goals as a Safety Advisor:** The development of new demonstrations that bring the message of safety to the site level.

**Recent Accomplishments:** 10 years of service with the SCSA.

### Justin Brooks, Safety Advisor (Regina Office)

**STARTED WORKING AT THE SCSA:** FEBRUARY 2016  
**REGIONS YOU SERVE:** YORKTON

**Background in safety/construction:** Started in industrial construction, moved to commercial construction and served as a safety rep for three years.

**Favourite safety topic:** Developing safe working habits for youth in construction.

**Favourite safety demo:** Fall Protection Demo because it gives workers the opportunity to see the equipment in action, where people would potentially be injured, which is rare to see. Hopefully no one is in a position to see it work in a real-life situation. You get to see the harness, the lanyard, everything in action and you also get to see the benefits of understanding the equipment you're using because there are different equipment requirements for different heights.

**Favourite part of your job:** Giving someone the tools and knowledge to ensure they go home safely to their families and friends. I also like connecting with people and giving them the opportunity to ask questions in their own environment, which I think is important.

**A question you get asked a lot:** How does a safety program benefit me and how can I possibly make time for it. How much does Advisory Services charge for their services (my favourite, because my answer is always "nothing at all").

**Challenges you see in construction safety:** Changing the mentality that safety takes too much time out of a day; or, that the return isn't as great as the investment.

**Current goals as a Safety Advisor:** My goal as a Safety Advisor is for the members of the construction industry to have a greater level of comprehension of what Mission: Zero is. Mission: Zero is not just a slogan, it is about action. Due diligence means nothing without competent action; the better we understand that as an industry, the greater success we will have stopping preventable injuries.

**Recent Accomplishments:** I obtained my National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO™) designation. Patrick Hunt, another Safety Advisor and I also recently completed a project to streamline the safety manual development process.



### Riley Hancock, Safety Advisor (Regina Office)

**STARTED WORKING AT THE SCSA:** MAY 2016  
**REGIONS YOU SERVE:** REGINA, DAVIDSON, AND THE REGIONS IN BETWEEN.

**Background in safety/construction:** I worked as a carpenter for about six-and-a-half years where I learned the practical side of safety. I started out manufacturing and installing commercial cabinets. From there, I was a residential framer for about a year doing strictly custom homes in Emerald Park. I then made my jump to the commercial/industrial sector. My first job was Building 1 of the Harbour Landing building plaza in Regina. After that project, I worked at the Co-op Refinery in Regina where I sat on the Occupational Health Committee and represented employees during my time at the Refinery. Aside from that, I achieved my National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO™) designation while working at the SCSA, which further expanded my knowledge of safety.

**Favourite safety topic:** Complacency. The reason a lot of companies and workers are not making their business safety oriented is because they've existed so long without needing it. When the odds are not in their favour and they experience a serious injury, most often it's because of complacency.

**Favourite safety demo:** The Eye Protection Demo. It gets the attention of everyone. We perform it at youth events, for companies, at larger events and trade shows. The reaction is always the same. Our audience is always interested to see how strong the safety glasses are. It's a great visual example of why you need to wear them and what they can do for you.

**Favourite part of your job:** Going out on sites and running into workers that are really interested in what we have to say. It's great to be able to answer questions and fill in that void of knowledge on the spot. I also enjoy interacting with workers to hear their thoughts on safety and working to try and sway their opinions in the right direction.

**A question you get asked a lot:** The most common questions I get asked are ones regarding when and how to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriately. A lot of people have a misconception that the work they are doing dictates the PPE that is required. This may be true for some cases, but workers tend to get mixed up on what PPE is specialized vs what is mandatory; not knowing when each needs to be worn.

**Challenges you see in construction safety:** As I mentioned before, complacency is a big issue not just with the companies, but also with the building owners or property owners. They tend to hire the company that puts forth the cheapest bid and these are the companies that typically don't invest in their workers by having a health and safety system in place. Another big challenge I see is the misconceptions and misinformation out there on what personal protective equipment is needed for the job and how to properly use it.

**Current goals as a Safety Advisor:** I'd like to educate as many new workers as I can to instill proper safety habits before they enter the workforce.

**Recent Accomplishments:** I recently achieved my National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO™) designation through the SCSA.



### Curtis Praud, Safety Advisor (Saskatoon Office)

**STARTED WORKING AT THE SCSA:** APRIL 2017  
**REGIONS YOU SERVE:** PRINCE ALBERT

**Background in safety/construction:** I started out welding and then I went into directional drilling and hydrovacating. From there, I started working in Fort McMurray as a Journeyman Scaffolder for just about seven years. My last year there, I oversaw and helped with our safety program because I had my National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO™) designation. What really made me get involved in safety and achieve my NCSO™ designation was after there was a fatality on the job at the mine I was working at in Saskatchewan.

**Favourite safety topic:** Fall Protection. I spent most of my career working at heights. Also, the fatality that happened at the mine I was working at was due to a fall, which further drove me to want to know more and educate others on that topic.

**Favourite safety demo:** Again, the Fall Protection demo, because it shows the importance of wearing and knowing what type of personal protective equipment to choose for the job. Also, this demo shows you the significant differences in impact to your body if you were to experience a fall wearing the proper equipment vs. when you do not.

**Favourite part of your job:** Working with all the members, helping implement a functioning safety program, meeting new people, developing my skills in safety. I love performing demos for audiences, and the team that I work with it's just a great team to work with. Everybody is very caring, all willing to help, and they bring a new meaning to 'no question is a stupid question.'

**A question you get asked a lot:** How do I get your job? When people want to get into the safety field I always recommend they look into the SCSA's National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO™) program or the Health and Safety Administrator (HSA) program if the person doesn't have the three years of experience needed for an NCSO™ designation.

**Challenges you see in construction safety:** It all starts with education. I always try to approach everyone assuming they may not know anything about the task or procedure and then I proceed to ask them questions about what they know and don't know vs. telling them they're doing something wrong. Education and information are huge. I've already seen improvements with people in construction companies I have worked with or approached with information. I help them understand that what they were doing was against legislation, as many of them legitimately didn't know what they were doing is illegal. Giving them information and resources – knowing what classes they can take – makes a big difference.

**Current goals as a Safety Advisor:** I want to challenge the NCSO™ exam to update my certification to the current national standards.

**Recent Accomplishments:** Public speaking. I've never been good at public speaking and it is now at a point where it's no longer an issue for me. This was a huge challenge I'm proud to have overcome in my life.