

ASK AN RSA

With Suzanne Jackson, Interior & Kootenay

In this monthly feature, we invite readers to submit a question for a BCCSA Regional Safety Advisor (RSA) to address. This month's RSA is Suzanne Jackson, who serves the Interior and Kootenay Region.

Question: What is Human and Organizational Performance (HOP) in construction, and how can it improve safety on site?

Answer: Human and Organizational Performance (HOP) is a way of looking at safety that starts with a simple idea: people make mistakes — even good, experienced workers. Instead of blaming someone when something goes wrong, HOP looks at how the job was set up, what conditions workers were facing, and the improvements that can be made in the system. On construction sites, HOP helps supervisors, safety staff, and workers understand why incidents, close calls, and unsafe conditions happen—and what needs to change in the work, tools, or planning to keep crews safer.

Key Principles

A strong HOP approach is built on a few simple ideas:

- People make mistakes, so we learn instead of blame. Errors will happen, especially on busy, changing sites. When something goes wrong, the aim is to understand what happened and why.
- The people doing the work see what really happens. Their ideas are key for spotting hazards and fixing problems, and everyone shares the job of speaking up and acting on concerns.
- Fix the system, not just the worker. Many incidents involve unclear procedures, missing tools, rushing, or poor planning — not just "worker error."

Bottom Line

On construction sites, HOP is used by asking workers to report hazards and incidents without fear, getting crews talking about what made sense at the time and what got in the way. HOP helps construction companies shift from asking "Who is at fault?" to "What can we learn and fix?" By paying attention to how the work is really done and involving workers in spotting and solving problems in the system, HOP helps make sites safer and work more reliable.

Need Help?

Your Regional Safety Advisor is available at no cost to guide employers in incident reporting.

Contact us: rsa@bccsa.ca or Regional Safety Advisors: BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA).