



***My name is  
Carol  
and I am a  
Safety  
Geek***

by **Carol Vincent**, Arcis Corporation

**T**he first step is admitting my addiction. It all started very innocently. I was working up north in Human Resources, completely content to Behavior—base Interview myself to retirement. That’s when I met “him”. He himself was a recovering geek. He tried to disguise himself under the HR umbrella, but no one really bought that. If I sat perfectly still, I could hear their conversations in the next office. Orientations, safety meetings, training, hazard assessments, incident reports..... The seed was planted. I wanted to know more. I needed to know more. “Here, see what you can do with this”, he said as he passed ‘Training & Contractor Management’ to my duties. His eyes narrowed and he grinned as he walked away, leaving me with my new project. The need for more safety knowledge had become insatiable. Over the next 12 months I would rise at 4:00 AM,

drive to Edmonton to join other recruits in the quest for higher safety knowledge. And then he was gone. Company swallowed and head office moved to Edmonton.

By now, the transformation was almost complete. New position: Safety Manager. HR? NO thank you. First monthly safety meeting, attendance 100+. Hands sweating, knees knocking. The high lasted for weeks. I wanted more. I needed more. I found a handful of previously safety converted. At monthly meetings, they would lean in and in hushed tones say, “You must go to Banff, you must”! Yes, of course, I must. I am in Banff, squeezed in to a seat designed for a anorexic ten year old. Eyes wide, heart pounding, drooling slightly. Then the “Great Safety One” walked out on stage. He was soft spoken and spoke in layman’s terms. He was a Senior Safety Manager with a large producer. He hypnotized

me with his slides and simple descriptions of basic safety and beyond. Beyond, ah yes! Advanced safety, that's what I want, that's what I need! I must taproot, I must develop competencies, I must observe, I must use perception surveys and most important I must mentor and lead my contractors. I want more acronyms to follow my name! I need more acronyms to follow my name! I am sitting in the Petroleum club, grilling the big cheese of ENFORM Safety. How do I get in? Will it hurt very badly? Will they cover me in Hazard cards & Observation cards and march me up and down Stephen Avenue? "Yes", he said, "but only on a Monday night in February". One year later, after I had submitted hair, blood and tissue samples, samples of my work from grade one to present and 25 references who swore I was a somewhat stable person, I am before the panel. I am sitting at one end of a board room table that is so huge I have to shout and use sign language for them to understand me. They are blurred faces from my seat. They ask me a series of safety related questions that only "geeks" would know. How many pages in the Alberta OHS Act, Code & Regs? Please recite Part 2 of the Code...verbatim! Uh.....silence. "Look at my handi-guide", I desperately say. "It's highlighted and flagged at all the important places, like Part 24 – Section 357"! Please demonstrate your multi-tasking skills" faceless # 1 commands. Within 5 minutes I have taprooted an incident, conducted an inspection of the room and delivered a presentation on the evils of cell phones & driving. Phew, I'm in.

And so after 10 years of preaching safety and donut bribes, I am ready to accept my addiction with pride.

My name is Carol and I am a safety geek. •



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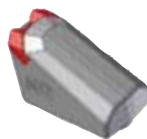


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