

Transcript of Melissa Upton, Occupational Health and Safety Advisor

The coolest thing about my job is... making the difference between life and death!

My job as an occupational health and safety advisor is all about safety; giving people the information that they need in order to make sure they go home at the end of the day—because last year, 32 people did not go home.

Everybody knows me as Safety Girl. I am absolutely passionate about what I do. It is something I do because it makes a difference and everybody knows me as Safety Girl; I have the Safety Girl website—it's important information, but it doesn't mean you have to do it in an un-fun kind of way.

As an occupational health and safety advisor with the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association, the three main parts of my job are training, offering safety courses to individuals; I also do auditing on companies, doing a little safety check-up on them; and I also do consulting making recommendations to organizations to improve their safety program.

When I go to an audit for a company, essentially, I'm looking to check -p on their safety program to make sure that they're meeting all of our requirements as well as the legislative requirements put out by the province. Also making sure that they have a safe workplace, trying to find any hazards that may be there, to take a proactive approach to make sure that everyone is the safest they can be.

As an instructor I like to make things as fun as possible. Often times safety is very dry, very serious information—that doesn't mean it can't be fun. So I like to incorporate things like music and humor into my teaching to make it more interesting and more memorable.

Working occupational health and safety there's a lot of opportunities out there. Every industry has occupational health and safety rules and regulations they have to follow, so whether you want to go into retail or go into an industrial sector, there's lot of opportunity.

My advice for anyone looking for a career is that if you're not singing in the car on the way to work, you're going in the wrong direction; so make sure you pick something that makes you sing in the car on the way to work every day.