



PrOHfiles in our CRBOH Members: Ted Letourneau, BSc., ROH

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Ted Letourneau is an occupational hygienist and technical operations manager in British Columbia.

Ted has had a unique path to occupational hygiene. As a young adult, Ted was working as a cab driver when he decided to pursue post-secondary education. When asked what inspired him to apply to university after being out of school for a few years, he was very honest, saying, “poverty is an excellent motivating tool.” Ted continued driving a cab on weekends while also being a full-time student.

Ted feels his life experience before entering university really instilled a strong drive to succeed once there. He completed his bachelor’s degree in 2002, studying environmental sciences at the University of Alberta. Ted did not delay at all in seeking out employment in his field: his interview for his first job out of university occurred just 3 hours after completing his last university exam. He clearly took his motivation from university into his career.

Ted’s first job was in asbestos abatement and surveys. Although occupational hygiene was not on his radar, it was only a couple years before his career in asbestos surveys “snowballed into industrial hygiene.” Ted credits his former colleague, Victor Leung, with encouraging him to pursue his professional designation.

Ted has spent most of his career in consulting, including for oil and gas, at Canadian Forces bases, hydroelectric dams, and more. He enjoys the diversity consulting provides. Ted currently manages asbestos, lead, and mould abatement tasks, which includes developing project specifications, inspections, air monitoring. He does hazmat, confined space assessments, noise, ventilation surveys. He also does assessments and monitoring for all types of chemicals, including welding fumes, benzene and organic vapours. Ted says he’s “willing to do the dirty work” whenever it’s required, though lately his work has been consisting of report reviews.

Finally, when asked about what he sees about the most pressing issues to Occupational Hygiene, Ted has highlighted both some emerging and some established hazards. With regards to emerging hazards, he sees nanoparticles as a rapidly changing and challenging field.

For existing hazards, Ted highlights that noise isn’t always taken seriously. He has observed that it is becoming normal on many sites for ear plugs not worn correctly, with general complacency around the risk of noise exposure. When asked if more training is required, Ted was clear that training alone is not the solution. He visits many sites where there is a lot of training, so much that “it becomes white noise”, with training being a requirement that must be checked off. Ted says he sees benefits in hazards being assessed. He also feels it’s time for many training programs to assess training from a psychological lens, in order for “how to get workers to take this seriously”. This is the next step in training programs for it to have an impact.

This is the second of our new, ongoing series profiling those working in Occupational Hygiene as ROHs and ROHTs, to highlight the many different routes to Occupational Hygiene and the variety of sectors we work in.