

# Procore Technologies Inc. - Director of Health Safety at Urbacon

Interview conducted on March 27, 2024

## Topics

Construction, Project Management, Risk Management, Compliance, Software, Safety, Procurement

## Summary

A Tegus Client is researching construction risk management, particularly focusing on subcontractors, insurance, compliance, and management. The Director of Health Safety at Urbacon discusses the process of managing compliance for subcontractors, including pre-qualification and ongoing monitoring, and the benefits of using a third-party for pre-qualification. They are considering switching to an international standard for contractor management and procurement, open to bringing on a third-party for assistance, and looking for a plug-in to better manage safety. The Director emphasizes the importance of prequalifying subcontractors based on experience, qualifications, and safety practices for successful project completion.

## Expert Details

Director of Health Safety at Urbacon. Expert can speak to risk management processes and frameworks.

Director of Health Safety at Urbacon. The expert is responsible for all aspects of health & safety for a multi-faceted construction and data center company. They are mainly in the Industrial Commercial Institutional Sector. The expert is experienced in both the use and specifications of H&S software, having worked with developers and end users on custom applications and off-the-shelf applications.

Q: NEW: What are the risk management frameworks or processes specifically related to prequalification, ongoing monitoring, or management of contractor risks? This can encompass several things such as but not limited to insurance, financial risk (e.g., risk of going bankrupt), any past liability not easily detectable etc)

A: each company couple of different stages. financial risks and insurance qualification with sub. once they get passed on approved list from safety side we do a thorough look into the safety documentation. We also got the ability to go through workers comp board and look at safety board as well and go in and look ourselves and gives us a check into our balance as well. Once to get through the job and look at high risks are and methods of procedure before the process. orientation and documents and monitor all of that.

Q: NEW: What kind of criteria or standards the contractors must pass in order to be approved as a vendor? Who are the stakeholders involved in such process?

A: Again couple of different stages on financial meet requirements of project. and then the safety side what qualifications are in ontario source of recognition certificate that we look for if not it means more management. Ordered by a 3rd party and then a preference in meeting in international standards.

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## Tegus Client

Hi, thanks for taking time to chat with us today. We are doing research specifically into kind of the construction risk management of kind of subcontractors, kind of insurance, compliance and just kind of managing that.

So for starters, we know nothing about the space. So we're just talking with experts in the space to try to better understand how things work and there, we will see if there's anything else to kind of dive deeper into. I have a list of questions here, so I'll just kind of fire away, and we can just kind of dive into this thing. Let's actually start off with just a little bit about your background.

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**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

I'm right now working as a Director of Health and Safety for a private construction company. We've also built data centers, too, normally, but which is something we do specialize in and I have worked in the health and safety field really all my life in different.

I came from a trader background originally and then went back to school and then did my degree and went into health and safety full time as I was doing it kind of part-time with my own job. So I've been doing that for probably the last 15 years as a manager and above in health and safety and worked for multiple industries from utilities, power generation, construction and that sort of thing.

**Tegus Client**

Can you define a little bit your current roles, responsibilities as the Director of the Health and Safety?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. So for this company, I'm responsible for all aspects of health and safety, also driving them towards an ISO certification as well. So I look after a team of health and safety representatives, advisers who are out in the field and they do the actual boots on the ground site-to-site work for us, and I manage that. But my real goal is in the kind of Director role in the strategic role where we go next and what processes are we going to use in the future.

**Tegus Client**

I don't know if this is on my end. Can you hear me all right? I'm having a little bit of trouble hearing you just kind of sounds like you are far from the mic or something.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Is that any better?

**Tegus Client**

Yes, a little bit better. It's a little bit better.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

I can try switching my headset. I've switch to a wireless one because my regular one was not good enough. Let me just see if I can connect my wireless one and see how that looks.

**Tegus Client**

Yes, that would be awesome. If not, we can keep going. I'll give you a second here. So can you walk me through the process of kind of managing and understanding the compliance for subcontractors? So I know a part of that would be certificate of insurance. Just kind of can you generally walk me through that process of how you guys assess?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. And because we're moving up in standards as well in what we do, so we have a standard in Ontario, Canada that we have to follow, that we follow, but we are looking go ISO. So that kind of process moves us back a step as well where we really start looking at subcontractors.

So right now, if we look at all of our subcontractors that are working for us at present or have done in the past, we would class them really to start up with all as being approved. And then we would go just by unapproved by exception. So instead of having to go through with all of these subcontractors and start, we've got a fairly deep book, if you like, on who we could choose for jobs.

So we'll say that everybody is preapproved for now. And then as each job comes up, we will then put the onus on them to supply us with documentation to prove like insurance and all of their workers trade certificates and whether they're match for the job they've got the skills and the experience to work on the project that we're looking at.

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And then once we get to that point and then we get to the mobilization stage when they're going to move into the field, then we kind of pass that over to our site superintendent. So anybody coming up the site, we meet with the supervisors first on site just to give them a run through what's expected of them before they actually bring their workers on the site.

There's a lot of onus on the subcontractor to manage their traders. We did not know the GC, the general contractor. We manage in the project, so we ask the traders to manage their own staff. But we will put a standard input, a safety program will have to meet or exceed ours.

If it doesn't meet ours, then they will follow our safety program. So that's where we normally pick the good people to work for because we don't really want to stop managing down at that level. So we try and make sure people are qualified, experienced and work for the same standards we do.

Once they get on the site, then there is going to be that requirement of documentation to be supplied on a weekly basis. And we also expect them to do their own risk assessments. They will have to do the analysis of the project.

And anything that they do, which is what's described as a high-risk activity, so you're going to be working in height, heavy equipment, confined space, excavations all of these things, we want methods of the procedure on how that would be done, and we will review and approve those before they're allowed to break ground, if you like.

So there's a whole process prior to them ever getting to site and then this is different once they're on site. So really, we have two major stages, if you like. One that requires quite an experience to do the job; and two, they have to meet the expectations of our safety program when they are on site. Just let me know if you need more clarification on anything.

**Tegus Client**

Yes, absolutely. And I'll be taking notes throughout this. So there'll be some pauses and whatnot.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. Sure. No problem.

**Tegus Client**

So just so I kind of understand then, there's two processes really for managing the compliances, some stuff you do beforehand and then there's some ongoing stuff once they're actually on site.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. They have to continue to meet that standard when they're in the field. The pre-qual side it's kind of, I don't want to say one and done, but it kind of it is you look for the subcontractor, you have knowledge of them or if not, you go through a pre-approval process and once that's done, that's done.

But then they have to keep that side of the bargain, if you like, once they're on the site so we see anything that's documentation or the documentation is insufficient in our lines, then we them and manage them on site.

**Tegus Client**

How much time would you say it takes to do the pre-qual?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes, I mean we're actually leaning towards maybe giving to third-party to do this. Yes, we're leaning towards maybe using a third party to do the pre-qualifications.

**Tegus Client**

But why is that?

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**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Well, there's lots of them that they manage these things really well. And it depends on the size of your back office, if you like, how much effort you can put in with. So what they will do is we will set the parameters for what we want, level of insurance, for instance, standards and the safety program what it has to have and high-risk activities.

And then that company, that third-party will then gather all that information and review it as per our requirements. And then they will keep on track with that. So if insurance is running out, they send reminders. If training is expiring, they will want new training records.

So they kind of manage it in the background. Sometimes that's where there can be a gap out in the field if we try to do it ourselves. We're relatively small. So we can kind of keep ahead of that. So we're just deciding whether to use a third-party.

Some of them are a cost to us to use. Others can just be a cost to a subcontract. And that's probably the model that we're going to lean towards to help them, and it's a small fee they will pay to be pre-qualified, but it's a little managing especially if you have multiple sites with multiple contractors, it can be a lot easy to have a third-party just to keep a more insight on that.

**Tegus Client**

So in the benefit of using a third-party for the pre-qual is easier to manage. And you kind of were elaborating on this a little bit already, but what really are some things that, that.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Well, one, they have to maintain a certificate of insurance, so they have to have a current certificate all of the time. There's also for most jurisdictions around there's like a workers compensation board prequalification that they have to meet. And that only lasts for a period of time, like three months, six months. So that means to be renewed on a regular basis.

**Tegus Client**

Sorry, what was that.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

It's like a workers' compensation clearance to show that they're in good standing with the workers' competition board. So that can actually expire after a certain period of time. We can ask the subcontract to supply us with the new certificate of clearance on a regular basis.

But the third-party company is a lot more efficient in doing that. So it makes it a little easier for those type of things that are on a renewal basis and they can fly the subcontract to say, "Hey, your insurance is expiring, and you're going to need a new certificate of clearance before they expire." So it helps.

**Tegus Client**

So that third-party company when those certificates are expiring, they will work with the subcontractor to make sure they're compliant and then.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. For us, it's seamless. Then we would just see a dashboard to see all green or something like amber, maybe a red. So you wouldn't normally see the red because the third-party is using pretty efficient in getting the new certificates of the true stockings.

**Tegus Client**

And then I imagine that kind of puts some of the liability on the third-party company as well in this situation? Or how.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. Yes. Yes. I mean, for that if you're entering a contract with them to do that we do have a responsibility to keep track of it. But we see a dashboard as opposed to going through a file or folder to see everything is up to date.

We get an easy view of the status of the subcontractor without having to check kits and check documents and everything else. We can just transfer that to see everything is good, but yes, that's the some of the liability under them, and that's what you pay for.

**Tegus Client**

Yes, that makes sense. So did you say you are currently using a third-party? Or are you guys are.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

No. We have had meetings and discussed. We've got some pricing just citing whether we're at that stage where we do need to do that. Or right now, we can manage it ourselves. But it's coming and we'll see because we're switching to a new standard for our company.

And that standard puts a lot of emphasis on contractor management and procurement. So we'll see. When we do the next audit, we'll see how well we're actually doing in that cells and then we'll be able to say, I think it's time to bring on a third-party.

**Tegus Client**

What led the decision of the standards changes?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Well to say it's not our choice. So like I said, there's an international standard we can have, which is an ISO standard. There's a provincial standard, which is the one we use right now. But that provincial standard it doesn't equate very well with international clients, which we do have. So that's why we're leaning towards going for the international standard.

But in the meantime, the provincial standard is taken on the format of the international standard, which is good for us because now that's a kind of easiness into the international standard. So they have made the change in Ontario to have this new standard and they've taken the format of an ISO standard, which is good.

So makes it a little clearer for everybody. So that change in standard was something we were going to do anyway. But this is now just kind of brought it forward a little bit. So it's kind of a baby step for us until we change to an international.

**Tegus Client**

So would you say that you've ever experienced any like costly errors or legal issues due to the difficulties of managing like COI and those sorts of things?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. No. Because we do manage the subcontractors, there's a challenge sometimes for project managers. We normally get ahead of any issues that are coming up. We haven't had an issue with insurance or anything like that because that's kind of upfront before contracts are signed.

So anything that happens at that level, we have experience that then it's a legal issue and legal counsels will take care of that. But no, it's really just the management of the subcontractors on site, which is really the biggest risk because one thing is insurance. The time that that's spent at a different level, but the actual safety risk on site with the subcontract not following the program is a lot more impactful from my point of view.

**Tegus Client**

Yes. So how do you manage the contractors on site effectively?

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**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

You really have to monitor them. So we have site superintendents who deal every day with the subcontractors. And like I said, those subcontractors will submit documentation every week. So we keep track of how well they're performing in that sense.

But the site superintendents are out on the project that we did and then watching what's happening. The site safety people do audits on a regular basis of the subcontractors to make sure that they're actually doing what they said. Yes, we're just leaning towards a kind of concept of workers imagined and workers done.

It's easy for people to say, "Oh, you know what, this is how we're going to do the job." But then we're going to see how you're actually doing the job. This is the same thing. So we're kind of open to that standard now.

**Tegus Client**

Yes. It's actually having an additional person physically monitoring the work.

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. They'll see what they're doing that day and see what they've done on the risk assessment and job safety analysis and then we'll go to the work site and say, "Hey, this is not you said you're going to do. You haven't taken all of the hazards and risks into account."

It's been successful so far because we have good subcontractors. But it's a challenge when you have a big project and have lots of subcontractors on site. But this is our method of.

**Tegus Client**

Yes. Makes sense. So while you guys are managing the COIs and those things in-house currently not using the third-party just yet, what are some of your processes for effectively managing and tracking those things? What sort of tools that you guys use if any as well?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Well, we do use a project management software system called Procore, which doesn't work great for the safety side of it. So we're looking at a plug-in to Procore to help us do a better job on the safety side because it's really built for managing the project. So the Procore system is really what we use as a tool to manage the project overall, and that helps the financials, everything. So it's a pretty robust piece of software, that's quite expensive.

**Tegus Client**

And does that roll up into your responsibility as managing the COIs and whatnot?

**Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Well, from my side, the safety side, it has a quality and safety plug-in in the software. And I don't love it. I think they admit that, too, as a company that it's not designed for that. So it doesn't work great for me. So it's more of an effort from the safety side for us to keep track of everything and really do a good job.

So we are looking at a third-party for that, but it does a good job overall of checking for everything from requests for information or RFIs, like it tracks everything, and it does a really good job. It will tell who's court is the ball in?

If the term here is the ball is in your court kind of thing. So if you send something out, it's in your court, you know the other one is going to respond, and it does a good job because the financials are all tied into that and the project sort of a lot of the insurance issues like the documentation, which was done at the beginning is kind of there.

But, like I said, managing that more directly, you really need a prequalification company to really tie into that as well because you often don't have the project build in Procore while you're preparing subcontractors and budgets and estimates and everything else like sometimes you're not really using the tool yet. So the

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pre-qual side really does need more oversight and that's where the third-party really helps.

### **Tegus Client**

What changes would make that plug-in for Procore that helps you with the safety side?

### **Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Yes. Well, I mean it doesn't do a good job of being able to get the data back out, from my point of view. Because a lot of the things are in forms in the system. And when it's in a form, you can't pull out the data from a form. So if I want to look at, say, "How many head injuries did we have in the last project?" I can't really get that because it was all under form originally.

If there was an investigation in an incident document, I might be able to get it from there. But it's just so fragmented that I can't really delve into it. I can't see a dashboard of what's happening. But the company admits that, that isn't its strength.

So that's why they have a marketplace within Procore, which allows you now to go for quality and safety and all of the other things. It doesn't do quite as well, and many have to buy another piece of software. And it will talk to Procore, but yes, Procore within itself it's just a bit of a clumsy, they didn't put a lot of thought and effort into the safety side of it because they knew that's not their strength.

So they were project management software with the ability to do something else where it doesn't do great jobs, but they recognize that. If I was to open up that program on my computer, it will have a place called marketplace up in the top corner, and I just click on.

### **Tegus Client**

Well, so similarly, what features and functionalities would you find most valuable in a solution for managing the COIs?

### **Director of Health Safety at Urbacon**

Well, I mentioned this. I mean, I know there's a lot about certificate, insurance, but I think when I first got on board with this, it was about contractors and subcontractors. So it kind of changed the focus a little bit.

So the certificate of insurers from my point of view, is really more to do with the pre-qual of the subcontractor, in general, not so much just their insurance where it's kind of what's my insurance on these guys being the right people.

And that's a multitude of things, like I said, from having an experience to do the job, from having access to qualified people and the right people on my project and then actually following through and work safely and documenting everything that they did. So it's a little different.

Typically, like I said, insurance. So one thing should something go wrong, I'm in the prevention business, so I'm trying to figure out what else we need from a subcontractor that would help us complete the job successfully, and that is having somebody who is experienced in what they do.

Follows a strict program, manages the staff well on site, is responsive to anything that happens or goes wrong, reports everything that's happening on site going back, positive observations and other things. We have some large clients we've really put a lot of stock in the fact that we report things ahead of time and the good things and the bad things.

### **Tegus Client**

Makes sense? Well, that pretty much covers everything that I was kind of hoping to get out of this. So I really appreciate, again, just you taking time and answering some of these questions for me, proving some insight on the industry. Have a good one.

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