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## HALL TOGETHER IN CONSTRUCTION

*Hall strengthens their turnkey construction  
solution with the introduction of  
Hall Shoring & Foundations*



What is the SQUID?





Matt Ramsden (left), general manager and Drew Kovacs (right), general superintendent, with Hall Shoring & Foundation's Soilmec SR-65





HALL SHORING &amp; FOUNDATIONS

# HALL

## Together in Construction

Hall strengthens their turnkey construction solution with the introduction of Hall Shoring & Foundations

By Aaron Broverman

Founded in 2010, with only 35 employees as a civil site servicing company based in Surrey, B.C., Hall Constructors has grown exponentially thanks to a focused investment in people, technology and infrastructure.

Now Hall has over 500 employees with specialties in large scale excavation, civil infrastructure, highway and bridge construction, underground utilities and site development projects ranging from \$100,000 to \$150 million across B.C. and Alberta. Through it all, they've remained a family business, founded by Dennis and Bryan Hall.

The father and son team have grown their extensive capabilities and services by bringing in leaders in their respective fields and investing in state-of-the-art equipment; all modelled on Hall's successful business infrastructure and enveloping all into the progressive culture of teamwork at Hall.





Hall Shoring & Foundation's Soilmec SR-125

"It's easy to say that you want to get into a business and it's easy to buy equipment, it's hard to get people. So once we decided that, 'We think there's a marketplace, we think we can do a better job and we can provide a better service,' then we went out to find the people," said Chad Tenney, vice-president and partner at Hall.

Hall has built the business on developing specialized divisions which focus on their own skillsets to develop a solution that delivers the company's high standard of quality and expertise. In addition to the core business that remains Hall Constructors, these divisions include Hall Mechanical Services, Coast Mountain





Setting up for Kelly bar drilling

Resources, All Roads Construction and Vancouver Sand and Gravel.

“A lot of the other businesses we started after Hall Constructors supports vertical integration into our core business. A big function of our core business is our excavation and shoring group, and in a lot of work in our marketplace, we’d been seeing a lot more piling associated with our excavation and shoring work,” said Tenney.

As a result, Hall Shoring & Foundations is the newest division in the Hall Ecosystem, headed up by general manager, Matt Ramsden, a 30-year veteran

of the foundations industry, including 15 years in Western Canada.

“When you talk to [Ramsden], you recognize that he loves the foundation business. His depth of knowledge is more than most people in the industry from a technical perspective, understanding the equipment, understanding the customer base, so when we met [Ramsden] we knew we had something we could build on,” said Tenney.

The new division gives Hall complete control of the shoring and foundations process for its projects in-house




## COVER STORY

in the same way they have control over every other aspect of civil construction and excavation with their various other divisions.

“We can dig the hole, through the excavation group, we can do all of the off-site and on-site civil construction and we can do all the groundwork. But Hall was using subcontractors to come in and do the piling, so they decided it was about time they started their own foundations and shoring division to do their own piling,” said Ramsden.

Rather than hiring three or four different subcontractors to do different scopes, a developer can now hire Hall, which offers those different scopes under the same umbrella, saving the developer money and time.

Such a thing is easy to pull off because Hall Shoring & Foundations offers a variety of services. They perform slope stabilization, ground densification and improvement, cut-off walls, drilled caissons and a full slate of pile types, including steel displacement piles, full displacement piles, secant and soldier piles and one



The speed of  
CFA installation  
allows Hall  
to reduce  
their carbon  
footprint.  
There's also less  
vibration and  
noise pollution  
with CFA piling.

Tooling up the Soilmec SR-125

pile type that wasn't readily available in B.C., until Hall decided to specialize in it.

"We've been well received because the type of piling that we specialize in is CFA – Continuous Flight Auger," said Ramsden. "I've spent 30 years doing CFA piling. I pioneered the technique in Canada, and consider myself and my team the industry leaders of this technique, so that's what we decided to focus on."

In Alberta and the Prairies, Ramsden and his team had already done approximately 80,000 CFA piles with his previous employer. His name is so synonymous with the technique in the province that when Hall Shoring & Foundations opened its first satellite office in Edmonton a few months ago, they quickly secured a high-profile project simply because the owner realized who the faces behind the Hall name were: Ramsden and his team.

"We didn't quite understand ourselves, our own direction, until we met [Ramsden]," said Tenney. "Until [Ramsden] really started to educate us on the CFA pile, what sets it apart from other types of foundation solutions and what it would bring to our organization if we could offer that service."

In B.C., Ramsden's name is less familiar, so it's the stellar reputation of Hall's other service areas that wins the day. However, that doesn't mean his team hasn't already achieved a lot since Hall Shoring & Foundations was established in February 2020. As of this article, they have five projects underway, with several more targeted

in B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan that cover residential, commercial and industrial sectors.

Although they are a long way from 80,000 piles – currently 3,000 CFA piles and counting – they are quickly gaining a reputation in B.C. as the people to call for CFA work.

"In Alberta, I was able to change the industry from conventional driven steel piling, conventional caisson piling and belled piles to CFA becoming the dominant pile type in the industry. That's my goal [in B.C.] and I already feel like I've gone a good step up the ladder in achieving that goal," said Ramsden.

Vancouver's foundations industry is dominated by driven steel piling because it's near the water and it's always been done that way. However, Ramsden has been able to market CFA successfully to the local industry as the quicker and less costly option.

The speed of CFA installation allows Hall to reduce their carbon footprint. There's also less vibration and noise pollution with CFA piling.

In general, Hall takes environmental standards very seriously. For example, it only uses new, Tier 4 heavy-duty equipment to ensure its fleet meets the strictest of EPA standards and in Coquitlam, B.C., its All Roads Construction division owns one of the most technologically advanced, cleanest burning asphalt plants in Canada.

"Of our emissions targets in our asphalt business, we're only at 30 per cent of our allowable," said Tenney.

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Installing CFA piles in Surrey, B.C.

Technological advancement permeates all Hall's service areas. Hall Shoring & Foundations, in particular, has acquired four rigs for its fleet in its first 12 months: two Soilmec SR-65s, an Enteco E9100 and a Soilmec SR-125, which can accommodate multiple pile diameters at multiple depths and allows Hall to work multiple sites at the same time. Hall also plans to grow this fleet as needs arise.

However, those machines don't run without the people behind them. The Shoring & Foundations team consists of 10 office staff and 15 field crew members between the offices in B.C. and Alberta, and every single one of them is treated like family.

"We've always aimed to compensate people at the highest level of where they would be compensated for working anywhere else. We also don't have an expectation of unrealistic working hours. There's not this 60-, 70-, 80-hour work-week expectation," said Tenney.

"We recognize that people have families and people have kids, as well as obligations outside of work that sometimes need to take priority, so we offer them flexibility in that regard. We can't solve people's problems, but we can support them through solving their own problems and be available with a listening ear, while also being open to hearing their ideas."

With its open attitude and familial culture, Hall attracted top talent in all its service areas. In addition to Ramsden, the company's other industry experts are also

leaders in their respective fields; another reason this new division has been buzzed about in industry circles.

"We just recently brought in who I consider to be the best pile designer-engineer in Western Canada – if not all of Canada – who worked with me for 10 years, back at my last company, and joined us because he wanted to work with me again," said Ramsden.

Fazli Raziq Shah is Hall Shoring & Foundations' senior engineer and, on his expertise alone, the company can offer full, in-house engineered and designed builds. This allows Hall to look at alternate designs that are often more efficient, cost-effective and schedule driven for every project they are asked to bid on.

"What we find in the B.C. market is we get a design that is tendered, but the design isn't specified or customized to what we would like to offer as a solution or what our equipment is capable of, so we find that we often have to provide alternate, value-added solutions to an owner," said Tenney.

"[Shah] is key in that process because he allows us to get a very competitive price in knowing we have a workable design and it's not just some guys guessing on what we can sell to an engineer."

Meanwhile, anything Hall Shoring & Foundations has accomplished – from the projects they've been able to procure to the people they've been able to recruit, the Alberta office they've been able to open and the drills



they've been able to acquire – has been done amid a global pandemic, making those achievements even more remarkable.

Finding the right people is always a challenge in any business, construction is no different and often more challenging than most. Take this to the next level of specialist work such as piling and foundations, and the pool of experienced people gets even smaller. That's why the addition of Cory Willard, regional manager for Alberta and Prairies was a key to the growth of Hall in this region.

"[Willard] and I worked together previously for over 10 years, and when you need someone you can trust and respect to get the job done, this was a no-brainer for me," said Ramsden.

"There are still not many people who want to meet in-person. In our business, relationships are critical, and it has been very challenging to launch this from a business development and relationship perspective, as well as finding proper field supervision. I feel like we would've been a little further ahead without Covid, but every one of us could say that."

Through it all, no shortcuts were taken and no steps were skipped. Hall's commitment to safety remains. This includes membership in the annual COR safety audit program and the implementation of a paperless safety system that is unique to the Hall Family of Companies.

"It allows our crews and office staff quick access to real-time data, ensuring that we are always using the most recent, up-to-date date information. This platform empowers our foremen with knowledge by having our entire safety management system on their tablets for review and reference. It is a firm belief that safety starts well before we even get onto a job," said Ashley Den Duyf, Hall's health and safety manager. "By giving them the required tools and making them easily available, it allows Hall to actively work at preventative safety rather than reactive."

So, thanks in large part to the hard work of Ramsden and the team he's built at Hall Shoring & Foundations, Hall finds itself even more prepared and able to compete in a constantly changing marketplace.


"The reason I joined [Ramsden] in this start-up is due to the limitless view of what we can do. We can do so much in the Lower Mainland and I can join him in being a pioneer in the industry in B.C.," said Joe Amarante, Hall Shoring & Foundations' operations manager.


If anyone else in the shoring and foundations industry wants to do the same, Tenney says all they have to do is call him because in the last 18 months, Hall has developed their own training group as a business unit in the company.

"When I say, 'All someone needs to do is phone me,' I mean it, yes," said Tenney. "We're looking for people that want to work in our industry, want to be part of a family, want a long-term career and want to show up every day and give their best. If you have those things, don't worry about what you know, we'll train you from there." 🍁



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