



NLCSA
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR
CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION



NCSO®/NHSA™ General Knowledge Exam Guidelines



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Exam Guidelines & Information

The purpose of the exams is to confirm that the candidate understands key health and safety concepts and can apply their knowledge in both general and specific situations related to the construction industry. The exams have been designed in consultation and agreement with many industry stakeholders and with oversight from the [Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations \(CFCSA\)](#). There are two separate exams, a provincial and a national, each having a slightly different purpose.

National Exam

The national exam is designed to test participants' knowledge of the fundamentals of health and safety; hazard recognition, evaluation and control, training, auditing, incident investigation, inspections, emergency preparedness, WHMIS and PPE. These concepts are critical to successful health and safety management systems in the workplace and to creating a positive culture relating to health and safety.

Candidates are only required to successfully complete the national exam once. If the candidate holds a valid NCSO[®]/NHSA[™] from another member of the CFCSA, the national exam would have already been successfully completed.

Provincial Exam

There are 14 jurisdictions within Canada (ten provincial, 3 territorial, one federal). Each jurisdiction is governed by its own occupational health and safety legislation, and while all are based on the Internal Responsibility System, there are differences across the jurisdictions. An NCSO[®]/

NHSA[™] must be aware of the individual provincial or federal legislation that applies when developing, implementing and overseeing a health and safety program.

The exam will test the participants' knowledge of regulatory requirements in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When Can I Write the Exam?

You will be eligible to challenge both exams as soon as all other program requirements have been successfully completed and it has been verified that required training is current (not expired). Once you are deemed eligible, you will have twenty-four (24) months to successfully complete both knowledge exams.

Please note the NCSO[®]/NHSA[™] candidate will be required to submit updated/current practical requirements for any one or more of the practical requirements that were completed more than twelve (12) months prior to the time that the candidate challenges both knowledge exams. Additionally, all required training certificates must be current at the time of challenging the exam.

How Do I Schedule the Exam?

Once you receive notification that you meet the exam eligibility requirements, it is your responsibility to contact the NLCSA and make arrangements to schedule one or both the national and provincial exams. The NLCSA requires a minimum of two (2) weeks notice to schedule a candidate for either one of the exams. Both exams are required to be written on the same day.



NCSO Exam Guidelines & Information

What If I'm an NCSO[®]/NHSA[™] From Outside Newfoundland and Labrador?

If you would like to have an NCSO[®]/NHSA[™] Certificate issued by the NLCSA and you are already hold an NCSO[®]/NHSA[™] designation from another jurisdiction, you do not need to write the national knowledge exam. The NLCSA will, however, need to verify that you are familiar with Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Health and Safety legislation, through the provincial knowledge exam.

To apply to challenge the provincial exam, you will be required to formally apply and pay a \$50 administrative fee. You will also be required to provide proof of your NCSO[®]/NHSA[™] certification from the province or territory you are coming from before challenging the exam.

The “Day Of” the Exams

When you arrive at the NLCSA to challenge the exams, you will be required to show a valid Government issued photo identification card (i.e. driver's license, passport, resident card) to verify your identity. Please note that electronic devices and textbooks are not permitted in the exam room.

You will be required to challenge the national knowledge exam first and will have two (2) hours to complete it. Following completion of the national exam, you will be granted one (1) hour to challenge the provincial knowledge examination. The successful passing mark for each exam is 75%.

When Can I Expect My Exam Results?

You will be contacted by email within two (2) weeks of challenging the exams to let you know if you were successful. The results will be communicated as a PASS or FAIL.

What If I Don't Pass An Exam?

If you were unsuccessful on either the provincial or national knowledge exams, you can apply to rewrite either. You must wait fourteen (14) days before being permitted to challenge the exam(s) again (and between any subsequent exams) and you must pay a \$50 + HST administrative fee each time you apply to rewrite.

You can challenge the national and provincial knowledge exam three (3) times. If you are not successful after three (3) attempts, you must wait a period of 12 months before starting the application process over again.

Exam Preparation

What Is Covered In The Exams?

In order to be accepted to write the exams, there are a number of compulsory and elective courses that you would have completed.

The exams will test your knowledge of, and ability to apply, the information covered in these courses. While you are only required to complete three (3) of the elective courses, the more programs you take the more familiar you will be with the material, and the more successful you will be on the exams.

The Layout - National Exam

The national knowledge exam is a two (2) hour, closed book exam, made up of 120 multiple choice questions. This exam is heavily weighted on the foundational concepts from the following compulsory courses:

- Certificate of Recognition® Training (COR®) *
- Standard First Aid
- WHMIS 2015
- Construction Worker Safety
- Site Specific Safety Plans

A blueprint for the national knowledge exam can be found on the following page.

*Certification for Level 1 OHS Committee /WHS Representative and Designate and Supervisor Health and Safety is included in COR®

The Layout - Provincial Exam

The provincial knowledge exam is a one (1) hour, closed book exam, made up of 60 multiple choice questions. This exam is heavily weighted on the requirements of the Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Health and Safety & First Aid Regulations and draws on information from the following courses:

- OHS Committee
- Fall Protection
- Confined Space Entry
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods
- Environmental Awareness 2017
- Trenching & Excavation
- Powerline Hazard
- Traffic Control Person
- Standard First Aid
- Construction Worker Safety
- Supervisor Health and Safety

You are not expected to be a subject matter expert on any of the above topics, however you should have a basic understanding of the legislative requirements for each of the general concepts and high risk construction activities outlined above.

Additional Resources

There are many additional resources that can assist you in preparing to write the exams including:

- [Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Health Safety Act & Regulations](#)
- [Guide to OHS Legislation, Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

Exam Blueprints

Topic	General Concepts for National Exam	Total Marks
Hazard Control & Risk Assessment	Hazard assessments, hierarchy of controls, elements of risk assessment, hazard categories	24
Investigations	Investigation processes, procedures and incident causation.	18
Health and Safety Management Systems	Elements of a health and safety management system (as per COR [®] Requirements), legislation.	18
Audits and Auditing	COR [®] Audit process and procedures, audit timelines, sampling, documentation review, timeframes and action plans.	16
Training & Orientation	Training needs assessment, evaluation, documentation, verification and monitoring methods.	15
Inspections	Inspection procedures, formal and informal procedures.	10
WHMIS	WHMIS 2015 components (includes worker education, site specific training, SDS's, workplace labels, hazard communication.	9
PPE	Standards, types of PPE, PPE controls and legislation.	9
First Aid & Emergency Response	Emergency preparedness.	1
		120

Topic	General Concepts for Provincial Exam	Total Marks
General Knowledge of Regulations	Drawn from any section of the regulations. Concepts could include working alone, harassment & workplace violence, OHS Program requirements, occupational disease etc.	19
OHS Committee/WHM Rep./Designate	When required, training requirements, committee constitution (how many & who), committee meeting & reporting requirements.	7
Rights and Roles/Responsibilities	Due Diligence, Internal Responsibility System (IRS), Worker Rights, Roles & Responsibilities	6
Return-to-Work	Roles and responsibilities for WorkplaceNL's early and safe return to work of workers, including goals, penalties for non-compliance etc...	6
First Aid & Emergency Response	Emergency preparedness, site training requirements, first aid equipment/material requirements, emergency response risk assessment	5
Confined Space	What it is, common hazards, basic legislative atmospheric testing requirements.	4
Fall Protection	What it is, when is it required, different systems, use and inspection requirements.	4
Traffic Control	When is it required, common hazards, basic legislative requirements.	3
Stop Work Orders & Investigations	Duties & authority of an OHS Officer & Division, stop work orders & incident reporting and investigation	3
WHMIS	Requirements as per SDS's	1
Power Line Hazards	General requirements for working around energized powerlines.	1
Trenching & Excavation	What is an excavation, common hazards, protective systems & requirements.	1
		60



SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Multiple choice exams are the most common format of testing used today. This type of question is used to determine if you are able to identify the “right” or “best” answer out of a list of choices based on your knowledge of the subject. These types of questions are typically short and are meant to focus on a single idea or step in a broad range of topics. Even though two or more of the answer options will appear plausible there will be a clear “best” answer which does not require explanation.

1. Which one of the following tools is used by workers to assess task(s) and site related hazards?
 - a. Training matrix
 - b. Comprehensive hazard assessment
 - c. Project safety plan
 - d. **Job hazard assessment**

2. What is the main purpose of a COR® Audit?
 - a. Achieve a Certificate of Recognition® so the company can bid on more jobs and reduce insurance costs
 - b. **Find strengths and areas for improvement in the company's health and safety management system**
 - c. Find gaps in the company's health and safety program so people can be held accountable
 - d. Demonstrate due diligence and provide a legal defense in case there are charges under OHS legislation

3. What are the three (3) main goals of Emergency Response/Procedures?
 - a. **Protect Life**
 - b. **Protect Property**
 - c. **Resume Normal Operations**
 - d. Due Diligence



TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Terms & Definitions

The following sections outline the basic information - general terms, definitions, acronyms you need to know to write your exam. Much of this information is located in your various compulsory training manuals.

Audit - An evaluation of a health and safety program measuring its effectiveness and efficiency against given standards. It helps enable the company to improve its health and safety program.

Auditee - The company being audited.

Auditor - An individual who has the qualifications and skill set to measure health and safety performance against a given standard.

Certificate of Recognition (COR®) - An accreditation given to an employer's health and safety management system that has been evaluated by a certified Auditor.

Company Rules – Company directives that govern and control conduct and action at the workplace. These rules are basic written statements that dictate acceptable behavior and leave no room for discretion or argument. Also referred to as safe work rules.

Company Health & Safety Policy - a written and signed statement of the employer's commitment to cooperate with the worker health and safety representative or the workplace health and safety designate and workers in the workplace in carrying out their collective responsibility for occupational

health and safety; and of the respective responsibilities of the employer, supervisors, the worker health and safety representative or the workplace health and safety designate and other workers in carrying out their collective responsibility for occupational health and safety.

Competent Person - May be defined as a person who is qualified because of that person's knowledge, training and experience to do the assigned work in a manner that will ensure the health and safety of every person in the workplace. This person also has knowledge about the provisions of the Act and regulations that apply to the assigned work and about potential, or actual, danger to health or safety associated with the assigned work.

Contractor - A person or organization that undertakes a contract to provide materials or labour to perform a service or do a job.

Corrective Action - An action to eliminate undesired behaviour/conditions.

Critical Task - A task that has the potential to produce major loss to people, equipment, process or the environment.

Due Diligence - In legal terms, this is the requirement of a company / employer to provide safe work conditions through taking reasonable steps to prevent incidents from occurring.

Documentation - Any information which has been written down, including forms, drawings, reports and notes.



TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Documentation, Observations and Interviews

(DOI) - These are the techniques used to verify the effectiveness of a health and safety program (also referred to as verification techniques).

Employee - Any and all individuals employed by an organization, either full or part-time.

Employer - A person who employs one (1) or more workers.

Follow-Up - The term used to indicate an action (usually hazard control) that should take place based on the recommendations in accident/incident reports and hazard assessments.

Frequency - Is how often a person would be exposed to a given hazard.

Hazard Assessment - An evaluation used to assess and document hazards, prioritize them and determine hazard controls.

Hazard Controls - These are the measures put into place to protect workers from known hazards. The typical hierarchy of control measures are elimination, substitution, engineering, administrative and as a last line of defense, personnel protective equipment.

Hazard Recognition - Seeing or becoming aware of a hazardous situation or condition.

Health & Safety Program (also - Occupational Health & Safety Program) - A structured program containing specific elements that is aimed at reducing incidents and costs, resulting in a safer place of employment.

Health & Safety Rules - An internally developed set of standards regarding policies and requirements for safety and general workplace conduct.

Immediate (Direct) Causes - The harmful transfer of energy that causes the injury, illness or property damage. The energies can include acoustic, chemical, electrical, kinetic, mechanical, potential, radiant, and thermal.

Intermediate (Indirect) Causes - The hazards that existed immediately prior to the incident that lead up to the Immediate Causes. They can be thought of as the unsafe conditions and unsafe practices that existed due to deficiencies in the Safety Management System, i.e., the Root (Basic) Causes.

Incident - An occurrence which resulted in or had the potential for causing an injury or occupational disease or damage to anything in the work or external environment.

Incident Investigation - The finding of the facts about an incident by inquiry, observation and exam.

Incident Records - Recorded information (reports and record books) detailing what incidents, injuries, occupational illnesses or damages occurred.

Inspection (Safety Inspection) - The act of examining worksites and/or equipment, and comparing conditions and activities observed against standards. Inspections identify hazards and determine if safety legislation and health and safety policies are being followed by looking for unsafe practices and conditions. The inspection should also be used to reinforce and promote safe work practices.

>> TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Inspection Report - A document containing the findings of an inspection. Causes and preventive measures are identified.

Investigation Report - A document containing the information and facts about a specific incident. The events are put into chronological order to give a complete picture of what occurred. Causes and preventive measures are identified.

Job - A segment of work, a specific work assignment or a set of actions required to complete a specific work objective.

Job Hazard Analysis - The process of evaluating a specific task (job) to identify all hazards or potential hazards that the individuals performing the job (task) may be exposed to.

Lagging Indicators - Measure the end result of OHS processes, policies and procedures. They're a record of things that have already happened. Since they record things after the fact, they inform a reactive health and safety culture.

Leading Indicators - Focus on future health and safety performance with the intent of continuous improvement. They are a signal and monitor of what is being done on an ongoing basis to prevent worker illness and injury.

Legislation - Act & Regulations that legally govern how activities must be performed.

Lockout - A positive method for disconnecting power (or an energy source), or making machinery,

equipment or a process inoperative. Normally, this is done with locks attached to electrical plugs, breakers or switches, control units, valves, or levers. The person placing the lock at the lockout point must be identified. A numbered tag can also be affixed to the lockout point showing the reason for the lockout, the date and the worker's name.

Lockout Procedure - A written procedure describing step-by-step how the positive locking out of equipment, machinery or a process is to be done.

Management - Individuals that have some level of authority, responsibility and accountability within an organization.

Manager - An employee of an organization who is responsible for planning, or directing a department or a group of individuals and monitoring their work. Managers have the authority to change the work assignments of staff and have some control over resources and expenditures. They are responsible for ensuring the organization or department is complying with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and other applicable safety legislation.

Occupational Health & Safety Committee (OHSC) - A group comprised of management and worker representatives that work together to identify deficiencies in the safety management system, and then recommend solutions to correct identified deficiencies. The OHSC plays a key role in the development, implementation, and maintenance of a health and safety program. Sometimes referred to as a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JHSC).



TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Occupational Illness - Physical condition or medical disorder caused by exposure to workplace environmental factors such as silica, dusts, heat, cold, hazardous materials, etc.

Orientation - Overview of, and introduction to, the organization's policies and procedures. Generally carried out with employees/sub-contractors/visitors who are new to an organization or worksite; or returning after an extended period away (i.e. Lay-off, extended leave etc.).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Protective gear designed to reduce or eliminate injuries to a worker. Basic PPE includes steel toed boots, gloves, hard hats, safety clothing and safety glasses. This is the last line of defense.

Policy - A management statement outlining goals, objectives, commitment and responsibilities for a specific topic i.e. PPE, training, inspections etc.

Principle Contractor - The contractor, employer or other person who enters into an agreement with the owner of the work site to be the prime contractor. The principle contractor has the overall responsibility for health and safety on the worksite.

Qualified - An individual who is knowledgeable of the work, the hazards involved and the means to control the hazards, by reason of education, training, experience or a combination of them.

Risk - The chance of loss based on exposure to a hazard, probability of occurrence, and the resulting consequences of exposure to the hazard.

Root (Basic) Causes - The deficiencies in

carrying out safety policies, programs, plans, processes, procedures or practices that allowed the intermediate and immediate causes to exist. Root causes are often the result of: Inadequate system to control hazards through activities such as safety leadership, training, planned inspections, maintenance, hazard analysis and procedures, incident investigation and analysis, emergency preparedness, and/ or rules and procedures. Inadequate performance standards that are not specific enough, not clear enough and/or not high enough. Inadequate compliance with standards because standards are not communicated and/or enforced.

Safe Job Procedures - A written, specific step-by-step description of how to complete a job safely and efficiently from start to finish.

Safe Work Practices - A set of positive guidelines or "Do's and Don'ts" on how to perform a specific task that may not always be done in a certain way.

Safety Management System - The planning, leading, organizing and controlling of activities at all levels in the organization necessary to achieve safety goals.

Senior Management - Individuals within an organization or department who directly control the overall operation of the company or department, and are in a position to make decisions for the entire company or department.

Severity - Is the level of harm that could reasonably be expected to be inflicted in the case of an occurrence.



TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Subcontractor - Subcontractors are not limited to trade contractors and may include delivery people, traffic control persons, service technicians, first aid, temporary labor and cleaning services.

Supervisor - Includes a superintendent, foreman or other worker authorized or delegated to exercise direction and control over workers of an employer.

Terms of Reference - A description of the objectives and structure of a meeting, committee, project, etc.

Training - A process by which someone is taught the skills that are needed for an art, profession, or job.

Unsafe Condition - A condition in which something exists that varies from a normal, accepted safe condition and, if not corrected, could cause injury, occupational illness, and death or property damage.

Unsafe Practice - The actions of a person in a manner which varies from the accepted or legislated safe practice, and which creates a hazard with potential for injury, occupational illness, death or property damage.

Worker - Means a person engaged in an occupation and is in the direct employ of an employer or is working as a worker under a contract of employment. Workers may include owners, management and subcontractors; for the purposes of the COR® audit this term will be used to define individuals that do not have management or supervisor responsibilities.

Worker Health & Safety (WHS) Representative / Designate - An individual who is selected and/or elected by the workers they will represent. Requires training as identified in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Workplace - Means a place where a worker or self-employed person is engaged in an occupation and includes a vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in an occupation.

WorkplaceNL - Means the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission established by the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act

TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Common Acronyms

Many of the most common safety acronyms are listed below. Some of the terms or shorthand used are found in your resource manuals. While it is not necessary to memorize every single item on this list, the more you recognize the better your comprehension of safety related communications will be.

AED – Automated External Defibrillator
 AIHA – American Industrial Hygiene Association
 ACGIH – American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists
 ALARA – As Low as Reasonably Achievable
 BCRSP – Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals
 CCOHS – Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
 CIH – Certified Industrial Hygienist
 CIHI – Canadian Institute for Health Information
 CLC – Canada Labour Code
 CNS – Central Nervous System
 CNSC – Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
 CO – Carbon monoxide
 COR® – Certificate of Recognition®
 CRSP – Canadian Registered Safety Professional
 CSA – Canadian Standards Association [The organization is now called CSA Group]
 CSSE – Canadian Society of Safety Engineering
 dB – Decibels [Unit to measure sound intensity of noise]
 EHS – Environment, Health and Safety; or Environmental Health and Safety
 ERP – Emergency Response Plan
 ESRTW - Early and Safe Return to Work
 GHS – Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
 HPA – Hazardous Products Act
 HPD – Hearing Protective Device
 HVAC – Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning
 IDLH – Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health
 ISO – International Organization for Standardization
 JHA – Job Hazard Analysis
 JOHS – Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee
 LEL – Lower Explosive Limit
 LEV – Local Exhaust Ventilation
 LPG – Liquefied Petroleum Gas
 LTD – Long-term disability
 MSD – Musculoskeletal Disorders

TERMS, DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

MSDS – Material Safety Data Sheet

MSI – Musculoskeletal Injuries

NCSO[®] – National Construction Safety Officer[®]

MSI – Musculoskeletal Injuries

NHSA[™] - National Health and Safety Administrator[™]

NFC – National Fire Code

NIOSH – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (USA)

NSC – National Safety Council (USA)

OEL – Occupational Exposure Limit

OHS – Occupational Health & Safety

OHSMS – Occupational Health & Safety Management System

PAPR – Powered Air-purifying Respirator

PEL – Permissible Exposure Limit

PLH - Power Line Hazards

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

ppm – Parts Per Million

PTS – Permanent Threshold Shift

QA/QC – Quality Assurance / Quality Control

QLFT – Qualitative Fit Test (for respirators)

QNFT – Quantitative Fit Test (for respirators)

REL – Recommended Exposure Limit

RMI – Repetitive Motion Injury

ROPS – Rollover Protection Structures

RSI – Repetitive Strain Injury

RTW – Return to Work

SAR – Supplied Air Respirator

SCBA – Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

SCC – Standards Council of Canada

SDS - Safety Data Sheet

SMS – Safety Management System

STEL – Short-term Exposure Limit

TDG – Transportation of Dangerous Goods

TLV – Threshold Limit Value

TSB – Transportation Safety Board of Canada

TTS – Temporary Threshold Shift

TWA – Time-weighted Average

WCB – Workers Compensation Board (in general)

WHMIS – Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System



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