



**Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations
COR® Harmonized Audit Instructions & Definitions**

**Compiled by the
Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association**





Instructions for Completing the COR® Audit Instrument

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The Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association (NLCSA) has prepared this COR® Audit Instrument to assist our members in measuring the effectiveness of their safety management system(s). This document is designed to be used by the organization's staff members or other individuals trained in its use.

Before you begin the audit process, you must first determine the number of employees in your organization (remember peak employment numbers, not your lowest number from the off season), your sample size and the sites to be reviewed. Then, determine what sections of the audit apply to your individual organizational structure and size. Please review each section to determine if the audit element applies. Remember, although a section may be applicable to your organization, a certain question in that section may not apply to your type of operations. If you find a particular question is not applicable, you will have to explain in writing why it is not applicable. Read over these pages carefully. They will explain the reasons for audits and describe some of the techniques used.

Remember, audits are a management tool used to improve existing systems. Audits measure system performance and provide a basis for future management strategies. It is important for the auditor to always be objective, otherwise the audit process is of little use.

The Audit Process

There are three phases in the audit process. Each phase has several activities.

1. Audit Preparation:
 - Inform participants.
 - Locate background material.
 - Gather tools.
 - Customize forms, and
 - Familiarization tour.
2. Performing the Audit:
 - Occupational Health & Safety Program documentation review,
 - Detailed audit observational tour, and
 - Worker interviews
3. Summarizing the Audit:
 - Close-out meeting,
 - Audit Corrective Action Plan
 - Auditor Summary Sheet (Score Sheet), and
 - Auditor's Code of Ethics

1. Audit Preparation

Planning saves time and energy. Before the audit begins, follow the steps below:

a. Inform Participants

The auditor should verify the following points:

- The date, time, and location of the pre-audit meeting,
- The names of the people that should attend the pre-audit meeting,

- The availability of the audit document,
- The date, time, and location of audit,
- The organization's activity the day of the audit,
- The number of workers/supervisors/managers on site(s) to determine interview sample size,
- The personnel designated as escort while the auditor is on site,
- Site orientation requirements,
- The name of the person designated as key contact for the organization,
- The availability of a quiet area for interviews,
- The personal protective equipment (PPE) required,
- The availability of the organization's Occupational Health and Safety Program Manual for advance review, and
- The availability of records for review (safety meetings, orientations, inspections, etc.).

b. Locate Background Material

Look for things such as:

- A written description of the organization,
- An Organizational Chart, and
- The previous Audit Action Plan, if available.

c. Gather Tools

Gather the tools you will need to perform the audit:

- Note paper and pens,
- Appropriate personal protective equipment,
- Copies of the most current applicable Health and Safety Legislation, and
- The COR® Audit Instrument

d. Familiarization Tour

Arrange for a tour of the site(s). Ensure that you have an individual, who is knowledgeable of the organization, to escort you.

e. Pre-Audit Meeting

The pre-audit meeting will be held to address the following items:

- The confidentiality of the auditor and the audit,
- The scope of the audit (documentation review, observational tour, and interviews),
- The audit instrument to be used,
- The minimum performance standards, and
- Answer the organization's concerns or questions.

2. Performing the Audit

Before proceeding with the audit, complete the "Company Audit Information" found at Page 1 of the audit instrument. Fill in ALL the blanks.

There are three verification techniques used in completing the actual audit: documentation review, observations, and interviews. These verification techniques are listed at the top of the scoring columns as "Technique Employed" in the audit document. Some sections will require all three be verified while others will require only one, or a combination of two. This would be indicated by a clear/white background (as opposed to shaded) in the appropriate column.

The techniques are listed below:

D = Documentation

O = Observations

I = Interviews

N/A = Not Applicable

Technique Employed			
D	O	I	N/A

Let us examine the N/A option. When this option's background is clear/white, N/A may apply to the question. If the background is grey, it means that this option is not available for that question. This can apply to any of the options, Documentation, Observation, Interview or Not Applicable.

Documentation Review

Documentation review is the process of reviewing the health and safety manual as well as safety records. What the auditor is looking for is written proof, or a historical record, that describes activities in place. Safety records are typically checked for completeness such as dates, frequency, agenda items, signature, senior management initials or signature, etc.

Documents that need to be reviewed include:

- Corporate Health and Safety Policy,
- Completed Hazard Assessment Forms,
- Safe Work Practices,
- Job Procedures,
- Organizational Rules,
- Personal Protective Equipment,
- Preventative Maintenance (tools, equipment, vehicles. Check schedule against actual samples),
- Training – Safety Meetings, On-the-Job Training, Orientations, Specialized Training,
- Completed Inspection Reports,
- Completed Investigations,
- Early and Safe Return to Work (ESRTW) Documentation - Completed ESRTW Plans, ESRTW Program Evaluations,
- Emergency Preparedness (review site specific plans for contact numbers; ensure the current date is on the form),
- Statistical Calculations,
- Medical Monitoring Records (where applicable),
- Action Plans from Previous Audit Reports (if available),
- Service NL/Regulatory Agency compliance orders.

Audit Document Completion – Documentation

Work through each documentation question reviewing health and safety documents to confirm or verify the answer. Use a check mark box "✓" for a positive response, leave blank for a negative response, or N/A for Not Applicable under the Documentation Method (D) technique column.

Observational Tour

The purpose of the site observational tour is to verify whether the occupational health and safety program complies with NLCSA COR® standards. An observational tour would be required for each worksite visited during the audit and the auditor must complete an NLCSA COR® Audit Site Information Sheet for each site visited during the audit. The auditor should also note general site conditions and attempt to correlate this to what health and safety program element(s) is/are working, or not working, at the operations level. This is not meant to be a detailed inspection. The NLCSA COR® Audit Site Information Sheet and Audit Observation Checklist are useful tools that can assist you when conducting the site observations.

Audit Document Completion - Observation

Work through each observation question regarding what was noticed during the observational tour. Use a check mark box "✓" for a positive response, leave blank for a negative response, or N/A for Not Applicable under the Observation Method (O) technique column. A positive observation must be made at each site visited during the audit for the "observation" to be verified for the section in question.

Interview Process

It is essential to get a good cross section of all the organization's personnel when conducting interviews. The auditor must constantly strive to collect data that is representative of actual conditions. To achieve a representative sample of those on a worksite, companies should include in the interviews, senior management, management, supervisors, office personnel, workers and contract personnel, where applicable. Group interviews are not an accepted auditing practice. Refer to the table below or contact a Safety Advisor at the NLCSA for assistance in determining your sample size for interviews. Interviewing workers to confirm the effectiveness of the Occupational Health and Safety Program is an essential process.

Number of Interviews to be Performed Based on Size of Organization	
Organization Size	Number of Interviews
1	Self employed person
2	1 Management, 1 WHS Representative (if not the employer) If Management is the WHS Designate, the Employee should also be interviewed
3-9	1 Management, 1 WHS Representative/Designate, 1 Employee
10-19	1 Management, 1 Supervisor*, 1 OHS Committee Member (Employee)**, 3 Employees
20-29	1 Management, 2 Supervisors*, 1 OHS Committee Member (Employee), 4 Employees
30-49	1 Management, 2 Supervisor*, 2 OHS Committee Members, 5 Employees
50+	1 Management, 3 Supervisor*, 2 OHS Committee Co-Chairs, 7 Employees
100+	2 Management, 3 Supervisor (+1 Supervisor for every 100 employees), 4 OHS Committee Members (2 Co-Chairs, 2 Members), 8 Employees (+1 employee for every 25 employees)

* The OHS Act states, "supervisor" means a person authorized or designated by an employer to exercise direction and control over workers of the "employer."

** WHS Representative as of 1-Mar-24

Exception: An auditor has the authority to conduct as many interviews (including written or other alternatives) as deemed necessary to establish the effectiveness of the program. Prior to deviating from the table above, however, the auditor must contact the NLCSA to receive consent to proceed, discussing the rationale.

Alternative methods of conducting interviews may supplement the one-on-one interview process. Alternative methods may include, but are not limited to, processes such as:

- Telephone interviews (one-on-one)
- E-mail responses
- Written submissions

Work through each question where the interview is required to verify or confirm that answer. Add the number of positive responses in the "No of Positive" column, and the number of negative responses in the "No of Negative" column, or "N/A" for Not Applicable under "N/A" column. The ">50% Positive Responses" column will only be checked if at least 50% of the responses for management, supervisors, OHS Committee/WHs Representatives/ Designates and workers are positive. If there are an equal number of positive and negative responses, award a positive response.

3. Summarizing the Audit

There is space in the Audit Instrument for you to record the who, what, when, where, and why answers of your audit. As well, there is space provided at the bottom of each questionnaire (worker, management, OHS Committee/WHs Representative and sub-contractor) for further information.

Close-out meeting

It is imperative that you meet with the appropriate company representatives to "close out". During this time, you should discuss the positive aspects of the audit and the areas that need any improvement. Ensure that the company is aware of all the corrective actions and how the company can submit evidence that they have met the requirements of the corrective action(s).

Audit Corrective Action Plan

The NLCSA COR® Audit, when conducted carefully, results in several benefits:

- Your organization will have an accurate, current measurement of your health and safety management system,
- Your organization will be able to make informed decisions on future health and safety program planning,
- Your organization will be able to evaluate the cost/benefit of its health and safety program, and
- The completed audit report will be able to assist the organization in demonstrating due diligence.

By acting on the recommendations from the Occupational Health and Safety Audit, and correcting identified areas of concern, your organization may be able to:

- Prevent injuries and lower incident/accident rates,
- Reduce property and production losses, and
- Reduce the potential for penalties and shutdowns.

An effectively implemented corrective action plan demonstrates a level of DUE DILIGENCE. The employer develops a written action plan after each audit. The action plan provides the employer with an opportunity to respond to the audit. A complete action plan will:

- Prioritize identified deficiencies and recommendations from the audit,
- Determine corrective action(s) required,
- Assign responsibility, and
- Establish implementation/completion dates.

Audit Summary Sheet (Score Sheet)

To award points that have multiple methods of verification, you need to confirm the answer using all techniques indicated. If all techniques are positive, then full points may be awarded. For example, some sections will require that Documentation, Observation, and Interviews each require positive responses, whereas others may require only one, or a combination of two. This is indicated by the clear background (as opposed to shaded) in the appropriate technique column.

Do not award partial points for questions that are partially correct. If the organization cannot demonstrate that they have met the criteria outlined in the guidelines and verification methods, then no points are awarded for that section.

The use of Not Applicable must be justified in writing under the comments section of the applicable element. Shaded areas in the methods section indicate that a particular technique does not apply to the question.

When each section has been completed, add up the points and write the total in the Actual Score Column for each audit element on the Audit Summary Sheet.

Any changes to the audit document must be in ink and initialed by the auditor.

Auditor Code of Ethics

Once all the information has been recorded onto the audit instrument, and with all requested material collated, you should carefully check the Auditor Code of Ethics Form, complete it, and sign and date it, before sending all document to the NLCSA for review.



Definitions

Adequate	Sufficient to protect people, equipment, materials or the environment from injury, illness or damage and meet legislative requirements
Action Plan	A document which outlines the corrective actions required to address deficiencies identified by the audit. This document outlines how the organization will achieve compliance within a set time frame.
Certified Auditor	a person who: 1. has completed the NLCSA's COR® training or the NLCSA's one day Auditor Certification training program or can prove the successful completion of an equivalent auditor training program; and 2. after their initial internal audit submission, has successfully completed one internal audit per audit cycle (three years).
Committee	An Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHS Committee) referred to in the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Mandatory for companies who employ 10 or more employees.
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.
COR® Program	A health and safety certification program designed to assist companies in the development and maintenance of an organization-wide health and safety management program. Firms receive accreditation upon completion of COR® training, development and implementation of an organization-wide safety program, a comprehensive hazard assessment, and internal and external safety reviews.
Corrective Action	An action to eliminate undesired behaviour/conditions.
Documentation	Any information which has been written down, including forms, drawings, reports and notes.
Employee	Any and all individuals employed by the firm, either full or part-time.
Employer	A person who employs 1 or more workers.
Health and Safety Program	A process for managing health and safety issues in the workplace. It includes a written document of health and safety policies and procedures which is tailored to meet the needs of individual workplaces.
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.
Incident	An undesired event that results in, or has the potential to result in, personal injury or illness, damage to or loss of property, process or the environment.
Legislation	Act & Regulations that legally govern how activities must be performed.
Lost Time Injury	A work-related injury that results in the injured employee missing his or her next scheduled shift from work.
Managers	A person who is in charge of a workplace or has authority over a worker (usually at a level higher than a supervisor).

Maintenance Schedule	Periodic inspection and/or servicing of equipment to be completed on a calendar, mileage, or hours of operation basis. The frequency of inspections and/or servicing is defined by the manufacturer's instructions, the organization's policy, or a COR® standard (whichever is the most stringent).
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 sick leave etc.).
P.P.E.	Personal protective equipment. This refers to devices, equipment and/or apparel used or worn by a worker to mitigate the potential effects of exposure to a hazard.
Preventive Maintenance	A system that attempts to eliminate injury/incident caused by malfunctioning equipment through a proactive approach.
Policy	A management statement outlining goals, objectives, commitment, and responsibilities for a specific topic i.e., PPE, training, inspections etc.
Posted	A highly visible location where the information comes to the attention of workers.
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.
Safe Job Procedures	Written, step by step instructions for a job, process, or machine that, when correctly followed, will provide optimum safety to the worker.
Safe Work Practices	A written document which outlines the methods to be used when performing an activity, that minimize the likelihood of injury/incident.
Statistics	A quantifiable method used to compile information used to measure performance.
Self-Employed Person	A person who is engaged in an occupation on his or her own behalf.
Sub-Contractors	One under contract to a prime contractor by subcontract for completion of a portion of the work for which the prime contractor is responsible.
Supervisor	Includes a superintendent, foreman or other worker authorized or delegated to exercise direction and control over workers of an employer.
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.
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.
Workplace Inspections	An observation tour of the workplace for the specific purpose of determining the levels of compliance with established safe work practices, procedures, and safety rules. Inspections are conducted on an ongoing basis to maintain the effectiveness of an Occupational Health and Safety Program and may be formal or informal. Formal inspections are recorded.
WHMIS 2015	Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (federally and provincially regulated).
WorkplaceNL	Means the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission established by the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act