

Safety & Health Certification Auditor Qualification: A National Guideline



Please note that this document is only for informational purposes and endorsement of best practices. Not all AWCBC member jurisdictions retain responsibility for auditing.

Table of Contents

1. SCOPE4

2. PURPOSE4

3. DESIGN5

4. DELIVERY5

5. EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK6

6. AUDITOR QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS7

 6.1 PRE-REQUISITES7

 6.2 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS8

 6.3 AUDITOR CERTIFICATION EXPIRY/MAINTENANCE9

 6.4 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS/AUDITOR DE-CERTIFICATION ...10

 6.5 CERTIFICATION AUDITOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT 11

 6.6 AUDITOR LIABILITY/INSURANCE12

 6.7 CODE OF ETHICS13

 6.8 RECIPROCITY/RECOGNITION14

APPENDIX A – DEFINITIONS 15

1. Scope

Provincial and Territorial entities who manage safety and health certification programs (*herein referred to as "Governing Body"*) require safety and health certification audits to be performed by qualified auditors who are external to the organization being audited. This guideline sets out the minimum requirements and criteria for certification auditor qualification.

To be recognized as a qualified safety and health certification auditor, individuals (Certifying Partner internal staff and external consultants in private practice) should meet the minimum requirements outlined in this **National Guideline for Safety & Health Certification Auditor Qualification (CAQ)**.

The National Guideline should be used in conjunction with applicable safety and health legislation, and *Certification Standards and Procedures* provided by the certification governing bodies in the auditor's local jurisdiction.

Safety and health certification auditor training programs delivered by recognized training providers outline the framework for obtaining CAQ. They may vary in format, structure and customization to address the specific needs of their industry. Certifying Partners or their Governing Body may develop additional certification auditor qualification requirements to ensure certification auditors are qualified to conduct audits within their industry sector. Certifying partners in each jurisdiction have the authority to deny applications, issue, or revoke CAQ. Training providers should effectively demonstrate their CAQ training programs meet or exceed the requirements outlined in this guideline.

2. Purpose

The National Guideline for Safety & Health Certification Auditor Qualification is designed to set benchmarks and designate consistent and essential credentials for qualified professionals to perform safety and health certification audits across Canadian jurisdictions. It provides high level recognition to individuals who have met the essential educational, experience and performance criteria required to perform safety and health management system certification audits to the standards set by the governing body.

This guideline is intended for the following individuals who conduct certification audits:

- certifying partner internal staff
- external consultants in private practice (approved by Certifying Partners)
- peer auditors (where applicable)

Applicants for CAQ should be deemed competent in knowledge, personal attributes and skills required for their chosen industry. The Certifying Partner in the applicant's jurisdiction is responsible to approve all applications. Applicants who are denied should receive written notice from the Certifying Partner indicating the reason for denial.

3. Design

Certification Auditor Qualification training programs should be competency-based and designed to reflect contemporary and innovative learning and assessment practices, industry expectations, and demonstrate that applicants meet the level of knowledge and competency required to conduct safety and health certification audits on behalf of Certifying Partners or the Governing Body. The training program should meet the following criteria:

- Compliance with adult learning principles:
 - Ensure learners know why they need to learn specific content, its relevance to them and the workplaces they will be auditing.
 - Relate learning to training participants' own experience in situations that simulate actual application in the workplace.
 - Program design, content and activities should demonstrate adult learning principles, challenge and engage participants, and include theory and practical components.
 - Recognize adult learning limitations and apply techniques to address the various ways that adults learn.
 - Use realistic activities and tools to support transfer of learning to the workplace.
- Language and literacy level appropriate for learners.
- Content that is accurate and current, and also references and verifies all legal and technical information.
- Uses a variety of teaching aids such as audio-visuals, manuals, case-studies, as well as oral and written exercises and varied evaluation methods to verify transfer of learning.
- Content that is tied to the services and support offered by the certifying partner.
- Consistency with the provincial, territorial and federal legal requirements and Governing Bodies' *Certification Standards and Procedures*.

4. Delivery

A certification auditor qualification training provider may provide training in any way or combination that meets the needs of participants, industry, Certifying Partner, and the Governing Body. The training programs should meet the following criteria:

- In-class, instructor-led training is the preferred training method.
- Hybrid training models may be used. Knowledge components can be delivered virtually, practicum auditing components should be conducted in person.

Training providers should maintain records of all auditors who have received certification in accordance with this guideline. These records may be requested by the governing body.

Training providers should also issue a certificate/recognition to each individual certified under this guideline which reflects: the certified individual's name, the name of the training provider, date of successful completion, expiry date (if applicable) and a unique individual identifier (ie: certificate number).

5. Evaluation and Feedback

Participants should complete theory and practical examinations to confirm their knowledge and understanding of OHS management systems, hazard identification and risk assessment, legislation, auditor roles and responsibilities and code of ethics, auditing principles and practices. Evaluation should include a combination of written examination and a practical component.

Participants should successfully demonstrate their knowledge and skill in auditing practices and principles during practical learning activities. The learning activities should simulate actual audit scenarios and participants should be able to demonstrate application of their auditing knowledge, skills and professional judgement. Trainers are required to monitor and instruct participants during learning activities and verify participants' competency in applying professional auditing knowledge, skills and judgement.



6. Auditor Qualification Requirements

6.1 PRE-REQUISITES

In order to apply to the Certification Auditor Qualification training program, applicants should meet the following minimum criteria:

- Alignment with a certifying partner (CP) and completion of the CP's auditor training

Applicants should possess one of the following:

- Three to five years' full-time experience in the safety and health profession.
- A recognized certificate/diploma/degree/masters in occupational safety and health
- A safety and health-related professional certification/designation such as: Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP), Canadian Registered Safety Technician (CRST) Certified Health and Safety Consultant (CHSC), Gold Seal Construction Safety Practitioner, or Professional Gold Seal Construction Safety Practitioner, National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO), other safety and health designations accepted by the Certifying Partner
- A professional auditor designation such as: British Standards Institute – Auditor (BSI), ISO Certified Auditor (Registrar, Certified Lead Auditor), Auditing Association of Canada, Certified Health and Safety Management System Auditor Program, ASQ Certified Quality Auditor, other professional auditor designations accepted by the Certifying Partner
- A combination of safety and health education and auditing experience may be considered by the Certifying Partner

6.2 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The minimum training requirements for the Certification Auditor Training program should include:

- Instruction and training in the following:
 - Recognized occupational safety and health management systems theory
 - Hazard identification and risk control techniques
 - Auditor roles, responsibilities, code of ethics
 - Applicable federal/provincial/territorial legislation
 - Industry Specific/Sector training (may be required by CPs)
 - Certification auditing theory, skills, techniques, validation techniques, scoring, reporting, quality assurance, practicum
 - The certification auditor training should include theory and practical auditing components
 - Participants should conduct at least one audit that has been reviewed and approved by the certifying partner.
 - Candidates who are new to auditing or who will be performing audits in a new industry classification should follow a practicum/mentorship program as determined by the Certifying Partner. Certified Auditor Qualification will be issued upon completion of all training and practicum/mentorship requirements.
 - Other training courses required by the Certifying Partner
- All course examinations should measure the candidate's achievement of the course learning objectives and require a passing score of at least 80%.
- All course examinations should be composed of different question types (e.g. true/false, short answer and multiple choice, etc.)
- A challenge exam may be offered by the candidate's certifying partner.
- Assessment of written and oral communication, interpersonal skills, critical thinking and analysis and sound judgment is required.

6.3 AUDITOR CERTIFICATION EXPIRY/MAINTENANCE

Certification Auditors should maintain their status by meeting the following requirements:

- Complete at least one audit within each 12 month period. The audit submission may be a certification audit, maintenance audit, or the initial qualifying audit conducted to obtain certification auditor qualification. *(Note: Some Certifying Partners' audit submission requirements may exceed these minimum guidelines.)*
- Complete a minimum of seven hours of safety related training (recommended or approved by the Certifying Partner) every three years. (ie: auditor refresher training, industry specific training, etc.)
- Comply with the Certifying Partner's maintenance requirements for certification auditors on or before any auditor's certification expiry date.
- Maintain all professional certifications/designations in good standing and report any status changes to the Certifying Partner.
- Comply with Auditor Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct and participate in any dispute resolutions as requested by the Certifying Partner.
- Conduct all audits using approved audit tools and methodologies.

6.4 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS/AUDITOR DE-CERTIFICATION

A Certification Auditor may become subject to performance management and/or disciplinary action and may become de-certified by the Certifying Partner or the Governing Body in the following situations:

- Contraventions of the Auditor Code of Ethics, including but not limited to: conflicts of interest, breach of impartiality and failing to uphold industry best practices
- Continued, documented sub-standard performance
- Non-conformance with CP's certification program, policies, or quality assurance corrective action recommendations
- Contravention of the auditor's obligations to the certifying partner
- Failing to comply with required auditor re-certification/maintenance activities and training
- Failure to maintain professional certifications/designations, WCB coverage or other required professional/liability insurance where applicable in each jurisdiction
- Sufficient, validated concerns arising from reported auditor acts, omissions or conduct
- Sufficient, validated concerns raised by stakeholders, including: employers, certifying partners, Labour Canada, provincial enforcement agencies, labour unions, associations, workplace safety and health committee representatives, workers or the public.

Investigation Process:

- The certifying partner will immediately conduct a thorough, documented and expeditious investigation upon receiving a report of any of the above-noted perceived violations. The certifying partner may involve other parties as necessary to complete the investigation.
- The auditor should actively participate in the investigation and provide any requested evidence or information related to the reported violation.
- A certifying partner will immediately place an auditor "under review" until the investigation is complete. During this time, no new audits may be assigned to the auditor. The certifying partner may choose to reassign an audit in progress to a new auditor at their discretion. The certifying partner may also choose to investigate other audits conducted by the auditor under investigation.
- The investigation may result in progressive disciplinary action or auditor decertification as determined by the certifying partner.
- The certifying partner will inform the auditor, in writing when an auditor has become de-certified.
- The certifying partner will inform the governing body and any other directly affected stakeholders when an auditor has become de-certified.
- The auditor has the right to appeal the certifying partner's decision and should follow the certifying partner's process for appeals.
- An auditor who has become de-certified should follow the certifying partner's requirements for recertification.

6.5 CERTIFICATION AUDITOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality Assurance of Certification Auditors:

The importance of performing auditor quality assurance and reporting will assist in:

- Continuous improvement of the certification auditor qualification guideline and related training
- Maintaining auditor integrity and professionalism to the highest standard
- The certifying partner, who certifies the auditor's credentials is responsible for ensuring the quality of the work performed by each auditor. The certifying partner's quality assurance should consist of:
 - Verification of each audit report to validate the results prior to issuing any certification to the auditee.
 - Conducting and documenting reviews of the Certification Auditor's activities in accordance with the governing body's requirements.
 - Conducting an annual review of any completed auditor evaluations and reviewing the results with the auditor.
 - Conducting and documenting a job observation of the Certification Auditor while in the field completing an audit in accordance with the governing body's requirements.
 - Following the completion of the above activities, the Certifying Partner conducts a closeout meeting with the Certification Auditor to discuss findings and determine next steps, as necessary (ie: further performance review)
- The governing body may request the results of the certifying partner's auditor quality assurance review, or, they may conduct their own quality assurance/ verification review.

6.6 AUDITOR LIABILITY/INSURANCE

Certification Auditors should obtain the following (as required by the certifying partner and/or jurisdictional requirements):

- Third-party liability/errors and omissions to be purchased by external (Certification) auditors
- CPs should provide third-party liability/errors and omissions insurance or statutory protection from liability for their (staff) certification auditors
- WCB coverage to be purchased by the employer for (staff) certification auditors.
- WCB coverage to be purchased by (contracted) external certification auditors when required by jurisdiction.
- A business license for the jurisdiction of operation for external certification auditors who operate as consultants
- Where a contract for service exists, the contract for service between the certifying partner and any external (non-staff) certification auditors should outline the terms of service, required insurance and process for investigating auditor complaint/appeals.

6.7 CODE OF ETHICS

Certification Auditors should be trained in and adhere to the Auditor Code of Ethics required in their jurisdiction.

- Code of Ethics training is required and may be included in maintenance auditor training, or offered as a separate course.
- All auditors should sign an agreement stating they will be bound by the Auditor Code of Ethics before completion of their certification process, or in the event of a lapse in certification, or re-certification after removal of credentials by the CP.
- Certification auditors should abide by the certifying partners requirements for refresher training in the Auditor Code of Ethics.
- A certification auditor should:
 - Disclose all perceived conflicts of interest involved with conducting the audit to the certifying partner
 - Not make audit recommendations with the intent to market or to justify the purchase of additional business services from either an auditor or a member of the auditor's corporate group.
 - Not perform "cross-audits" in all auditing scenarios. (A cross-audit situation occurs when, in the same calendar year, a certified auditor from Company A conducts an audit of Company B, and a certified auditor from Company B conducts an audit on Company A.)
 - Not audit the principal(s) or prime contractor that their employer is working for at the time of the audit in a peer audit system.
 - Maintain confidentiality of audit information
 - Maintain impartiality, fairness, professional conduct and judgement when conducting an audit
- Subsequent re-certification audits should ideally not be permitted to be performed by the same auditor for the same employer.
- Certification auditors should not audit employers to which they have been involved in the development, design or implementation of their safety management system within the past year.

6.8 RECIPROCITY/RECOGNITION

Certification Auditors who wish to conduct audits across Canadian jurisdictions should conform to all requirements of the host jurisdiction, as outlined by the host jurisdiction's certifying partner.

- Certifying partners should facilitate reciprocity/ recognition of out-of-jurisdiction auditor certification if the auditor meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of the guideline.
- CPs may require the applicant auditor to meet/ verify any of the requirements of Section 6.2 Training Requirements.
- Certifying partners may offer recognition for auditor certification training or other requirements received or fulfilled from other jurisdictions which has been deemed to be 'equivalent.'

Appendix A

Definitions

Governing Body

– a provincial or territorial entity (WCB, WSIB, Government) who has a contractual relationship with an organization (certifying partner or industry based safety program) granting them the authority to administer a certification program. The governing body is responsible to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the certification program.

Safety & Health Certification Auditor

– an auditor who has the knowledge, training, experience and authority to perform a certification or recertification audit in accordance with the safety and health management system standards outlined by the provincial governing body on behalf of a Certifying Partner. (This individual should not be employed by the organization being audited and may be referred to as an: external, third party or peer auditor.)

