

## 1. What is COR™?

The Certificate of Recognition (COR™) program is a health and safety management system (HSMS) which is often required for contracts with both public and private sector construction projects in Ontario. For example, some municipalities expect their contractors to be registered with the COR™ program in order for them to qualify for bidding purposes.

Recently, COR™ was enhanced to COR™ 2020 in order to help interested workplaces qualify for financial rewards and recognition from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

COR™ 2020 is voluntary and workplaces interested in only pursuing or maintaining regular COR™ certification should visit [IHSA's COR™ page](#) for additional information and resources.

Because COR™ is fundamentally based around a general health and safety management system (HSMS), it can be utilized and achieved by companies across any industry and scaled to firms of any size.

## 2. What is an audit?

An audit is a comprehensive and detailed review of the employer's health and safety management system (HSMS). The audit will typically cover the basic elements of an HSMS and will include interviews, documentation review, and observation techniques.

## 3. What is a health and safety management system (HSMS)?

A health and safety management system (HSMS) is a framework put in place by employers to manage risks, establish controls, and minimize the incidence of injury and illness to their workers. This is accomplished through identifying, assessing, and controlling risks to workers in all workplaces. The scope and complexity of the management system will vary according to the type of workplace and nature of the business.

## 4. What are the benefits of COR™?

- By achieving COR™, employers are able to demonstrate to buyers of construction that their HSMS has been developed, implemented, and evaluated on an annual basis through comprehensive internal and external audits.
- Audits will typically include interviews, documentation review, and observation techniques to evaluate how well the employer is able to identify, assess, and control risks to workers.

- The audit criteria used by COR™ are recognized by industries throughout Canada. Your company will be part of a nationwide network participating in and promoting health and safety excellence.
- In a situation where you have to demonstrate that you have an active health and safety management system, participation in COR™ is an asset.
- Firms that are registered in the COR™ program may qualify ahead of others for certain jobs. Buyers of construction can make COR™ a requirement for contractors bidding on jobs in order to be more confident in the contractor's health and safety performance.
- Protecting the health and safety of all workers at all times is the right thing to do. Effective development and maintenance of an HSMS is a proactive approach to eliminating workplace injuries and illnesses.
- A firm's corporate image will be enhanced within the industry and community. Commitment to a strong culture of safety will attract safety-conscious workers.
- Providing immediate proof that you have an effective HSMS in place will give your organization a competitive advantage. Buyers of construction can be assured that you will bring superior safety practices to the workplace.
- Your program will comply with COR™ national standards, since all stipulations have been endorsed by participating members of the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA).
- **Additional benefits may also be available by moving to COR™ 2020 (see question #17).**

## 5. What's involved?

A representative from senior management and one designated full-time permanent employee must take prescribed training offered by IHSA. The training is conducted to help the employer understand and commit to the program, and for the full-time employee to become the designated internal auditor. The mandatory courses that must be taken can be found on our [\*\*Steps to Achieve COR™ web page\*\*](#).

Once the training is complete, the employer is required to conduct an internal audit of their HSMS using IHSA's COR™ Audit Tool. The internal audit is reviewed by IHSA, and is then followed up with an external audit. Upon successful completion of the internal and external audits, the employer is issued the **Certificate of Recognition**. The employer is required to conduct and successfully complete annual internal audits for each of the next two years using IHSA's COR™ Audit Tool. This must be done in order to receive a **Letter of Good Standing** for years two and three.

## 6. How much does it cost to participate?

COR™ Essentials 1/2 Day	Basic Auditing Principles	COR™ Internal Auditor	Introduction to Hazard & Risk Management
Member Fee <b>\$85.00</b> /per person	Member Fee <b>\$0.00</b> /per person	Member Fee <b>\$169.00</b> /per person	Member Fee <b>\$169.00</b> /per person
Member Fee <b>\$605.00</b> at your facility	Member Fee <b>\$0.00</b> at your facility	Member Fee <b>\$1,210.00</b> at your facility	Member Fee <b>\$1,210.00</b> at your facility
Non-Member Fee <b>\$169.00</b> /per person	Non-Member Fee <b>\$338.00</b> /per person	Non-Member Fee <b>\$338.00</b> /per person	Non-Member Fee <b>\$338.00</b> /per person
Non-Member Fee <b>\$1,210.00</b> at your facility	Non-member Fee <b>\$2,420.00</b> at your facility	Non-member Fee <b>\$2,420.00</b> at your facility	Non-member Fee <b>\$2,420.00</b> at your facility
Review of Internal Audit	Member Consulting Services	Non-member Consulting Services	
<b>\$350.00</b>	<b>\$1,210.00</b> /per day	Member Fee <b>\$1,210.00</b> /per day + expenses	

For more information regarding costs contact [cor@ihsa.ca](mailto:cor@ihsa.ca).

### 7. How do I join?

COR™ is a voluntary program, and therefore requires you to undergo a specific process to become a participant. Please contact IHSA at 1-800-263-5024 for more information or complete the [application form](#).

### 8. Do I have to re-apply if I want to participate in COR™ 2020?

No. Once you are registered, you are registered to challenge whichever COR™ standard is most appropriate. Please indicate which COR™ audit tool you are using to complete your audit and you will be assessed against that tool.

### 9. How long does it take to go from registration to certification?

The length of time required depends upon the state of your existing HSMS. Many employers are currently meeting all the COR™ requirements, while others may require up to 18 months to successfully implement all elements of the program.

#### 10. How long is my certification valid after successfully completing an external audit?

The COR™ certification is valid for three years from the date of certification, provided the employer performs and successfully completes internal maintenance audits in the second and third years, and complies with the terms and conditions of the COR™ program. All internal audit results must be approved by IHSA. A **Letter of Good Standing** issued each year verifies that the training elements and auditing standards are maintained. In year four, the employer must re-apply to the COR™ program and start the process over again.

#### 11. As an employer, how many COR™ certificates can I obtain?

All employers who are entitled to use the audit system must have an active Ontario WSIB account, and be in good standing. To obtain COR™ certification, each applicable WSIB account (employer account number) held by an employer must independently achieve its own COR™.

In order to participate in COR™, the employer should have a functioning health and safety program in place for at least one year. The program must contain all the elements required for the COR™ audit, although the elements may be listed under other headings. The auditor will take this into consideration when reviewing the audit.

#### 12. Can I maintain separate certifications in COR™ and COR™ 2020?

No. There remains only one COR™ certification to be achieved per account. Once a firm has moved to COR™ 2020, they will maintain their certification under COR™ 2020 going forward. Only COR™ 2020 will exist once all firms have transitioned (between 2020 and 2024).

#### 13. As a "senior management representative" is my only obligation to attend IHSA's prescribed training?

In addition to the prescribed training, the following is a partial list of employers' (senior management representatives) obligations:

- Ensure audits are properly planned and scheduled.
- Provide access to facilities and supporting information as requested by IHSA.
- Actively participate in the COR™ audit process and maintain COR™ training requirements.
- Provide IHSA with feedback on the audit process to assist with continuous improvement.

- Ensure maintenance of their COR™ status is achieved on an annual basis, always prior to their anniversary date.
- Sign off and review the various mandatory documents included with submission.

A complete list of all senior management representative responsibilities can be found in the COR™ 2020 Program Guideline.

#### 14. What if the person who completed the training leaves my company?

The training certification belongs to the individual who completed the training. To continue to perform the maintenance audits internally, you must send another representative to attend the training and have them assigned as your "full-time permanent employee."

The COR™ certificate belongs to the employer.

#### 15. If my company has more than one WSIB account number, does it make a difference to the audit process? Can one audit and COR™ cover them all?

Each WSIB account (firm number) held by an employer can independently achieve its own COR™.

#### 16. Our company has offices all over Canada, and we are participating in COR™ in other provinces. Can we use COR™ from other provinces and bring it into Ontario?

COR™ must be achieved in the province where your office is located. Therefore, if you have an office in Ontario and work in this province, you must achieve COR™ through IHSA.

Employers that have attained an out-of-province COR™ and do not have a permanent office in Ontario may apply for interim equivalency to IHSA by providing an email to [cor@ihsa.ca](mailto:cor@ihsa.ca) containing:

- Confirmation from the CFCSA member safety association that the employer's COR™ is current (e.g., a Letter of Good Standing from the host association).
- Proof of training from the home province that the COR™ Internal Auditor course was completed. Documentation to accompany this should be a course transcript from the host association.
- Should the request be successful, IHSA will provide to the employer an interim Letter of Good Standing. This document can then be used to accompany the employer's tender for a job bid.

\*If the employer is successful in bidding on the job, they must enter into the process of an **Internal Audit**, then an **External Audit**, for the additional six elements in IHSA's COR™ program.

### 17. Why Has COR™ changed to COR™ 2020?

COR™ 2020 aligns to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skill Development's accreditation standard, and will help safe workplaces qualify for financial rebates and recognition available under two new provincial programs:

Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers (SOSE)

Health and Safety Excellence

This means by achieving COR™ 2020 workplaces are fully implementing an accredited Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS), recognized by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and the Workplace Safety Insurance Board.

### 18. How is COR™ 2020 different?

COR™ 2020 has reduced its audit tool to 14 elements by blending some of the existing elements and reducing the amount of redundancy.

New requirements have been added for the following:

- Procurement and Change Management
- Contractor Management
- Control of Documents
- Control of Records

The overall format has also changed in COR™ 2020. Organizations now have flexibility to tailor their program to best suit their needs while also meeting COR™ requirements.

### 19. Do I need to use the COR™ 2020 tool this year? When do I need to transition to COR™ 2020?

IHSA is planning to assist COR™ firms to transition to COR™ 2020 over the next four years. We are encouraging firms to use the current audit tool during this period of time while working to implement and be able to demonstrate evidence of this implementation at some point during that transition. We recognize that some COR™ certified firms will be interested to move to COR™ 2020 before others, and they will be able to challenge this new audit at their anniversary in their COR™ cycle if they so choose.

### 20. If I am new to COR™, which system do I use?

If you haven't started the COR™ process at all, it is recommended that you work towards COR™ 2020. This can be done via IHSA as a provider of the Health and Safety Excellence program for extra guidance: [www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram](http://www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram).

**21. I am not yet certified but I have been working towards COR™ based on the 2015 tool. Do I have to do COR™ 2020?**

If you have made significant progress towards the existing COR™ and are targeting certification soon, then it is recommended you complete certification with the original program and then transition to 2020 in a subsequent year. This transition can be done with guidance under IHSA as an approved provider of the Health and Safety Excellence program:  
[www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram](http://www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram).

**22. What is the relationship between COR™ 2020 and the Health and Safety Excellence program?**

The new requirements under the COR™ 2020 standard include contractor management, change management & procurement, controls of documents, and controls of records.

These four new requirements for COR™ 2020 are also topics listed in WSIB's Health & Safety Excellence program for which IHSA is an approved provider. In 2020, your organization can join this program, select these four topics (or any other that may also apply), and qualify for a WSIB rebate. In 2021, your organization will have closed any gaps that might exist and request to be audited to COR™ 2020 and apply for MOL Accreditation and receive recognition under this program.

**23. What is the relationship between COR™ 2020 and Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers (SOSE)?**

**Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers** is a voluntary Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development program run by the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO). It promotes health and safety in the workplace and helps reduce injuries and illness. The program is made up of two parts:

Accreditation of an occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS).

Recognition of employers who have successfully implemented an accredited OHSMS and meet other criteria set by the CPO.

If your organization is recognized by the CPO, you will be eligible for financial rewards from the **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)**.

The CPO has accredited the COR™ 2020 updated standards.

**24. Can my firm switch to COR™ 2020 in between external audits on a maintenance audit year?**

Yes. This can be done by firms independently and/or utilizing IHSA as a provider of the Health and Safety Excellence program: [www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram](http://www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram). A 'transition audit' can be conducted at your firm's request when you feel you are ready.

#### **25. Equivalency and COR™ 2020.**

Standards and out-of-province COR™ equivalencies that were considered for equivalency under the previous COR™ program are still considered for equivalency with COR™ 2020.

Organizations that do not have a valid WSIB account, or have not included representative work performed in Ontario in their ISO 45001 audit scope, will only be granted COR™ reciprocity for bidding purposes.

Please contact us for more information: [cor@ihsa.ca](mailto:cor@ihsa.ca).

#### **26. Courses and information sessions.**

IHSA will be offering ongoing sessions in COR™, COR™ 2020, the transition process for firms moving to COR™ 2020, and the Health and Safety Excellence program, for which IHSA is an approved provider: [www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram](http://www.ihsa.ca/HealthAndSafetyExcellenceProgram).

#### **27. Do I need to completely rearrange my H&S manual to reflect the new COR™ 2020 elements?**

No. In general, functioning portions of your current HSMS do not need to be rearranged based solely on the new tool.

Each element in the COR™ tool will require a policy (stating the expectations to meet the requirement) as well as a procedure (a guide for your employees to assist them to meeting the expectations outlined in the policy).

Additionally, there are the four new areas which need to be addressed: procurement and change management, contractor management, control of documents and control of records.

#### **28. What do I do if I wish to appeal my COR™ internal or external audit results?**

Audit appeals must be filed within five business days of the formal notification of audit results. This must be done following our appeals process and using the appropriate form.