



Certificate of Recognition (COR™)

COR™ Program Guidelines

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COR™ Program Guidelines

1. Program Guideline Overview

The *COR™ Program Guideline* is designed to provide employers with the information needed to ensure that audits are performed in accordance with the Infrastructure Health & Safety (IHSA) COR™ auditing protocol and that COR™ registered Employers maintain their health and safety management system according to IHSA's COR™ auditing standards.

1.1 Scope

This Guideline applies to employers and other persons who are actively involved in IHSA's COR™ program. It is intended specifically, to assist Employers who are participating in or are considering registering for the COR™ program.

1.2 Eligibility Requirements

The COR™ program requires the employer have an active Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) account in good standing. Employers having more than one account, and who intend to have several of their accounts participating in COR™, must register each account separately by providing IHSA with the corresponding WSIB firm numbers. IHSA will only audit those accounts which have been registered under COR™. To obtain a Certificate of Recognition, each WSIB account registered by the employer must independently achieve its own COR™.

IHSA recommends the employer have a functioning health and safety program in place for at least one year*. This program should contain the 19 elements required for IHSA's COR™ audit. These elements may be listed under other headings so long as the basic intent of those elements is covered. The auditor, both internal and external, will take this into consideration when reviewing the audit.

* The COR™ Audit requires the review of an organization's health & safety program documents and supporting evidence which may involve accessing documents from the most recent year.

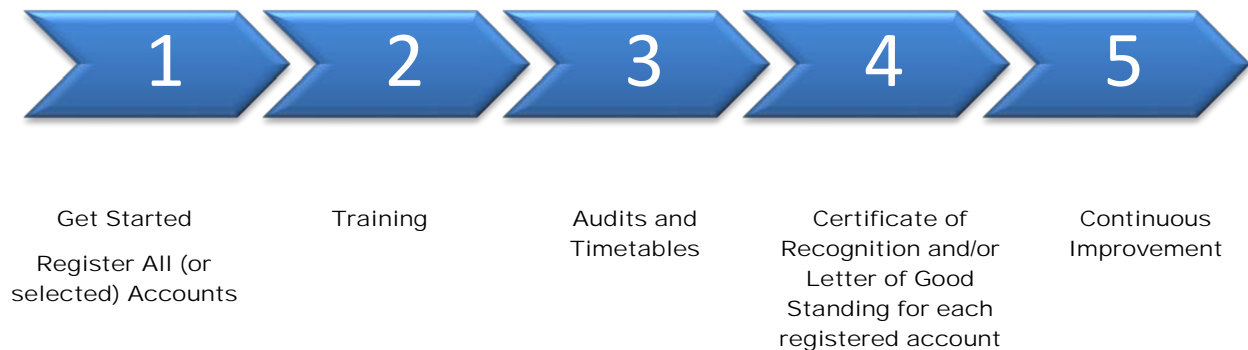
2. The COR™ Process

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 validated by IHSA.

A **Letter of Good Standing** issued in year 2 and 3 verifies that the audit elements and auditing standards are maintained by the Employer.



The COR™ Process – Companies with Multiple Accounts



2.1 Get Started - Register

- Visit the IHSA website (www.ihsa.ca) and complete the **COR™ Application Form**. This can be found under the COR™ tab.
- For companies with multiple WSIB accounts – select the accounts which you want to register in the COR™ program and fill in an application for each
- Submit completed form(s) to IHSA via fax (905-625-8998) or email cor@ihsa.ca.
- It is the employers responsibility to ensure the COR™ application form is complete and accurate.
- Once received by IHSA, you will be registered in the program and your progress is tracked.
- Upon registration your company name will be published on IHSA's website.

2.2 Training

- As part of the organization's commitment to the COR™ program, a representative from Senior Management must attend the following workshop
 - COR™ Essentials (1/2 day)
- One designated permanent full-time employee must complete the following IHSA training to qualify as the Internal Auditor:
 - COR™ Essentials (1/2 day)
 - Basic Auditing Principles (1 day)
 - COR™ Internal Auditor (1 day)
 - Introduction to Hazard & Risk Management (1 day)

Requests for training exemptions must be submitted to and approved by IHSA and include:

- The title of the course(s) for which they wish to be exempt
- Supporting transcripts and course outlines from the **training provider*** for the course(s) they wish to use in lieu of the IHSA programs
- Courses must have been completed within five (5) years prior to the submission to IHSA for exemption
- Exemptions will be granted on an individual basis.

A completed **COR-Training Exemption** form must be submitted with acceptable documentation which includes transcripts and official course outline. Course certificates and wallet cards are not considered acceptable documentation. Professional experience will not be accepted in lieu of training.

*For this purpose, only CFCSA member organizations and/or other recognized organizations that provide lead auditor training will be recognized as training providers

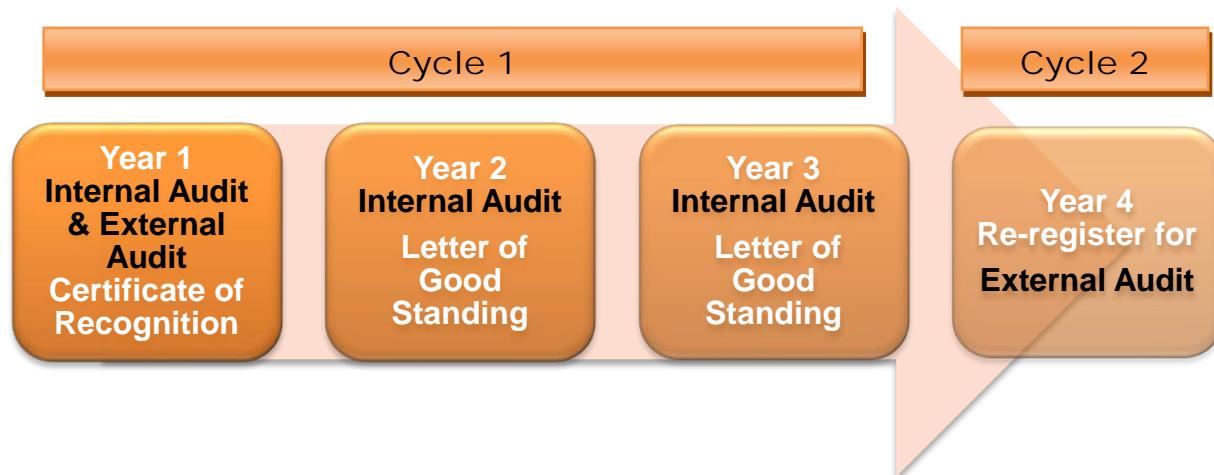
2.3 Audits and Timetable

Upon registration, the Employer is provided with an electronic copy of the COR™ audit package which includes the audit instrument and instructions.

The designated Internal Auditor must submit the completed audit instrument and all supporting documents and forms. For year 2 and year 3 this documentation must be submitted prior to the organization's designated anniversary date.

The employer is responsible for ensuring the audit is completed and submitted according to the timeframes. Failure to do so may result in the company not receiving COR™ certification or a Letter of Good Standing and is placed as 'pending' on the IHSA website..

2.4 Certificate of Recognition + Letter of Good Standing



Upon successful completion of the External Audit(s), the employer will be issued a Certificate of Recognition. The certificate is valid for 3 years. The date of issue of the Certificate becomes the employer's **anniversary date**. A letter of good standing is issued for each 12 month period in years 2 and 3 in which the employer successfully completes the internal audit.

Year 1

- The employer will submit the completed internal audit and all supporting material in hard copy format (health & safety program and any documents such as completed forms, schedules, lists etc. used as verification) to IHSA for review. IHSA reserves the right to accept electronic format submitted by the organization provided it has been pre-approved by IHSA.
- For companies that have registered multiple accounts for the COR™ program and that have a single Health and Safety Management system (policy and program) which covers all the accounts, the designated Internal Auditor has the option of completing and submitting one internal audit which includes supporting documents from all registered accounts.
- Upon receipt of the audit documentation, IHSA will date stamp and log it into the COR™ tracking system.

- A preliminary assessment will be conducted to ensure submission is in accordance to CORTM program guidelines. If necessary, employer is notified of any deficiencies and requested to submit for review.
- CORTM Manager assigns the internal audit to an IHSA auditor.
- The IHSA auditor will review the audit and provide written feedback to the participating Employer within 60 days of receipt of the internal audit.
- Failure to complete the CORTM Audit document as directed may result in the audit being returned for required corrections, additions or changes.
- The external audit will be initiated if the internal audit meets the following requirements which include but are not limited to: receipt of supporting documentation, legislated questions achieving 100%, meeting minimum score requirements for each element (65%) and the overall audit (80%) and the quality of evidence submitted .
- For companies with multiple accounts registered, IHSA will perform external audits for each account and upon successful completion each registered account will receive their own Certificate of Recognition.
- If the Employer does not pass the External Audit, IHSA will provide in writing the areas of improvement required. The Employer will have up to 6 months to provide confirmation that corrective actions have been implemented. A re-audit may be required.

2.5 New Audit Submissions

Upon receipt of a new CORTM internal audit, IHSA will review the submission and complete a detailed desk review within 60-days of receipt of the audit. If successful, IHSA will provide a formal report and an IHSA representative will contact the organization to schedule an External Audit for Year 1.

If, after the initial review of the submission, the internal audit does not meet the minimum COR™ standards the organization will be notified of any concerns, errors or omissions with a written report. Upon notification by IHSA, the organization will be allowed a maximum of 6 months from the date of notification, manage the gaps within the report, and notify IHSA of the intent to proceed and schedule an external audit.

If the time period between the notification and the subsequent submission from the organization exceeds 6 months from the date of submission, the organization will need to submit a new audit.

The organization is encouraged to create and implement an action plan prior to the opening meeting that satisfies the minimum COR™ requirements. Failure to advise IHSA of the intent to move forward to an external audit within the 6-month period will result in the submission of a new internal audit.

2.6 Continuous Improvement

Years 2 - 3

An annual audit must be completed by the designated Internal Auditor and submitted by the Employer prior to the **designated anniversary date** for year 2 and 3. The audit must be in the standard format required by IHSA and include all supporting documentation and a written report. The audit must pass an audit review conducted by the IHSA for the Employer to maintain good standing.

Companies that have registered multiple accounts must complete and submit an Internal Audit for each account registered for year 2 and 3 of the cycle. Once the audit cycle has begun (year 1) the company cannot add additional accounts to this cycle. Any additional accounts must begin at the start of the cycle (beginning of year 1).

Successful completion of the yearly Internal Audit must occur on or before the anniversary date of the Employer's initial receipt of the Certificate of Recognition.

Re-Certification of COR™

Firms are required to submit their internal audit submission 45 days in advance of their anniversary date. Any COR™ certificate or Letter of Good Standing (LOG) that exceeds 30-days from the anniversary date shall be identified as '**pending**' on the IHSA website. The status will be revised once the firm is successful in achieving COR™ certification or a LOG is issued.

A COR™ certified firm that fails to meet the minimum requirements of the COR™ Standards will have a maximum of 6 months from the date the COR™ certificate/LOG was issued to satisfy the requirements. Failure to do so will result in the expiration of the certificate.

All dates are subject to the discretion of IHSA. Firms have the option to submit an appeal for consideration.

Year 4

The end of the third year marks the completion of the COR™ cycle. Continued participation in COR™ requires the Employer to re-register for the program.

For organizations entering Year 4 (Cycle 2) of the COR™ Audit the submission of an Internal Audit **is not** required, however, an External Audit performed by IHSA **is** required to start the new cycle. IHSA will contact the organization 30 – 45 days in advance of their anniversary date to schedule the External Audit.

Although it is not a requirement to submit an internal review in Year 4 (Cycle 2), IHSA encourages the organization to conduct their review in preparation for the External Audit.

Any COR™ certificate or Letter of Good Standing (LOG) that exceeds 30-days from the anniversary date shall be identified as '**pending**' on the IHSA website. Upon successful completion of the Cycle 2 Audit an organization will be granted certification and will begin a new 3 year cycle.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 IHSA

IHSA oversees the COR™ program in Ontario. As a result, the following procedures, training, and information are managed by IHSA, but are not limited to:

- managing the COR™ Program Guidelines
- designing and maintaining the programs used to train the internal auditor and senior management
- reviewing and/or validating all audits submitted for the COR™ audit process
- ensuring all COR™ audit standards and protocols are followed for the program
- fostering a positive audit environment by assisting and co-operating with member employers so that audit objectives can be met
- maintaining the COR™ information database
- controlling the security and confidentiality of audit documents and results
- maintaining quality assurance of auditors and the audit process.

3.2 Employer/Senior Management Representative

In addition to the prescribed training, Employers (Senior Management Representatives) have the following obligations.

- **Notify IHSA immediately** at cor@ihsa.ca of any changes to company registration information such as WSIB account number, company name, address, personnel affiliated with the COR™ audit etc.
- Ensure audits are properly planned, scheduled and signed off by employer/senior management
- Provide access to facilities and supporting information as requested by IHSA

- Actively participate in the COR™ audit process and maintain COR™ training requirements
- Provide the 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
- Designate a permanent full time employee to act as internal auditor
- If the designated senior management representative is no longer available, the employer is responsible for designating and training a new senior management representative and notifying IHSA in writing of the change
- If the internal auditor is no longer available, the employer is responsible for designating and training a new internal auditor and notifying IHSA in writing of the change.

3.3 Internal Auditor

To qualify as an Internal Auditor, the employee appointed by the employer must be a permanent full-time employee of the organization and must complete specific IHSA training. The employee's name and records of training must be submitted with the internal audit to IHSA for verification.

The Internal Auditor's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Administering and overseeing the organization's COR™ program
- Completing and submitting the Employer's COR™ Internal Audit and the supporting documentation (as set out in Instructions for Completing the COR™ Audit document) by the anniversary date (date of certificate issue)
- Completing pre and post audit meetings
- Developing a written corrective action plan to ensure continuous improvement

- Providing additional audit information to the External Auditor if requested
- Act as the liaison person between the employer and IHSA for the COR™ program
- Compliance with COR™ program guidelines
- Performing to industry standards and ethical practices.

3.4 External Auditor or Associate Auditor

The term External Auditor refers to the IHSA employee assigned to provide COR™ auditing services. These services include but are not limited to:

- Reviewing an employer's Internal Audit
- Communicating audit requirements to the employer
- Performing the COR™ audit
- Generating the audit report
- Following a code of ethics
- Maintaining confidentiality

NOTE: An IHSA employee who provides consulting services to a specific employer cannot be assigned to act as External Auditor or Associate Auditor to that employer. The External Auditor or Associate Auditor must declare a conflict of interest if circumstances arise between the auditor and the Employer (or their representative) which may be viewed as a conflict.

4. Audit Instrument & Scoring

4.1 IHSA Audit Instrument

To ensure accurate and thorough completion of the COR™ audit, the designated Internal Auditor must be knowledgeable on the content and guidelines for using the IHSA COR™ Audit Instrument.

There are nineteen (19) elements in the instrument. The first thirteen (13) are common to all of the provinces and territories that participate in COR™:

1. Policy Statement
2. Hazard Assessment, Analysis and Control
3. Safe Work Practices
4. Safe Job Procedures
5. Employer Rules
6. Personal Protective Equipment
7. Preventive Maintenance
8. Training & Communication
9. Workplace Inspections
10. Investigations & Reporting
11. Emergency Preparedness
12. Statistics & Records
13. Legislation

There are also six (6) supplemental elements that are specific to Ontario

14. Occupational Health
15. First Aid
16. Health & Safety Representative/Committee
17. Workplace Violence & Harassment
18. Return to Work
19. Management Review

Additional details of IHSA's COR™ Audit Instrument are provided to the Internal Auditor during training and in the electronic audit package.

4.2 Audit Scoring

For both internal and external audits, the scoring requirements are:

- Minimum score of **65%** on each element
- Minimum score of **80%** for the overall audit
- Must obtain **100%** on all items identified as legislated requirements

At any time during the audit process, the Employer or Internal Auditor may contact IHSA with audit related concerns or questions.

5. Quality Assurance

5.1 Internal Audits

Internal audits will be reviewed by IHSA on an annual basis. At the discretion of IHSA, failure of audits for any reason (i.e. overall minimum score not achieved, legislated requirements not met) may result in any of the following:

- The employer will be given a reasonable time frame (not exceeding 6 months) to attain the minimum standards found lacking and re-submit.
- IHSA reserves the right to grant and suspend/revoke COR™ certification at its discretion. Quality assurance is established through IHSA review of audits and Internal Auditor credentials, as well as by verification assessments.

5.2 Internal Auditor

The Internal Auditor must complete and submit the audit using the COR™ Audit Instrument provided by IHSA. The audits must be submitted in hard-copy format or other IHSA pre-approved format.

IHSA reserves the right to apply the following condition if the internal audit does not meet the guidelines set out in the audit instrument.

An Internal Auditor may be:

- given 6 months to address the concerns and resubmit the document
- The Internal Auditor may be required to undergo retraining if more than one audit is returned for corrective action

5.3 Verification Assessments

To assist employers in tracking their progress through the COR™ program, IHSA will post the Employer's name under "COR™ Registered Firms" on IHSA's website.

IHSA also reserves the right to conduct verification assessments on participants at any time. Upon completion of a verification assessment, a formal letter detailing one of the following three options will be sent to the employer:

No follow-up required – workplace and employer have demonstrated satisfactory performance of a COR™ participant.

Corrective action is required – workplace and/or employer need minor improvements in demonstrating the expectations of a COR™ participant. At IHSA's discretion, an employer will be given a reasonable timeframe to provide confirmation that the corrective action has been completed.

Complete Audit is required – workplace and/or employer require major improvements to demonstrate the expectations of a COR™ participant. A new and current internal audit will be required by the employer. At IHSA's discretion, an employer will be given a reasonable timeframe to submit a full and complete employer internal audit for review and evaluation by IHSA. If minimum standards are not verified, COR™ will be suspended and/or revoked. (Additional service fees will apply with the associated audits).

6. Out-of-Province COR™ Reciprocity (for bidding purposes only)

Under the reciprocity agreement, if an Employer from outside Ontario considers bidding on a project in this province which requires a Certificate of Recognition, they must submit a completed **COR™ - Request for Reciprocity** form and attach a letter from the issuing province/territory's CFCSA member organization showing proof of participation in COR™.

6.1 Full Participation in the IHSA COR™ Program

If successful in bidding on the project and, if required by the Buyer of Services or if the Employer chooses to be certified under COR™, the Employer must follow the process set out for registering for COR™ in Ontario. The Employer must then perform an Internal Audit, which will be followed by an External Audit. While the first 13 elements in the COR™ program are similar and meet the national standard between provinces/territories, Ontario has an additional six elements.

The Employer will contact IHSA to complete the following requirements:

- Register as a participating member in COR™. The Employer will be provided with an electronic Audit package for use in completing the Internal Audit.
- Complete the **COR™-Training Exemption** form. Training provided in each province is not identical and while some equivalencies may exist, the employer's designated Internal Auditor may be required to take additional training through IHSA such as the COR™ Internal Auditor program.
- An audit must be completed by the designated Internal Auditor and submitted by the Employer. The audit must be in the standard format required by IHSA and include all supporting documentation and a written report. The audit must pass an audit review conducted by IHSA.
- The Employer must pass an external audit conducted by IHSA
- Upon successful completion of this process employer will receive the IHSA Certificate of Recognition and a Letter of Good Standing in year 2 and 3 providing they follow the COR™ submission guideline.

For additional information on the COR™ program access IHSA's website at www.ihsa.ca

7. OHSAS 18001 Equivalency to COR™ Audit

- IHSA may consider accepting an OHSAS 18001 as an equivalency to the COR™ audit if the following provisions have been completed:
- The employer will provide the following documents to IHSA with a completed **COR™ - OHSAS 18001 Equivalency** form for consideration:
 - A copy of the most recent OHSAS 18001 Audit Report
 - A copy of the most recent certificate issued
 - A current action plan as a result of the OHSAS 18001 audit
 - A current Environmental, Health and Safety Program
 - A current copy of management review
 - A documented action plan as a result of the management review
 - Master Hazard Registry
- Documents will be reviewed by the IHSA Lead Auditor within 30 days of submission
- A standard fee of \$350 + applicable taxes will apply for review of the documentation
- Upon review, the equivalency will be submitted to IHSA management for approval or in the case of a rejected submission, a written justification will be provided to the Employer
- If necessary, provide details of request for additional information from client to IHSA management for review and follow up
- Upon approval by IHSA management a Certificate of Recognition will be issued
- The certification is conditional upon ongoing annual submission of current documentation as set out in the equivalency requirements. A letter of good standing will be issued for year 2 and year 3.

8. Complaints/Appeals

8.1 Complaints

- Complaints regarding the auditor, audit process or employer dissatisfaction will be directed to the IHSA.
- All complaints must be submitted to the COR™ Consultant using the **COR™ - Complaints/Appeal** form within 7 working days by e-mail, registered mail or fax.
- Employers, employees or the public may file complaints. Any complaints will be investigated by IHSA

8.2 COR™ Audit Appeal Process

In the event that an Employer wishes to appeal an audit related decision, the following procedures must be followed:

- All audit appeals must be filed with the IHSA COR™ Consultant within 7 working days by e-mail, registered mail—using the **COR™ - Complaints/Appeal** form
- The IHSA COR™ Consultant will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 2 working days by e-mail, registered mail or fax and provide a response within 5 working days of his/her decision.
- If the appeal is unresolved, the Employer may appeal the decision within 7 days to the IHSA Manager of Strategic Programs. The manager will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 2 working days by e-mail, registered mail or fax. Copies of appeal will be retained in a central file at IHSA Head Office
- The Manager and/or designate will review the appeal.
- A consultation meeting with all parties may be held to discuss any additional information regarding the appeal.

- The written decision will be on the **COR™ - Complaints/Appeal** form and provided to all relevant parties within 7 working days of the date from the acknowledged receipt of the appeal.
- If a mutually satisfactory agreement has been reached to resolve the complaint, both parties will acknowledge the agreement by signing the **COR™ - Complaints/Appeal** form
- If a mutually satisfactory resolution **has not been reached** the VP of Strategic Programs will review the files and other relevant documentation within 7 working days of the decision by the Manager of Strategic Programs or by the designate.
- The decision by the VP of Strategic Program will be final.

9. Agreement on Confidentiality and Non-disclosure

All audit reviews, audit instruments and supporting documentation are strictly confidential and will be kept on file with IHSA for a minimum of three years. These findings will not be released to anyone, except as outlined above or as legally required.

- IHSA will hold confidential any information obtained directly or indirectly through the performance of the COR™ audit.
- IHSA will not to disclose any information obtained through the audit without expressed written permission of an authorized representative of the Employer.
- Notwithstanding the 2 previous points, IHSA may use information obtained through the audit for its own internal purposes, with the provision that no reference will be made to specific projects, employers, or workers without the expressed written permission of the parties concerned.