



# Building safer workplaces, one certification at a time

How the NCSO® and NHSA™ programs shape skilled leaders in construction health and safety.

Workplace safety doesn't happen by chance. It's built through knowledge, skill, and a commitment to continuous improvement. IHSA supports these three foundational elements through professional development opportunities, such as the National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO®) and National Health and Safety Administrator (NHSA™) programs.

NCSO® and NHSA™ are professional designations that recognize workers who support workplace safety at their organization. They are recognized by all provincial and territorial members of the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA). IHSA facilitates these certifications in Ontario through the CFCSA.

These programs acknowledge workers whose experience in the construction sector and education equip them to identify hazards, improve safety practices, and contribute to a culture where everyone goes home safe at the end of the day.

## Building expertise and confidence with NCSO® certification

The NCSO® certification recognizes those who have practical construction knowledge and experience in a range of health and safety topics. NCSOs are qualified to act as construction health and safety representatives and COR® internal auditors. Workers who earn the certification show that their skills, training, and on-the-job experience meet the high standards set by the CFCSA. They have the expertise to identify and manage jobsite hazards and help strengthen and maintain their organization's occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS).

When a worker is qualified as an NCSO®, it shows that they're committed to the designation's Code of Ethics and uphold high professional standards on the job. A certified NCSO® can perform several health and safety duties:

- Identify, assess, and manage workplace health and safety hazards
- Communicate health and safety issues to management, inspection authorities, and other key groups
- Provide workers and workplace parties with the necessary safety knowledge and skills

## Starting your NCSO® certification journey

Applicants must complete all program requirements to earn the NCSO® certification. The certification requires applicants to have at least three years of construction field experience within the last 10 years. It also requires them to complete health and safety training courses. These courses must meet current legislative standards at the time of application. The applicants may also need to conduct a Certificate of Recognition (COR®) health and safety student audit of their organization.

Once an applicant achieves NCSO® certification, they're expected to maintain all mandatory course requirements, including those with expiry dates, and continue to build their expertise through professional development activities. If they fail to meet these requirements, their NCSO® status will become inactive.

Applicants who don't have three years of construction field experience may consider the NHSA™ certification.



## Get equipped with workplace health and safety tips

### Improving safety with NHSA™ certification

The NHSA™ program offers certification for individuals who are actively involved in their company's health and safety program at an administrative level but who don't have three years of recent field experience related to construction safety. Certified NHSAs can help the NCSOs at their organization manage and support the OHSMS.

Workers who achieve NHSA™ certification show real dedication to learning and growing in the field of construction health and safety. The program also gives employers confidence that their certified workers are well prepared and committed to building a strong safety culture across the organization. For many, earning the NHSA™ certification is the first step toward becoming an NCSO®.

A certified NHSA™ can support their organization with many valuable skills:

- Help management implement, maintain, and monitor their company's health and safety system
- Review and identify health and safety issues specific to the jobsite and company operations
- Communicate effectively with government authorities, occupational health and safety officers, management, and workers on all aspects of health and safety

### Renewing NCSO®/NHSA™ certifications

Every three years, NCSO®/NHSA™ certificate holders are required to complete a renewal process on or before the anniversary of their original certificate. Applicants need to provide a few documents as part of this process:

- Proof that they've renewed any expired courses
- A completed renewal application
- Documentation that shows they've met all maintenance requirements

Once they've completed the required documentation, they can submit it to IHSA through the NCSO®/NHSA™ renewal application. They must check that any courses with an expiry date are valid for at least six months at the time of application and will not expire during the renewal process.

By maintaining these certifications, NCSOs and NHSAs show their commitment to ongoing growth and professional development. The NCSO® and NHSA™ credentials aren't simply career milestones—they are stepping stones toward becoming a trusted leader in construction health and safety. ■

**Tune in to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*, where professionals, specialists, and industry leaders engage and discuss effective ways to control health and safety hazards in workplaces. Stay up to date on latest best practices, tools, and training, and listen to discussions on important topics, such as:**

- ***Falls From Heights and Ministry Enforcement (Episode 57)***, which discusses why falls awareness remains a significant MLITSD focus and what inspectors look for during a workplace visit.
- ***The MTO Driver Certification Program (Episode 87)***, which discusses the Ministry of Transportation's certification program that enables organizations to train and test employees for Commercial Driver's Licence upgrades, as well as the benefits of IHSA's MTO-approved training programs.
- ***Working Outside in Canadian Winter (Episode 76)***, which examines the risks of working in harsh, cold-climate conditions and outlines strategies employers can use to protect workers from cold-related hazards.

**Listen to new episodes every two weeks at [ihساسafetypodcast.ca](https://ihساسafetypodcast.ca).**

**Visit [ihساسafetypodcast.ca](https://ihساسafetypodcast.ca) or scan the QR code.**



### One step closer to certification



**EMAIL** [ncsoadministrator@ihسا.ca](mailto:ncsoadministrator@ihسا.ca) for more information on the NCSO® and NHSA™ certifications.



**WATCH** our video, *National Construction Safety Officer: What's in It for You?*, to understand the history, value, and impact of these designations in Ontario's construction industry: [youtube.com/@ihسا-worksafeforlife](https://youtube.com/@ihسا-worksafeforlife)