

Frequently Asked Questions about the new NCSO Program

1. Why is IHSA changing their Construction Health & Safety Officer (CHSO) Program to a National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO) Program?

- IHSA is changing the CHSO program to align with other provinces and territories and ensure equivalency criteria are met in accordance with the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA) Agreement. This will allow IHSA's program to meet the higher National Standard.
- IHSA needs to update the existing requirements of the CHSO program to meet the construction industry standards of health & safety performance.
- Changes to the process are needed to meet the ongoing demands for NCSOs and to ensure that they demonstrate proficiency in the occupational health and safety environment of the construction industry.
- IHSA wants to support workers and encourage them to become health and safety professionals. NCSO training will help increase the number of COR™ Internal Auditors and Construction Health & Safety Reps serving the construction industry.

2. Will those who are already CHSOs be grandfathered into the NCSO program?

No. There will be no grandfathering in of existing CHSOs. All CHSOs will have to meet the new requirements before receiving their NCSO Certification.

3. What has changed in the program?

The requirements for CHSO Certification were five years of practical health and safety experience (they are now three years within the past five) and successful completion of the following courses:

- WHMIS
- Working at Heights – Fundamentals of Fall Prevention
- JHSC – Part One (formerly *Construction Health & Safety Rep*)
- JHSC – Part Two: Construction (formerly *Sector-Specific* and *Simulated Hazard Analysis*)
- Basics of Supervising
- Basic Auditing Principles
- First Aid/CPR

For NCSO Certification, we have added the following new requirements:

- An additional four programs that must be completed:
 1. COR™ Essentials
 2. COR™ Internal Auditor
 3. Introduction to Hazard & Risk Management
 4. Defensive Driving General
- A work assessment – Simulated exercise
- A “code of ethics” criteria

- A knowledge verification test – Provincial and National Exam
- Maintenance criteria
 1. Proof of renewal for relevant courses
 2. A total of 18 class hours must be completed (any number of courses can be taken as long as the time completed amounts to 18 hours) and must be taken within three years of receiving the NCSO Certificate or last renewal. This is beyond the program requirements that support the skills required to be an effective NCSO.

4. What happens with the courses that have an expiry date?

- Courses with an expiry date must be valid at the time of application to the NCSO program and should not expire through the application process.
- Up-to-date certificates will need to be supplied every three years for the maintenance portion of the certificate. All renewals of courses that contain an expiry date must be done in a timely fashion and evidence of their validity must be provided. Failure to do so will result in NCSO status becoming inactive.

5. Will applicants receive equivalency for courses taken elsewhere?

Equivalency will be decided by the NCSO Committee. Documentation must be supplied by the applicant and must include:

- Course description
- Course length
- Proof of successful completion.

6. Has the administrative process changed?

Yes, in several of the following ways:

- The name will be changing from CHSO (Construction Health & Safety Officer) to NCSO (National Construction Safety Officer).
- Applications will be approved by the NCSO Committee.
- There will be an Appeals Process.
- There will be a Complaints Process.
- There will be an Application Renewal Process.
- Equivalency for provincial acceptance will be defined.
- There will be a process to post names of the approved applicants and valid NCSOs on our website.
- Applicants will be able to contact or send their information to a designated administrator: NCSOAdministrator@ihsa.ca

7. When will the changes be implemented?

- April 1, 2016 –New criteria will be introduced.

- September 1, 2016 – New applicants will be required to meet the new rules.
- September 1, 2016 – New applications will be received.
- September 1, 2017 – All existing CHSOs will be required to meet the new NCSO requirements.

8. What will happen to those existing CHSO applications that are currently pending approval?

- As of September 1, 2016, IHSA will no longer accept CHSO applications.
- As of September 1, 2016, new NCSO applications will be accepted.
- Existing approved CHSO certificates will remain valid until August 31, 2017.
- Anything received and processed after September 1, 2016, will be subject to the new application process and criteria.

9. What will be the process for CHSOs that have already been approved?

Companies who have existing approved CHSOs on record with IHSA will receive written notification advising them of the changes and proposed new criteria. Information will also be shared by IHSA through its communication channels. They will have until the end of the phase-in period (August 31, 2017) to complete the additional requirements. Failure to meet the additional requirements will mean their CHSO/NCSO status will not be valid and they will not have their name on the approved list of NCSOs on our website.

10. Why is there now a test component?

- A test is required to align our program with the National Standard.
- All participants will be expected to complete a Provincial Exam and a National Exam as part of the NCSO process.
- The Provincial Exam will be created by IHSA and all questions will be based on information taught in all required courses under the NCSO Certificate. The test questions will come from the post-tests of these courses. To receive information on exam dates, locations, and requirements, visit the IHSA.ca website or contact the NCSO administrator.
- Existing out-of-province applicants who have previously completed the National Exam created by CFCSA must provide proof of completion prior to taking the Provincial Exam. Valid documentation must be supplied by the provincial agency.

11. What happens if someone does not pass the knowledge verification exams?

The pass requirement will be a minimum of 75%. If someone does not pass the exam, they will have to re-challenge at the next available testing date.

12. Where and when can applicants write the exams?

Those interested in taking the exams should visit the IHSA.ca website for dates and locations where and when the exams can be administered by an IHSA Trainer/Consultant or designate.

13. What is the workplace assessment? Why is it needed?

- All applicants will have to complete and submit a workplace assessment for review by IHSA. This assessment will establish the applicant's level of competency and demonstrate their ability to operate as an occupational health and safety professional.
- Anyone who achieves an NCSO Certificate must have the ability to understand and to apply concepts, principles, and practices involved in the recognition, evaluation, control, prevention, reduction, and elimination of hazards, accidents, injuries, diseases, and disabilities to people in on-the-job situations.
- Examples of acceptable workplace assessment submissions include
 - COR Audit Tools
 - Safety Group Audits
 - Simulated Exercise by IHSA.

14. Why does the applicant need to sign a code of ethics?

Many safety professional recognition certifications adhere to a professional code of conduct as a way to uphold the integrity of the performance and expectations of an individual who achieves NCSO Certification.

15. Why does IHSA want to publish the names of NCSOs on the website?

- It will allow IHSA to promote those who have successfully met the requirements of the NCSO program.
- It will serve as validation for employers on the current status of those who are referencing their NCSO Certification on their resumes, etc.

16. What are the benefits of the new changes to the program?

- Many employers recognize the NCSO Certificate as a value-added asset associated with someone who has interest in pursuing a career in health and safety within the construction industry.
- Meeting the requirements of the NCSO Certificate demonstrates a person's skill level, education, and work effort.
- NCSOs will be recognized province-to-province as having met the requirements of a National Standard.
- NCSOs are qualified to serve as COR™ Internal Auditors and Construction Health & Safety Representatives.
- The certification will make NCSOs more marketable to potential employers.
- NCSOs will receive increased exposure from being promoted on the IHSA website.
- Remaining current and up-to-date with industry trends and professional development will make NCSOs more effective at their jobs.

17. What happens to existing CHSOs who do not apply for NCSO status?

If existing CHSOs decide **not** to apply for NCSO status, they will not have their names on IHSA website. Their status as CHSOs will not be recognized by IHSA. After September 1, 2017, only the NCSO Certification will be recognized.

18. Will the NCSO program have a new Certificate?

Yes. Unique NCSO Certificates will be issued and unique Certificate ID numbers will be assigned to approved NCSOs.

19. Where can we direct specific questions?

- The IHSA.ca website will have a dedicated web page for CHSOs/NSCOs: www.ihsa.ca/NCSO
- Specific inquiries can be sent via email to NCSOAdministrator@ihsa.ca
- The Manager of Strategic Programs will be able to answer questions.

20. How long does the process take?

The process involves the successful completion of 11 required courses, a proctored examination, submission of a workplace assessment, and completion of the application with supporting documentation. The duration is dependent on the applicant's ability to meet the requirements specified by the certificate at the time of application and the applicant's ability to schedule their time to attend and successfully complete the required courses and administrative tasks.

21. What is the total cost?

The cost is dependent on member and non-member fees that are subject to change at the discretion of IHSA. Visit our website at www.ihsa.ca/NCSO for details on current pricing.

22. What are some of the Professional Development courses applicants could take?

As part of the maintenance component of the NCSO Certificate, the applicant is required to complete Professional Development courses beyond the required courses for the certificate. The courses are expected to be a minimum of 6 hours in duration, include an evaluation, and be delivered by a recognized training institution. The courses must be relevant to performing duties as part of a person's health and safety responsibilities and they can be online, self-study, or in-classroom format.

23. Why are some of the required courses related to the Certificate of Recognition (COR™) program?

The COR™ program is an evidence-based audit tool used to assess a firm's Health & Safety Management System (HSMS) for compliance and continuous improvement. NCSOs play an important role in ensuring that the HSMS is properly implemented, communicated, and measured to meet industry standards of performance. By completing the COR™ courses, NCSOs enhance their understanding and knowledge base of health and safety practices and leading indicators.

24. Is there an appeal process if equivalency is not granted?

Yes. Visit our website at www.ihsa.ca/NCSO to review the process for an appeal.

25. Are there situations where an applicant's NCSO status can be taken away?

A person's NCSO status can be revoked by IHSA upon findings as the result of an investigation from a written complaint, failure to abide by the requirements specified in the program, or a violation of conduct associated with professional ethics.

26. How does the applicant get equivalent NCSO status from one province to another?

The applicant does not automatically get equivalent NCSO status in other provinces. Certain courses can be deemed equivalent but not the status itself. NCSOs will be recognized province-to-province as having met the requirements of a National Standard. However, each province has its own specific requirements that must be met to achieve NCSO Certification in that province. In addition, applicants must pass a Provincial Exam.