

FAQ: Upcoming improvements to the NCSO® and NHSA™ program and new application portal launch

1. What are the key changes being made to the NCSO® and NHSA™ program?

IHSA is introducing several improvements to the NCSO® and NHSA™ process, based on feedback, that ensure continued alignment with the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations. These changes include a new online application portal, a revised exam scheduling process and exam format, and a requirement for NCSO®s to complete a COR® audit, as well as a requirement for both NCSO®s and NHSA™s to submit a workplace inspection.

2. What is the new application portal? How will it help me?

Launching in early 2025 in partnership with the British Columbia Construction Safety Alliance, the new application portal is designed to make the NCSO® and NHSA™ application process easier. It will allow you to:

- Access real-time updates on your application status
- Communicate with approvers directly through the platform
- Complete the process faster with a more user-friendly interface
- Make secure online payments

3. How will exams be conducted moving forward?

Exams will no longer be conducted in person. Instead, they will be scheduled weekly and held online via a Learning Management System. The system will use an integrity-enhancing tool to ensure a fair and secure online testing environment.

4. What is the new COR® audit requirement for NCSO®s?

NCSO®s will need to complete a COR® audit as part of the updated process. You can choose from the following options:

- Submit an internal or external audit completed within the last 12 months.
- Complete a four-element COR® audit on your company, if your employer is not part of the COR® program.

This requirement aims to strengthen your auditing skills and help identify gaps in your company's health and safety management system, which will lead to improved safety practices. This audit will be completed and submitted through AuditSoft for IHSA to review for completeness and accuracy. If you are unemployed or do not access to a workplace to fulfil this requirement, please contact the NCSO Administrator at ncsoadministrator@ihsa.ca.

5. What is AuditSoft? Is there a cost to use it?

AuditSoft is a leading provider of audit and data analytics software that is trusted by more than 20 safety associations across Canada. Their innovative solutions are designed to streamline audit processes, improve accuracy, and enhance overall safety standards in various industries. The cost per use (i.e., every three years) will be \$75 that is paid directly to AuditSoft.

6. Will these changes affect new NCSO® applicants only?

No, these changes will affect both new and renewal applicants. NCSO®s will be required to demonstrate competency in auditing every three years.

7. How does the COR® audit benefit my company?

The COR® audit helps your company by:

- Guiding the continuous safety improvement of your health and safety management system
- Providing clear recommendations for corrective actions
- Enhancing your company's understanding of how well workers grasp workplace policies and procedures
- Validating compliance with legislative and regulatory standards

8. Will NHSA™s be affected by the new COR® audit requirements?

No, NHSA™s will not be required to complete a COR® audit.

9. With the addition of the COR® audit, will there be any changes to the maintenance requirements?

Yes, the maintenance requirements for NCSO®s will change to reflect the additional time that it will take to complete a COR® audit. NCSO®s will be required to submit the following documentation every three years to maintain the designation:

- Proof of current training (e.g., working at heights, Standard First Aid, joint health and safety committee, etc.)
- A COR® audit completed within the last 12 months
- Two safety talks

- A completed workplace inspection
- Eight hours of professional development

NHSA™s will be required to submit the following items:

- Proof of current training (e.g., working at heights, Standard First Aid, and joint health and safety committee, etc.)
- Two safety talks
- A completed workplace inspection
- Eighteen hours of professional development

10. Is there a change to the application fee?

Yes, IHSA announced a modest price increase to some of its programs and services in April 2024. While this increase did not include NCSO® and NHSA™ application fees at the time, the application price will increase on February 1, 2025, to \$209 per application. This is the first time the application fee has been increased since 2016.

11. Will IHSA continue to use BadgeCert for digital badges?

Yes, IHSA will continue using BadgeCert to offer digital badges. These badges allow NCSO®s and NHSA™s to showcase their designations and achievements online, making it easier to display and share their credentials.

12. When will these changes take effect?

The changes are set to launch on **February 3, 2025**. To prepare for this transition, the application intake will be closed from December 15, 2024, to January 31, 2025. During this time, we will transfer data to the new system and make other preparations to ensure a smooth transition.

13. What happens if my NCSO®/NHSA™ certification is expiring during the transition period?

If your certification is set to expire between December 15, 2024, and January 31, 2025, IHSA will contact you directly with instructions on how to manage your renewal during this time. We will be recommending that you renew your designation early, which will provide you with a three-year transition period to the new COR® audit requirements.

14. How can I stay informed about the upcoming changes?

You can find regular updates on the [NCSO® and NHSA™ webpage](#). Additionally, a session will be held at the NCSO®/NHSA™ Educational Conference 2024 to review the changes and answer any questions you may have. You can register for the conference [here](#).

15. Will there be resources to help with the transition?

Yes, IHSA will share several resources to assist with the transition to the new portal and requirements. These will be available in the coming weeks. We will keep you informed with regular updates.

16. Is there anything I need to do now to prepare?

At this time, no immediate action is required. However, we encourage you to stay updated through IHSA's website and consider attending the NCSO®/NHSA™ Educational Conference 2024 where we will provide more detailed information on the changes. If your designation is coming up for renewal, you will receive a separate email with additional information and options.

17. Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions, please reach out to the IHSA NCSO® Administrator by email: ncsoadministrator@ihsa.ca.

We appreciate your patience and co-operation as we work to enhance the NCSO® and NHSA™ program. Thank you for your continued commitment to workplace safety!