



## **2022 Certificate of Recognition (COR) COVID Audit Plan**

The 2022 COVID Audit Plan is in effect from January 1 to December 31, 2022.

- On-site data gathering activities by auditors was suspended from January 1 to February 28, 2022.
  - During this period, Alberta implemented a public health measure for mandatory working from home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Note internal maintenance auditors were allowed to continue on-site activities, if they were directed by their employer to remain on-site during the pandemic.
- Effective March 1, 2022, the suspension of on-site data gathering by auditors is lifted. Auditors may resume on-site data gathering activities, or continue to work remotely.
  - Alberta lifted the public health measure for mandatory working from home on March 1.
  - Partnerships will continue to monitor the COVID 19 situation, and respond if public health measures are again implemented.
- Prior to conducting on-site data gathering activities, both the auditor and employer must agree that on-site work can be safely conducted.
  - Approval of this decision is not required by the auditor's Certifying Partner (CP).
  - The *Safe Auditing Guidelines for Auditors and Employers for On-Site Activities* must be followed.

### **Audit Techniques**

- Remote interviews are conducted using web-based platforms (Teams, Zoom, WebEx, etc.) or by telephone calls.
  - For some audits, questionnaires can take the place of interviews (as allowed by Partnerships Standard 1.9).
- The use of observations for COR and SECOR audits will remain optional throughout 2022.
  - Auditors may explore the use of remote technology for observations with the approval of their CP.

## **COR Audits**

### **A. Certification/Recertification Audit Minimum Requirements**

External audits based on documentation and interviews (conducted remotely) are eligible for three-year CORs.

- The minimum requirement for documentation is any six months of system documentation in the previous 12-month period.
- The passing score for certification/recertification is a minimum of 80% based on overall score only. There is no minimum element score requirement.

### **B. Maintenance Audit Minimum Requirements**

Audits based on documentation and interviews (conducted remotely) by either the employer's internal auditor or an external auditor are eligible to maintain COR.

- The minimum requirement for documentation is any six months of system documentation in the previous 12-month period.
- The passing score for maintenance audits is a minimum of 60% based on overall score only.

### **C. COR Audit Instruments based on Documentation and Interviews**

CPs are not required to create specific COVID audits based on documentation and interviews, the current approved audit is used.

- Auditors will mark observation questions as not applicable (N/A).
- Multiple audit technique questions that require observations are scored based only on the other specified techniques (documentation and/or interviews).

### **D. Processing Documentation and Interview Audits in CORRS**

Use the COVID audit template to process certification/recertification or maintenance audits in CORRS.

- For certification/recertification audits, select the three-year COR term.
- Enter only the overall audit score. Element scores are not reported.
  - Note when observation questions in COR audits are marked as N/A, this unbalances the scoring proportions between elements.

## **Maintenance Options for COR**

The following maintenance options are available to employers in the COR program (these options are not available to SECOR employers).

- Standard 1.5 – Action Plans
  - The submission timelines for action plans for COR maintenance are extended:

- The deadline for employers to submit an Action Plan to their CP for approval is June 30, 2022.
- The deadline for employers to submit their completed Action Plan to their CP for review is December 31, 2022.
- Standard 1.10 - Corrective Action Reports (CAR)
  - CAR questions requiring observations are not required during 2022, and may be scored as not applicable (n/a).
- Standard 1.21 - Use of Corporate Audits for COR Maintenance
- Standard 1.22 - Health and Safety Perception Surveys

## **Small Employer Certificate of Recognition (SECOR) Audits and Assessments**

### **A. SECOR Audits - Minimum Requirements**

- External SECOR audits based on documentation and interviews (conducted remotely) are eligible for three-year certification or maintenance.
  - The minimum requirement for documentation is any six months of system documentation in the previous 12-month period.
- The current approved SECOR audit instrument is used.
  - Auditors will mark SECOR observation questions as not applicable (N/A).
  - Multiple audit technique questions that require observations are scored based only on the other specified techniques (documentation and/or interviews).
  - SECOR element scores are reported.
    - Note, compared to the COR audit, there are so few SECOR questions that require observations, marking these as N/A does not significantly affect the balance between elements.

### **B. SECOR Assessments - Minimum requirements**

- SECOR Assessments conducted with the current documentation-based process are eligible for three-year certification or maintenance.
  - The minimum requirement for documentation is any six months of system documentation in the previous 12-month period.
- CPs follow the current review and scoring process for SECOR assessments as outlined in Partnerships Standard 7.2.

### **C. Scoring Requirements for SECOR Audits and Assessments**

- The passing score for certification/recertification is a minimum of 80% based on overall score, and no less than 50% in each audit element.
- The passing score for maintenance is a minimum of 60% based on overall score only.

## **COR Expiry Date Extensions**

COR expiry date extensions for up to 90 days are available to both COR and SECOR employers.

- Extensions may be offered to employers at the CP's discretion, and will not be advertised.
- Employers may receive multiple COR expiry date extensions if required.
  - Note COR expiry dates cannot be extended past December 31, 2022. Extensions issued after October 2 must be shorter than 90 days to avoid crossing the calendar year.

## **Auditors**

### **A. Auditors - Recertification Requirements**

Certified auditors must be recertified at least once every three years. To be eligible for recertification, auditors must:

1. attend an auditor refresher training session within the three-year certification period, and
2. successfully complete one audit within the three-year auditor certification period.

### **B. Auditor Candidates - Qualification Requirements**

For certification, auditor candidates are required to:

1. complete auditor training (covering all required content),
  2. pass the full auditor exam (covering all required content), and
  3. successfully complete a qualification audit based on both documentation and interviews (conducted remotely).
- While the COVID pandemic continues, auditor candidates are allowed a one-year period (after completion of auditor training), to complete and submit their required qualification audit to their CP for review.
    - If individual circumstances merit a longer period for an auditor candidate to complete their qualifying audit, the CP should contact Partnerships for approval.

### **C. Auditors Holding Limited Status from 2020**

Auditors holding limited status (after completing a documentation-only qualification audit in 2020), must conduct a second qualification audit or relinquish their auditor status. The second audit must include both documentation and interviews (conducted remotely), and be completed by December 31, 2022.

- Prior to conducting their second qualifying audit, auditors must complete focused training (covering interviews and use of the audit tool) from their CP.

#### **D. CP Staff Audits of Member Employers**

CPs may use staff auditors to conduct COR certification/recertification or maintenance audits in 2022.

- Review by an audit reviewer who is external to the CP is not required.
- CP staff conducting audits must be COR certified auditors.

#### **Safe Auditing Guidelines for On-Site Work**

Partnerships and the CPs jointly developed the *Safe Auditing Guidelines for Auditors and Employers for On-Site Activities*.

- This document sets the requirements for on-site work (when permitted) for all COR audits, maintenance audit options and auditor qualification audits, including the requirement to follow all applicable public health directives and guidelines.
- The guidelines must be followed by auditors, auditor candidates and employers for any COR on-site data gathering activities.

#### **WCB PIR Refund Eligibility**

The WCB confirms PIR refund eligibility for the 2022 COR auditing plan.

#### **Completion of 2021 Audits**

Audits conducted up to and including December 31, 2021, follow the requirements of the 2021 COR COVID Audit Plan.

#### **For Questions**

If you have any questions, please contact Ian Hooper at 780-415-9997 or e-mail: [ian.hooper@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ian.hooper@gov.ab.ca)