

WCB Safety Certified – Q&As

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What is WCB Safety Certified?

A WCB Safety Certified accreditation is issued to companies who have passed an audit of their health and safety management system. The audits are conducted by [audit providers](#) approved by the WCB to conduct WCB Safety Certified audits.

A WCB Safety Certified audit measures the effectiveness of a company's health and safety management system across 22 elements:

- Policy
- Compliance Assurance
- Detailed Responsibilities
- Management Communications and Commitment
- Training – Management
- Training – On-the-Job
- Training – Orientation
- Worker Participation
- Incident Reporting and Investigation
- Inspections
- Hazard Assessments
- Work Refusal Process
- Safe Work Practices and Procedures
- Emergency Preparedness
- Employer Rules
- Contractor Health and Safety
- Data Analysis / Objectives / Standards
- Operational Health and Safety Meetings
- Maintenance Policy and Program
- Management Performance Standards
- Permits and Special Procedures
- Personal Protective Equipment

How does being WCB Safety Certified benefit my company?

Effective health and safety management systems have been shown to have an impact on reducing injuries. Eliminating the social and financial effects of workplace injuries can strengthen the business success of participating employers. Being WCB Safety Certified is a visible demonstration of your company's commitment to workplace health and safety. Increasingly, more and more organizations want to do business with companies they know take safety seriously. People seeking employment are also drawn to companies that show they care about their workers' safety. An active and effective health and safety management system can be a great benefit to your recruitment and retention efforts.

Companies who want to bid on any work for the provincial government – particularly construction work for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal – are required to have an independent third-party audit of their health and safety management system. WCB Safety Certified meets this requirement.

How do I sign up?

You will need to contact one of the [approved audit providers](#) and arrange for them to conduct an audit of your health and safety management system.

How much does an audit cost?

The cost of a certification audit varies among the approved audit providers, and is not something the WCB controls. You will have to contact the [approved audit providers](#) for that information.

How do I choose an audit provider?

You should make your choice of audit provider the same way you would decide on any service provider. [Contact them](#) and ask them to describe their process, the time involved, the cost, and the benefits. Ask about their expertise with the health and safety aspects of your industry. Although all approved audit providers can conduct a WCB Safety Certified audit in any industry, some providers may be more familiar with a particular industry than others. You will need to determine which approved provider best suits your audit needs.

How long will an audit take?

The length of time an audit will take depends on many factors – including the size of your organization, how many locations you have, your organization's readiness to undergo an audit, an audit provider's availability to schedule an audit, for example. The WCB does not establish timeframes for audits. You will need to discuss that with your audit provider. For clarity, it is unlikely that an audit can be scheduled, conducted, and certification issued in less than two to four weeks. If you are intending to bid on a tender that requires you to have certification, it is recommended you contact an approved audit provider as soon as possible to begin the process, so that you can submit the required information as part of your bid documentation.

My company's certificate is only valid for one year, but I know another company that does the same work I do and theirs is valid for a three years. Why?

A WCB Safety Certified certificate can be valid for up to three years, depending on the size of your organization. The Program Standard, which the approved audit providers are required to follow, identifies four possible options for issuing certificates:

- *Option 1 – Employers with 5 or more employees – on-site audit at least once every 3 years – internal maintenance audits required in the intervening years*
- *Option 2 – Employers with less than 5 employees – on-site audit at least once every 3 years – no internal maintenance audits required in the intervening years*
- *Option 3 – Employers with less than 5 employees – annual mail-in audit – audit providers who offer this option establish specific criteria for audit evaluations*
- *Option 4 – Any size employer – on-site audit every year*

During the audit provider approval process, the audit providers identify which option(s) they will offer and they develop their audit process and procedures based on that. As a result, some providers may offer two or more audit options depending on the size of an organization, while other providers may only offer one audit option for all of their customers.

I am WCB Safety Certified through Provider X. Can I change audit providers when my certification comes up for renewal?

Yes. You can choose to change audit providers – as long as your new provider is approved by the WCB to conduct WCB Safety Certified audits.

I have a Certificate of Recognition (COR) from Construction Safety Nova Scotia. Is that the same as being WCB Safety Certified?

Construction Safety Nova Scotia (CSNS) is an approved audit provider. A COR from CSNS meets the WCB Safety Certified Standard.

I have a COR from another province. Is that the same as being WCB Safety Certified?

No. In order to be WCB Safety Certified, the audit of your health and safety management system must be conducted by an audit provider approved to conduct WCB Safety Certified audits.

If your COR was issued by another provinces' Construction Safety Association, you may be eligible for a Construction Safety Nova Scotia COR through a reciprocity program. Contact CSNS at 902.468.6696 for more information.

Note: If a tendering organization requires you to have an independent third-party audit of your health and safety management system to bid on a job, it is up to that tendering organization to determine what they will accept as meeting that requirement. The WCB will not confirm or endorse the equivalency of other safety management system audits.

If I am WCB Safety Certified, will I get a rebate or reduction in my assessment premiums like in other provinces?

The WCB is currently piloting a Practice Incentive Rebate Program in the trucking and construction industries, which provides rebates for those companies that meet eligibility criteria – one of which is being WCB Safety Certified. More information about the Practice Incentive Rebate Program can be found [here](#).

I am interested in becoming an approved audit provider so I can issue WCB Safety Certified certificates. How do I get approved?

It is important to note that the WCB does not approve individuals to be auditors. The audit provider approval process is intended for registered businesses who provide auditing services. Here are some of the requirements needed to be considered for approval as an audit provider for WCB Safety Certified:

- Be in good standing with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks for a minimum of three (3) years;
- Obtain and maintain registration and certification to the ISO 9001 Standard – *Quality Management Systems – Requirements* (annual audit required);
- Carry a minimum of \$1 Million in Errors & Omissions or Professional Liability insurance;
- Develop your audit instrument to meet the criteria in the *WCB Safety Certified Audit Standard*;
- Develop your audit program and procedures to meet the criteria in the *Program Standard for WCB Safety Certified Audit Programs*.

If you meet the first three requirements and are interested in having your business approved as an audit provider for WCB Safety Certified, please contact [Deirdre O'Reilly](#) at 902.491.8445 for more information.