

May 2010

**COR Policies
and Procedures Manual**

**Certificate of
Recognition (COR)
Program**

AMHSA
Alberta Municipal Health and Safety Association



AMHSA – COR Policies and Procedures Manual

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Certifying Partner.....	3
Audits	3
General Requirements.....	3
External Audits.....	10
COR Maintenance (Internal) Audits.....	14
Small Employer Certificate of Recognition Program.....	15
Medium Employer Certificate of Recognition Program.....	17
Auditors	17
Auditor Training and Certification.....	18
Audit Quality Assurance.....	21
Code of Ethics.....	24
Liability of Auditors.....	24
Trainer and Analyst Requirements.....	24
Certificate of Recognition Process	26
AMHSA as Certifying Partner.....	26
Achieving, Maintaining and Renewing COR.....	26
Review of COR.....	28
Partnerships in Injury Reduction Program.....	28
COR Database.....	29
Communication.....	30

Introduction

This policies and procedures manual was developed to ensure that AMHSA staff and all AMHSA certified auditors have current, accurate information about the *Partnerships* Certificate of Recognition (COR) program, and the standards that we are all required to follow. The manual has been updated with new requirements since it was first published in 2004. Auditors: ensure you are familiar with the requirements in this manual. The COR Policies and Procedures Manual will continue to be updated as required and made available to all auditors in course materials and for download from the AMHSA website.

Certifying Partner

AMHSA agrees to act as Certifying Partner for all of its regular members. This includes any municipal government in Alberta which has a Workers' Compensation Board industry code of 95100 (villages), 95101 (towns), 95102 (municipal districts & counties), or 95104 (cities).

In addition, AMHSA may agree to be the Certifying Partner for an organization that is not a municipality, but whose function is closely aligned with municipal operations. Each request will be reviewed individually to determine appropriateness. If AMHSA agrees to act as Certifying Partner for a non-municipal organization, an administrative fee will be levied to offset costs as follows:

Annual associate member fee: \$500

Auditor quality assurance review fee: \$80/hour (generally 1-2 hours per audit)

Note that Associate Members using AMHSA as their Certifying Partner will be expected to hire AMHSA-certified consultant auditors to conduct their external audits.

Audits

General Requirements

Audit Tool

Partnerships in Injury Reduction (PIR) health and safety management system audits are conducted for the purpose of achieving or maintaining a Certificate of Recognition. Any *Partnerships* audit performed within the municipal sector must be conducted using the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool, as approved by Alberta Employment and Immigration.

Changes made to the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool will be made in accordance with Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEI) protocols. The revised audit tool must be reviewed in its entirety and approved by AEI before it can be used for *Partnerships* audits.

If a municipality makes changes to the approved audit tool, approval of the audit tool is nullified, and the audit results are not valid.

The current AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool was approved in February 2010. An electronic version of the excel document is available on the AMHSA website. This Audit Tool must be used for all AMHSA audits. If significant changes are made to the Audit Tool, AMHSA will inform auditors via email, the updated Tool will be made available on the website, and the Audit and Auditor Recertification courses will be revised.

Scope

Municipal operations have multiple departments, facilities and worksites, and the health and safety management system is developed and implemented for the benefit of all employees working in all of these departments and sites. The audit is a measure of how well the system has been implemented and managed throughout the entire organization. Therefore the scope of the audit must be representative of all the municipality's facilities and worksites.

If there is any uncertainty as to whether a facility, department, or operation is part of the municipality, the employer must determine if the operation has a separate Workers' Compensation Board account number from the municipality.

- If the operation in question has its own WCB account number, it is not part of the municipality. If that operation wishes to obtain its own COR, it would need to develop its own health and safety management system and have it audited separately from the municipality.
- If the operation in question does not have a separate WCB account number, then it is part of the municipality, must be included in the municipality's health and safety management system, and must be included in the audit.

All *Partnerships* audits must be representative of all the departments, facilities and sites. Audits that are not comprehensive in their scope will not be accepted as a valid audit for the purpose of obtaining or maintaining a municipality's COR.

See Table 1: 2010 Audit Sampling Criteria regarding interviews and sites – includes minimums tables and information on representative sampling. This table is included in the Audit Tool Excel document.

Special Note regarding volunteer fire fighting operations:

Municipalities must include the fire department in their health and safety management system **if they have the same WCB account number as their employing municipality** (see “Scope”). If they have a different WCB account, they are excluded from interviews, documentation review, and observational tours.

AMHSA recognizes that volunteer fire fighters do not work on site; they only respond on behalf of the municipality if there is a fire. So for the purposes of an audit, **if the fire fights have the same WCB account as the municipality**, auditors:

- **must include the fire department’s material in the documentation review** (e.g. hazard assessments for non-emergency tasks – see Firefighter’s Code of Practice regarding emergency tasks hazard assessment exemption, training records, etc.)
- are **not required to include the number of volunteers in the employee count for determining the number of interviews** to be conducted
- **must include permanent fire department staff** (e.g. chief: deputy) as well as any volunteers who actually work for the municipality in their permanent job, in the interview process
- **should include the fire hall in the observation tour**, looking for examples of corrective actions from the fire hall inspections, seeing if a copy of the health and safety policy and legislation is available, etc.

Departmental / Baseline Audits

There are times when specific departments or facility-specific audits are conducted. For example: an individual seeking certification might choose to perform a small scale audit; or a particular department or facility might choose to have an audit done if they have concerns about health and safety performance. If this is done the auditor focuses **only** on health and safety management system activities carried out in this department or facility. This means that interviews are based on the number of employees working in the area, only documents (e.g. inspections, meeting minutes, etc.) from the area are reviewed, and the observation tour is only of sites under the jurisdiction of the audited area.

Although these smaller scale audits serve a valid purpose for the municipality and/or auditor, they **are not valid Partnerships audits** and do not count for achieving or maintaining a municipality’s COR. To count towards maintaining auditor certification, these audits must be submitted to AMHSA for quality assurance review.

Activity

Municipalities are active all year around, but some aspects of municipal operations are seasonal by nature (e.g. parks operations and road construction are more active in summer; while snow clearing and ice arenas are more active in winter). The audit must be conducted while operations are active.

Documentation Review

Auditors review all relevant health and safety documents when conducting the audit. The municipality being audited should know in advance what documents will be required, and it is recommended that the auditor provide a checklist to the municipality to help them assemble this documentation. The Health and Safety Management Systems - Audit course material has more information regarding documents required. Lack of documentation is one of the biggest areas of contention between auditors and the municipality audited.

- **It is the responsibility of the municipality audited to know what is required and to have it available.**
- If certain documents are missing or out of date, the auditor should discuss this with their key contact to ensure nothing more is available.

All documents requiring signatures, such as policies, directives and reports, must have hand written signatures. Scanned or stamped signatures are not acceptable.

Interviews

All *Partnerships* audits must be conducted using at least the minimum required number of interviews. Interview sample size is based on the number of employees working for the municipality **at the time of the audit**, including seasonal, part-time and casual employees. The minimum numbers and information on representative sampling are in Table 1: 2010 Audit Sampling Criteria.

The interview sample size also needs to be **representative of the organization's overall structure**. It is the responsibility of the auditor to determine who to interview based on the following considerations:

- **Years of Experience with the Municipality** – a cross section of everyone from new hires to the most experienced personnel must be included.
- **Departments** – at least one individual from each department must be included.
- **Level** – a cross section from every staffing level within the organization, representing managers, supervisors and front-line workers, and including part-time and casual, must be included.
- **Shifts** – if there are multiple shifts in any department, employees from all shifts are to be included.
- **Municipal History** – if there has been a significant change in the municipality's structure, such as the formation of a Specialized Municipality from a town and municipal district, individuals from both of the previous organizations must be interviewed.
- **Multiple Sites** – in addition to ensuring that all departments are represented, different sites must be represented. For example, if public works is responsible for equipment maintenance and water treatment, interviews must be conducted with people from both areas. Similarly both a pool and arena fall into the recreation department but the sites are different, so individuals from both sites should be interviewed.

It is important that auditors have an organizational chart or similar document to determine who to interview. Table 2 - "**Organizational Structure for Determining Interviews**" provides a structure for auditors to determine how many individuals to interview from the various departments, and from the various levels in the organization. Based on this determination, the auditor may need to interview more individuals than the minimum required by the *Partnerships* standard.

In Table 3 - “**Interview Selection Sheet**” auditors must indicate who they interviewed (note that employee names are not to be included on this document). These tables are found with the Audit Tool in the Audit participant’s manual.

Any audit that does not meet these interview requirements is not representative of the organization, and will not meet the Quality Assurance standards. As such, the audit is not valid and the audited municipality will not have met their *Partnerships* requirements, which means:

- if the audit was an external peer audit, the municipality will not receive its COR
- if the audit was an internal maintenance audit, the municipality will lose its COR

Written Interviews

There are certain circumstances in which a municipality may use written questionnaires instead of in-person interviews. There are limitations on the use of written interviews and procedures which must be followed:

- This option is only available to municipalities with a workforce of **over 200 employees**
- The employer being audited must obtain **permission from AMHSA**, and get agreement for the process from their auditors
- AMHSA has created a written interview questionnaire; this document can be customized to use the terminology of the audited organization, however the context of the questions cannot be changed
- Written questionnaires can only be used for worker interviews (not for managers or supervisors)
- A maximum of 50% of the worker interviews can use written questionnaires
- Workers participating in the written interview process must have good reading and writing skills, and agree to the process
- The confidentiality of all written responses must be maintained, just as in-person interview confidentiality is maintained
- The questionnaire must be administered in a controlled environment (either one-on-one with the auditor, or a classroom with several workers and the auditor present). The auditor is allowed to answer questions and provide clarification about questions, but cannot allow group discussion or debate to occur
- When submitting the final audit package to AMHSA the auditor must provide the details of the written interview process (e.g. how many worker interviews were conducted by written questionnaire vs. oral and the methodology used in administering the questionnaire)

Observation Tours

Site visits are conducted to complete the observation verification technique. The purpose of this verification technique is to confirm that the information found in the documentation review process is an accurate reflection of the on-site activities. The audit must be representative of the activity at all sites, but not every site has to be visited during the observation tour.

Use the following as guidelines for worksites to select for the observation tour:

- Include all major departments – the **main shop and office complex must be included** in every PIR audit
- Include a variety of different types of activities
- Consider including any departments and worksites not included in the audit from the previous year
- Take into account the results of documentation review – some specific information from the documentation review must be verified by observation. The auditor won't know what areas must be visited for this verification until the documentation review is complete

If the sites visited during the audit for the observation tour are not representative of the municipality's operation, the audit is not valid for *Partnerships* and will not be process for COR Certification or COR maintenance.

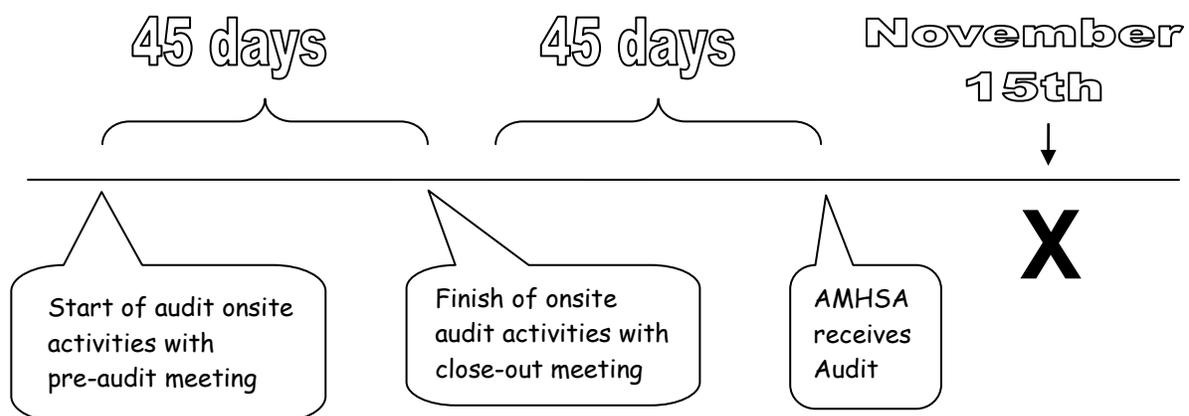
See Table 1: 2010 Audit Sampling Criteria for minimums table and information on representative site samples.

Timelines for Audit Completion

On-site activities for all *Partnerships* audits must take no more than 45 days. On-site activities begin with the pre-audit meeting and include the documentation review, interviews, observation tour and close out meeting. By the time that the close out meeting is held, the auditor must have completed all of the scoring, and have developed some general comments regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the municipality's health and safety management system. These **preliminary results** are presented with the Summary Score Sheet.

If it is anticipated that the onsite activities will exceed 45 days, **prior approval** must be requested from AMHSA. Alberta Employment and Immigration will determine if an extension is warranted. The maximum extension that may be granted is an additional 45 days. If an audit takes longer than 45 days to complete, and no prior authorization was granted, the audit is not valid for *Partnerships* and will not be process for COR Certification or COR Maintenance.

The final audit document, including the executive report, must be completed and submitted to AMHSA and to the municipality audited within 45 days of completing the on-site activity, and no later than November 15th of the audit year.



See Roll-Up Audits section (page 11) for deadlines specific to that option.

Documentation to Submit

A copy of the completed audit is to be submitted to both the audited municipality and AMHSA. The documents to be included in each package are as follows:

To the Audited Municipality:

- Completed Audit Tool including Summary Score Sheet
- Executive Report

To AMHSA:

- Completed Audit Tool including Summary Score Sheet
- Executive Report
- Organizational Chart
- Table 2 (*Organizational Structure for Determining Interviews*, found in the Audit Tool Appendix as part of the audit package)
- Table 3 (*Interview Selection Sheet*, found in the Audit Tool Appendix as part of the audit package)
- Interview Summary Sheet

AMHSA reviews all audits for quality (see page 25 for more information about quality assurance). Audits that are not submitted for review, or which do not meet AMHSA's standards, are not valid for

- the Partnerships program (i.e. do not count towards achieving or maintaining a municipality's Certificate of Recognition)
- achieving or maintaining auditor certification

Roll-Up Audits

Large municipalities might conduct their audit by performing individual departmental audits and then combining the results into a single report. The roll-up audit must be representative of the municipality's overall operations. Note:

- application must be made on "Application for Roll-Up Audit" form
- application must be **received by AMHSA by June 30th** of the audit year
- each of the departmental audits must be completed within 45 days, the results must be compiled and submitted **within 60 days of the end date of the last departmental audit**
- the final audit document must address the corporate health and safety management system status, not just the status of the individual departments
- the auditor must include the individual departmental audits that contributed to the final document and explain how the information was consolidated (i.e. who participated in which audits, who consolidated the information and how the weighting of scores and comments was achieved)
- the "Partnerships Roll-Up Audit Sampling Table" and "Partnerships Roll-Up Audit Score Sheet" forms must be completed and submitted

Contact AMHSA for roll-up audit forms.

AMHSA Field Review

In addition to reviewing audits for quality, AMHSA may periodically conduct a field review to verify audit findings. This process will entail a “mini” audit, in which AMHSA employees and/or consultants will conduct an audit on a portion of the municipality to replicate the auditors’ findings. If significant discrepancies are found, AMHSA will contact the auditors to discuss any issues.

External Audits

Standard Process

A municipality wishing to achieve a Certificate of Recognition (COR) for the first time (COR Certification), or renew an existing one (COR Recertification), must pass an external audit of its health and safety management system. The standard is 80% overall, with no less than 50% in any one of the eight elements. The COR is valid for 3 years, assuming the municipality conducts an internal maintenance audit, or equivalent, in each of the next 2 calendar years. See page 16 for more information about maintenance audits. The audit must also receive a minimum of 80% on the quality assurance review and all revisions must be received within the deadlines to be valid. See *Quality Assurance section on page 25 for more details.*

External audits are conducted by auditors from outside the municipality who are certified to conduct audits using the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool.

- In most cases the auditors used will be **certified peer auditors** from another municipality
- **Private consultants** may also be used if they are certified by AMHSA to use the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool
 - AMHSA-certified consultant auditors can be hired by a municipality needing an external audit to conduct their audit (not participate in the peer process) or
 - AMHSA-certified consultant auditors can be hired by a municipality to conduct an audit on another municipality on their behalf (both participate in the peer process). This fulfills their obligation in the peer system – note that the municipality responsible for the audit has the option of providing a peer auditor or consultant – the municipality receiving the audit does not specify what type of auditor will conduct their audit.
- Large municipalities (those with at least 500 employees) may use **Corporate Auditors**, if acceptable to AMHSA. Prior approval is required if a municipality chooses to pursue this option. See page 13 for more information about corporate auditors.

External audits are normally arranged through AMHSA. A municipality wishing to have an external audit performed by a peer auditor must contact AMHSA as soon as possible, **at least by June 15th** of the audit year. If the municipality is using a consultant, they should advise AMHSA of this and confirm with AMHSA that the auditor is properly certified.

In any year that a municipality requests an external audit, they will be required to provide auditors (municipal or AMHSA-certified consultants) to perform an external audit elsewhere. The municipality is expected to provide auditor resources equivalent to those required to perform their audit (e.g. if 6 audit days are necessary to complete an audit of the Town of ABC, then the Town of ABC is expected to provide 6 audit days in return).

If the municipality is unable or unwilling to provide auditors for an external audit, they will be expected to hire an AMHSA-certified consultant auditor to either:

- perform their municipality's audit (i.e. the municipality opts out of the peer process), or
- act as the municipality's peer auditor (i.e. the hired auditor performs an external audit elsewhere on behalf of the municipality)

Only certified auditors may be used for external audits. Individuals attempting to obtain auditor certification are not allowed to participate in an external audit.

External auditors must be free from any conflict of interest with the municipality being audited. Conflict of interest would occur if the external auditor:

- worked for or had a direct contractual relationship with the municipality within the previous 12 months
- was involved in developing or implementing the municipality's health and safety program within the previous 12 months

If either of these two scenarios applies to an auditor he/she must inform AMHSA and not perform the external audit.

AMHSA will not allow "cross audits" to occur. A cross audit would occur if auditors from employer ABC audit employer XYZ in the same year that auditors from employer XYZ audit employer ABC.

The same auditors will not be used to perform 2 consecutive external audits for a municipality.

External Audits will be kept on file by AMHSA for 3 years.

Costs/Expenses

The municipality requesting an external peer audit **is responsible to cover all reasonable travel expenses of the peer auditors**. This includes hotel, meals and mileage. The auditors' employer is required to cover their salary during the audit. AMHSA recommends the auditor and municipality being audited discuss costs and expenses prior to the audit.

AMHSA has no policy regarding fees for consultant auditors. If a municipality opts out of the peer process and hires an auditor, it will need to negotiate these fees with the auditing firm.

Corporate Auditors

A Corporate Auditor is someone from within the organization who is acting as an external auditor for his/her own organization. Only municipalities that have more than 500 employees are large enough and complex enough to consider using corporate auditors.

Although auditors from within the organization may participate in the external audit as corporate auditors, the external audit process must be lead by an auditor who is completely external to the organization. It is the responsibility of the municipality audited to verify with AMHSA that the auditor selected as lead auditor is acceptable. Once the lead auditor has been selected and approved, the auditor (rather than an individual from the municipality audited) is the individual who communicates with AMHSA about the audit status. The lead auditor is responsible to – at a minimum – plan the audit, compile the results from the different departmental audits, and write the final report.

Corporate auditors would be used to audit specific facilities or departments that they would normally have no other involvement with. In order for an auditor to be considered as a corporate auditor, he/she:

- must not report to any management at the audited facility
- must not be involved in developing or implementing the health and safety management system at the audited facility
- must not be held accountable for the results of the health and safety management system of the audited facility

The corporate audit process may not be used without prior written approval from AMHSA.

In order to request approval, the lead auditor (who must be external to the organization) shall provide the following information to AMHSA at least 30 days prior to the anticipated start date of the external audit:

- Copy of the organizational structure, showing the number of employees in each department
- Description of corporate auditing system
- Name and department of the corporate auditors including their relationship to the department that they will be auditing
- Reporting relationships of the various facilities to the corporate office and departments providing auditors

AMHSA, in collaboration with AEI, will evaluate the municipality's proposal and will jointly approve or deny the request. AMHSA will notify the municipality in writing of the decision.

Limited Scope Audits

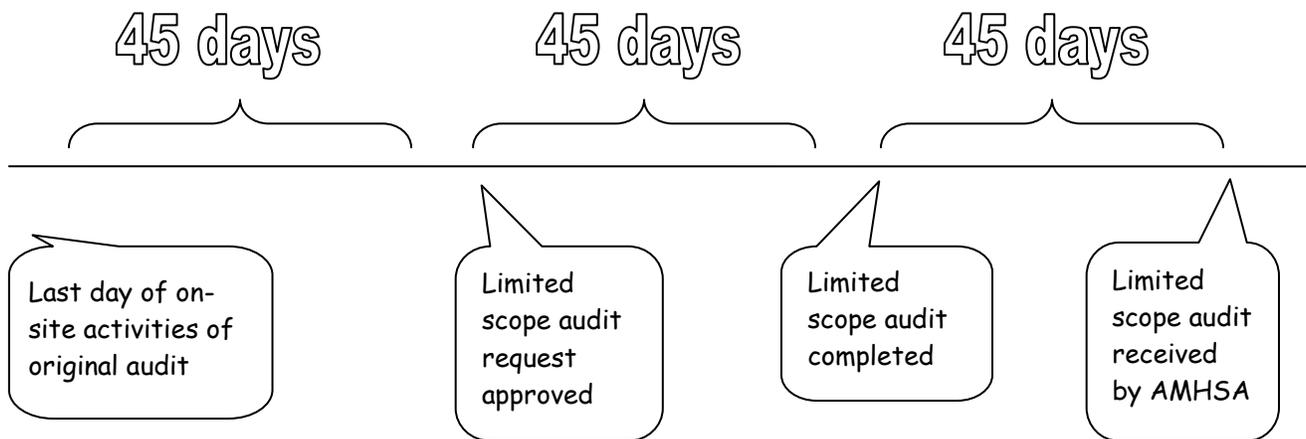
A limited scope audit can be used if a municipality fails its external audit, but only because of minor deficiencies in its health and safety management system. The external audit score must have been at least 70%, with one or more failed elements in order to qualify for a limited scope audit. If the auditor thinks that the municipality would likely have passed the audit with a bit of minor fine tuning he/she should recommend that the municipality consider having a limited scope audit.

The limited scope audit is only used to review deficient areas of the management system; it is not a complete re-audit.

Prior approval is required from AMHSA before proceeding with a limited scope audit. The municipality that failed its external audit must make a written request to AMHSA, and receive approval within 45 days from completion of the on-site activities of the original failed audit (i.e. within 45 days of the close-out meeting). In making its request, the municipality must submit the original failed audit, along with an action plan to correct the deficient items. AMHSA will determine whether the deficiencies can realistically be corrected, implemented, and evaluated within the timeframe allowed for the limited scope audit.

The limited scope audit will be conducted by an external certified auditor, using specific questions from the audit tool determined by AMHSA. The decision on whether to use the original auditor will be made by AMHSA, the municipality audited and the original auditor. If the original auditor is not used, it is the responsibility of the municipality to obtain another suitable auditor to perform the audit.

Time frames are as follows:



The limited scope audit is subject to the same quality assurance review by AMHSA as the original audit.

A municipality passing the limited scope audit will be issued a COR backdated to the completion date of the original audit.

If the original audit was conducted before the end of one calendar year, and the limited scope is not completed until the beginning of the next year, the municipality will still meet the *Partnerships* program requirements for the previous audit year if all requirements stated here are met.

The Limited Scope Auditor must submit the following to AMHSA:

- ✓ Revised Summary Score Sheet
- ✓ Updated Audit Tool (highlight questions included in Limited Scope)
- ✓ Updated Executive Report (including auditor information, dates of LSA and amended element scores)

Note that Limited Scope Audits are subject to the same quality assurance review (including revision requirements) as all other PIR audits.

Partnerships Audit Standard Equivalency

The *Partnerships* Audit Standard Equivalency (PASE) is an option offered by Alberta Employment and Immigration. It is intended for large employers that have well established health and safety management systems, but that have their systems audited with a complex, comprehensive audit tool that do not meet the *Partnerships* standard. The intention of this equivalency was to recognize employers who manage health and safety to a level that is at least as good as the *Partnerships* program requirements.

All municipalities participating in the *Partnerships* program are currently auditing their system using the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool. None are using an audit protocol that would meet the PASE standard; therefore **AMHSA does not currently offer PASE.**

COR Maintenance (Internal) Audits

Standard Process

Once a municipality achieves a COR by passing an external audit of its health and safety management system, the COR is valid for 3 years if internal maintenance audits are performed in each of the following 2 calendar years.

There is no requirement for a municipality to pass these internal maintenance audits. However, the **audit must pass quality assurance with a minimum of 80% and all revisions received per deadlines in order to be valid** for COR maintenance. If the QA review fails, the audit will not be submitted to AEI/WCB and the municipality will lose its COR.

Maintenance audits are conducted by an auditor certified by AMHSA. Normally this auditor is an internal auditor (an employee of the municipality being audited). However a municipality may use a certified peer auditor from another municipality or a private consultant who is certified to use the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool. It is the responsibility of the municipality to coordinate its internal maintenance audits; if it does not have a certified auditor on staff it is the municipality's responsibility to find a suitable auditor.

An individual attempting to become a certified peer auditor may conduct a municipality's internal COR Maintenance audit for his/her certification if the audit is representative of the entire municipal operation.

If a municipality fails to perform an internal maintenance audit in either of the 2 years following receipt of its COR, **the municipality will have its COR revoked**. AMHSA will notify AEI *Partnerships Team*, and advise the municipality that their COR is no longer valid and should be cancelled. The municipality will need to pass an external audit before it is eligible to receive a new COR.

Maintenance audits will be kept on file at AMHSA for 3 years.

Action Plans

AMHSA offers 1-year Action Plans as a **COR maintenance (internal audit year) option**. Employers who may benefit from the use of Action Plans include:

- ✓ Large, complex employers who utilize a large amount of internal resources and time to conduct an internal audit, and
- ✓ Those who have achieved high audit scores and find that internal maintenance audits no longer reveal sufficient opportunities for improvement.

To be eligible to use an Action Plan in lieu of an internal maintenance audit, an employer must meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Must have current COR
2. Must have completed at least one full three-year COR audit cycle (an external audit, two internal audits, and a second external audit)
3. Must make **written application to AMHSA by March 31st** of the calendar year in which the maintenance audit is required
4. Must have approval from AMHSA to use an Action Plan.

An Action Plan must use the Partnerships template and include all of the following:

- List of audit recommendations from the last certification (external) audit and the accompanying corporate projects to implement the recommendations.
- Each project should be broken down into milestones or significant activities and must include target date and person(s) responsible.
- A description of deliverables for each project that will be submitted to AMHSA as evidence of project completion.
- Assignment of relative weights for each project (out of 100) to assist AMHSA in determining percentage completeness of Action Plan.

The activities identified in the action plan must be actively pursued during the remainder of the year, and **a final report with documentation to prove deliverables completed, must be submitted to AMSHA by November 30th** of the same year. Note that this deadline cannot be extended!

AMHSA will review the report and proof of deliverables to determine acceptability relative to completeness of deliverables. The employer will be informed of results in writing.

- Employers who receive a final score of 80% or greater on their Action Plan will qualify to use an Action Plan in lieu of their next internal COR maintenance audit.
- Employers who receive a final score of less than 80% will not qualify to use an Action Plan in lieu of their next internal COR maintenance audit.

Notes re Actions Plans:

- It must be recognized that by not participating in a standard internal COR maintenance audit for 2 years, there will be less certainty as to how the municipality will score in its next COR certification (external) audit. Therefore AMHSA recommends using an Action Plan in lieu of only one of the two internal COR maintenance audits per audit cycle.
- The creator(s) of the Action Plan will receive credit towards maintenance of their AMHSA auditor certification. However, auditors who would normally participate in an internal maintenance audit that do not contribute to the creation of the Action Plan may still need to perform an audit in order to maintain their personal auditor certification.
- Having actions assigned to an auditor does NOT count as having created the plan.

Small Employer Certificate of Recognition Program

A small employer is defined as an employer with 10 or fewer employees. For the purposes of this program the term “employees” includes anyone who directly affects the outcome of the organization’s work (e.g. municipal manager, administration, and outside employees). “Employees” also includes part-time and temporary employees, as well as subcontractors. The total number of employees cannot exceed 10 at any time during the year; if it does, the municipality is considered a regular employer and the standard program requirements apply.

The definition of a small employer must be applied to the municipality’s whole operation when pursuing a Small Employer Certificate of Recognition. All activities that come under the municipality’s WCB account number are considered one operation; therefore a municipality cannot be issued multiple small employer CORs for different sites or facilities unless the number of employees represented by all the CORs is still less than 10.

The AMHSA Small Employer Certificate of Recognition (SECOR) program audit instrument is available online at www.amhsa.net. The standard is 80%, with no less than 50% in any element.

Within SECOR small employers perform “self-audits” to achieve a certificate of recognition, rather than participating in a peer process. The self-audit is validated by a Commissioner of Oaths. This validated self-audit is submitted along with additional documentation for review by AMHSA. The additional documents that must be submitted are described in Tab 6 with the SECOR audit instrument.

At least one individual within the municipality is required to attend the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS COURSE (see pages 20 and 26 for more information on training requirements). The municipal manager or the person most familiar with the overall municipal operations must be one of the participants. The individuals who take this training are responsible for completing the SECOR self-audit.

The municipality has the option of hiring an external auditor to perform its SECOR audit, rather than performing its own self-audit. If the municipality chooses to hire an auditor to conduct the SECOR audit:

- The auditor must be certified to use the SECOR audit tool
- The audit does not need to be validated by a Commissioner of Oaths
- The municipal manager or person most familiar with the overall municipal operation is required to take the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS course prior to initiating the audit

The municipality must submit all the following documents to AMHSA:

- Completed SECOR self-audit validated by a Commissioner of Oaths, or an external SECOR audit performed by an external auditor
- The required supporting documentation as outlined in the SECOR audit tool
- An Action Plan to correct any audit question that was answered with a ‘no’

Successful small employer municipalities will be issued a Small Employer COR, which is valid for 3 years, assuming it is maintained by continuing to conduct SECOR self-audits in each of the next 2 calendar years. These internal audits must be submitted to AMSHA with the appropriate supporting documentation. Documents to be submitted include changes to policies, as well as current year activities (e.g. inspection reports, meeting minutes, etc.). The municipality is not required to pass these maintenance self-audits or have them validated by a Commissioner of Oaths.

If the SECOR maintenance requirements are not met, the municipality will have its small employer COR revoked. AMHSA will notify the AEI *Partnerships* Team and advise the municipality that their COR is no longer valid. The municipality will need to pass another external audit or validated self-audit before it is eligible to receive a new small employer COR.

If a municipality exceeds the maximum employee number of 10 after being issued a small employer COR it is no longer considered to be a small employer. It must move into the regular COR program and have a regular employer audit done of their program in the next year. The next applicable audit (internal maintenance or external peer) must meet all the requirements of the regular COR program.

All external / validated self-audits as well as maintenance self-audits must be completed within 45 days, and submitted to AMHSA within 45 days of completion. AMHSA will keep all SECOR audits on file for 3 years.

Medium Employer Certificate of Recognition Program

AEI allows for a transition process for employers who hold a small employer COR and are growing from a small employer into a regular large employer. A medium employer is defined as an employer who has 11 – 30 employees. The intent is to help employers who have grown make the transition into the more complex requirements of the regular employer COR program, by allowing them to achieve their small employer COR, and then conduct maintenance audits using the large employer audit tool. This program is open to any small employer who currently holds a small employer COR.

AMHSA does not currently offer the MECOR program. If any municipality with an existing small employer COR changes its status from small employer to regular employer, AMHSA will work with it on an individual basis to help it adapt to the large employer requirements.

Auditors

There are basic skills required to conduct a health and safety management system audit. These skills include good verbal and written communication, an ability to analyze information, and a basic understanding of occupational health and safety. Anyone wishing to become a certified peer auditor should assess whether they have these skills, or are willing to improve these skills, before pursuing certification.

Auditors need to be comfortable reading documents and extracting the key information. They should be able to write clearly: they need to be able to explain their findings in writing to several different groups, and present strengths and logical suggestions for improvement based on the findings. Auditors must be able to work cooperatively with workers, supervisors, managers and councillors within the municipality audited.

Auditors should have a basic understanding of health and safety concepts such as

- identification and control of hazards,
- performing formal inspections, and
- incident investigation.

They should also be familiar with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code.

Within the Partnerships in Injury Reduction program there are different training requirements for regular auditors and those who perform small employers self-audits. The requirements are described on the following pages. All training records (i.e. records of attendance and course results) and audits will be kept on file by AMHSA for 3 years.

AMHSA Employee Auditors

AMHSA employees who are certified auditors are allowed to conduct or assist with COR Maintenance (internal) audits for members of the Association. AMHSA employee auditors cannot participate in COR Certification (external) audits of members.

Auditor Training and Certification

An AMHSA Certified Auditor is certified to conduct audits in the municipal sector using the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool.

Anyone wishing to become an AMHSA Certified Peer Auditor must successfully complete:

- ✓ the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS course,
- ✓ the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AUDIT course, and
- ✓ an AUDITOR QUALIFICATION/CERTIFICATION AUDIT.

AMHSA tracks and will confirm this completion prior to issuing an auditor certificate.

• HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

This course is 2 days in length, and participants are instructed in the 8 elements of a health and safety management system. The course covers the purpose and benefits of each element as well as detailed content information about each element. In addition, participants learn about workplace health and safety legislation, and other relevant topics.

There is no pre-requisite for this course, however it is strongly suggested that participants have taken courses or have previous experience in health and safety (e.g. hazard assessment, inspection, incident investigation). To successfully complete this course, participants must score at least 80% on a written exam. Participants who successfully complete this course will be issued a certificate, and they can then proceed to take the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AUDIT course. Those participants who fail the exam will be issued a certificate of attendance, but will not be eligible to take the AUDIT course.

• HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - AUDIT

Participants must successfully complete the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS course before taking this course. (Successful completion will be confirmed through AMHSA's student database or should courses run consecutively, by the instructor prior to commencement of class). This course is 2 days in length, and is designed to teach participants how to conduct audits. It covers:

- Types of audits, purpose and benefits of auditing
- *Partnerships* and PIR program
- Skills, knowledge and ethics required to perform audits
- Basic steps in conducting audits (preparing for the audit, performing the audit, and reporting the results)
- Types of questions (all/nothing; range)
- Verification techniques (documentation, interviews, observation)

- Justification for scores
- Documents to review
- Interview sample selection & process
- Worksites to visit & sample selection
- Utilizing the current audit tool
- The written report
- Quality assurance requirements

To successfully complete this course, participants must demonstrate an understanding of the audit process through their completion of classroom exercises, and a score of at least 80% on a written exam. Exams can be rewritten by participants who do not pass the exam – either at the Northern or Southern AMHSA office or under supervision - contact AMHSA for details. One rewrite is allowed/student, and must be completed within 6 months of attending the training.

Participants who successfully complete this course will be issued a certificate, and can then perform their CERTIFICATION AUDIT. Those participants who are not successful will be issued a certificate of attendance, but cannot continue on towards certification as an AMHSA Auditor.

• **AUDITOR QUALIFICATION (CERTIFICATION) AUDIT**

Participants who have successfully completed the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - AUDIT course have up to six months to submit an Auditor Qualification (CERTIFICATION) AUDIT. Although six months is allowed, AMHSA generally requires candidates to complete this certification audit **within 3 months of course completion**. Extension of up to 6 months from the date of course completion will be granted on a case by case basis. It has been AMHSA's experience that the longer candidates wait to perform their certification audit, the less likely it is to pass quality assurance review. We recommend auditors-in-training conduct their certification audit as soon as possible after passing the course.

The purpose of the CERTIFICATION AUDIT is for auditor candidates to demonstrate that they can properly apply the audit tool. Therefore candidates must complete the entire audit process – they must correctly determine the number and range of people to interview and the sites to visit, based on the scope of the audit. They must use all verification techniques, and complete all eight elements of the management system in the audit and write the Executive Report.

The audit can be of an entire municipality or a single department/area. If auditing a department, we recommend a scope large enough that at least 6 interviews are conducted by the auditor-in-training. **Table 1 – 2010 Sampling Criteria minimums must be met!** This provides them with the experience of compiling the interview results and including positive response rates in the “I” justifications.

All supporting documentation must also be submitted, including:

- an organization chart
- Tables 2 and 3
- Pre-audit letter
- Pre-audit meeting agenda and meeting notes
- Close-out meeting agenda and meeting notes
- Interview summary sheet
- Interview notes
- Observation notes
- Completed audit tool including summary score sheet
- Executive report

Auditors-in-training are also required to submit a signed code of ethics (see page 26 for more information about the code of ethics).

Prohibitions & Restrictions:

- ✘ Auditor candidates may not participate in an external peer audit to achieve their certification
- ✘ Two or more candidates cannot work together to complete a joint Auditor Qualification (CERTIFICATION) AUDIT

Team Audits

If an auditor candidate wishes to work on his/her qualification (certification) audit **with a certified auditor** (team audit), the candidate must demonstrate to AMHSA that he/she lead the process:

- actively carried out all steps of the audit,
- independently scored and completed the audit tool, and
- made the recommendations and drafted the report.

Certification from another Organization

AMHSA recognizes that some individuals in the municipal sector have received education and certification in auditing from other Certifying Partners and will work with these individuals to determine specific requirements needed in order to become certified by AMHSA. Anyone certified through another Certifying Partner, wishing to challenge AMHSA's training and certification audit must provide the following documents:

- résumé
- copy of current auditor certificates
- examples of his/her work (recent *Partnerships* audit)
- signed copy of AMHSA's auditor code of ethics

AMHSA will contact the other Certifying Partner to ensure the individual is a current certified auditor with that Partner. After reviewing the submitted material, AMHSA will determine if the auditor's quality meets AMHSA's standards, or if upgrading is required, and advise the individual accordingly. Note that there will be a fee of \$80 per hour for this review. Successful applicants will receive an AMHSA auditor certificate and the Health and Safety Management System - Audit course materials.

Maintaining Auditor Certification

Peer auditor certification is valid for 3 years assuming the auditor conducts **at least 2 audits within the 3-year certification** cycle using the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool. The audit can be an internal maintenance audit, an external peer audit, or an audit of a portion of a municipality (departmental/baseline). All audits must be submitted to AMHSA for quality assurance review and pass with a minimum of 80%.

Note: The creator(s) of an Action Plan in lieu of an internal COR maintenance audit will receive credit towards maintenance of their AMHSA auditor certification. However, auditors who would normally participate in an internal maintenance audit that do not contribute to the creation of the Action Plan may still need to perform an audit in order to maintain their personal auditor certification. Having action items assigned to an auditor does not count as having participated in creation of the Action Plan.

Every 3 years, auditors must renew their certification by **attending a one-day Auditor Recertification course and passing the exam with at least 80%**.

SECOR Training

If a municipality wishes to participate in the small employer certificate of recognition program (SECOR) the municipal manager or person most familiar with overall municipal operations is required to participate in AMHSA's 1-day HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS – SMALL EMPLOYER COURSE. Small employer representatives will receive supplemental small employer information to help them implement their system.

To successfully complete this course, participants must score at least 80% on an exam. There is no pre-requisite for this course, although it is beneficial to have some previous experience in health and safety activities (e.g. inspections, hazard assessments). Participants who successfully complete this course will be issued a certificate, and can then proceed to implement their municipality's small employer health and safety management system and perform a SECOR self-audit.

The individual receiving the initial training is required to take one day of refresher training every 3 years. The refresher training will consist of:

- overview of health and safety management systems (1/2 day) and
- one of:
 - hazard assessment and control (1/2 day)
 - formal workplace inspections (1/2 day)
 - incident investigation (1/2 day)

Audit Quality Assurance

All health and safety management system audits must meet or exceed a minimum quality and are reviewed using the Partnerships Audit Quality Assurance Form – AMHSA Regular Audit tool. Large employer audits are reviewed using the standard tool while SECOR audits are reviewed using a modified Quality Assurance Tool for small employer audits.

Audits which must be reviewed:

- PIR audits: COR Certification (external) and COR Maintenance (internal)
- Auditor qualification (certification) audits
- SECOR audits

Audits which can be submitted for review to maintain auditor certification:

- auditor maintenance audits
- departmental/baseline audits

Fatal Flaws

The following are requirements that if not met are considered fatal flaws:

- from start to finish, the **on-site activity must occur within 45 days**, unless prior approval was granted by Partnerships
- the audit must be **received by AMHSA within 45 days following the last day of on-site activity**
- the auditor must have conducted the **appropriate number of interviews**, in accordance with the interview sampling standards, and the **interview sample is representative** of the organization
- **a representative number of worksites must have been included** in the site sample

If any of the above fatal flaws are found, the audit will not be reviewed for quality assurance. These are issues which cannot be fixed. Audits that are not reviewed due to fatal flaws will not be processed for PIR – which means loss of COR or not attaining a COR.

Quality Assurance Review

If no fatal flaws are found, then AMHSA will review and score the audit, determining if:

- the auditor's use of the audit instrument was appropriate
- the verification techniques were followed
- there were no errors in the calculation of scores
- justifications are complete and appropriate for each question
- for external audits - the auditor correctly determined if the municipality met the requirements for its COR
- the auditor has provided a sufficient quantity and quality of notes to clearly justify the points awarded (or not awarded) – including positive response rate for interview questions and quantification of documentation and observation questions
- strengths of the existing management system are clearly stated
- suggestions for improvement must be appropriate to audit results and be clear and actionable
- there are no contradictions in the auditors notes, scores and executive report

Auditors must achieve a score of at least 80% in this review to pass quality assurance.

Revisions

Whether 80% is achieved or not, if issues are found with applying scores according to audit instructions, applying validation methods per instructions, justifications are insufficient or contradictory, or contradictions exist between questions, detailed feedback about required changes will be sent to the auditor, and **he/she will have 20 days from the date of contact to correct the issues and submit the affected pages to AMHSA.**

- If the audit scored 80% or more upon the first review, and all of the changes are made as requested, the audit will meet PIR requirements, be processed, and the auditor credited with the audit. The QA review score will not change.

- If all changes are not received, the auditor will be contacted a second time and given 20 more days to submit the changes.
- If all changes are received in the second set of changes, the audit will meet PIR requirements, be processed, and the auditor credited with the audit. If all revisions are not received in the 2nd round of changes, the audit will not be processed.
- If the audit failed the initial quality assurance review (0-79%), and all of the required changes are received by AMHSA within the 20 days, the audit will be re-marked to give the auditor the opportunity to pass.
 - If the audit passes after the first round of changes but there are still QA issues, more detailed feedback will be supplied and the auditor will have a further 20 days to make corrections. If the changes are completed, it will then be processed for PIR and auditor credited, but score will not change.
 - **If the audit does not pass QA review after the first round of changes, the audit will FAIL** and not be processed for PIR or auditor credit. In the case of internal and external audits, this will result **in the loss of the municipality's COR.**

If an auditor does not make all of the required corrections, whether the QA review passed or not, the audit will not be processed - the municipality will not have met its *Partnerships* program requirements and the auditor will not receive credit toward their auditor certification maintenance. If an auditor submits 2 consecutive audits that do not meet the minimum quality standards, the auditor's certification will be revoked. If an auditor's certification has been revoked, he/she will be required to successfully complete the HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - AUDIT course again, and submit another Auditor Qualification (CERTIFICATION) AUDIT.

Every auditor will receive a copy of the completed Audit Quality Assurance Tool for each audit that they submit. The completed Tool will provide the auditor with feedback on what they did well, areas for improvement in conducting the audit, and their Quality Assurance score.

Auditors are strongly encouraged to review the QA Tool prior to conducting/submitting their next audit. Past QA reviews can provide a helpful reminder of what to include in justifications.

Once all revisions are completed and the audit passes QA review, the auditors must supply updated scores to the municipality if the QA review resulted in changed scores.

Conflicts of Interest

In cases where an AMHSA-certified auditor is related to an audit reviewer, their audits will be reviewed for quality assurance by a reviewer other than their relative.

Any audits conducted by AMHSA employees will be reviewed for quality assurance by the Executive Director, never a subordinate of the auditor.

Code of Ethics for Auditors

All AMHSA Auditors must adhere to AMHSA's code of ethics for auditors and are required to provide a signed copy to AMHSA. The key ethical considerations for auditors are:

- to apply the principals of auditing in a professional manner
- to be objective and impartial in conducting the audit
- to ensure they are complete and comprehensive in their review
- to maintain confidentiality
- to seek assistance or clarification from AMHSA if uncertain about any aspect of the audit

AMHSA's Executive Director will investigate any complaints about auditor conduct. If warranted, the auditor will be counseled to improve his/her performance, and might lose his/her certification.

Liability of Auditors

AMHSA is sometimes asked about the liability associated with being an auditor. Generally speaking, the care required of any professional person is that degree of care shown by the "reasonable prudent practitioner operating in like circumstances." If there is evidence of generally approved practice within a profession, compliance with that practice must be regarded as reasonable.

If for some reason the actions of an auditor were scrutinized in court, the court would consider whether the task (the advice being given) is the kind of advice that any other auditor with comparable skill and experience could reasonably make. If the advice of the auditor meets that test, then the auditor should be fine. As long as the auditor is making a comment on the basis of his or her own personal experience – either in the industry generally, or specifically as an auditor – he/she wouldn't be incurring any liability.

The auditor is responsible for commenting only on what he/she is comfortable with, and must be able to support those comments by his/her personal experience – both as an auditor and as a worker in that industry.

Trainer and Analyst Requirements

Trainer

Individuals teaching HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS and HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - AUDIT have extensive health and safety related experience, are knowledgeable in health and safety management systems and auditing, and are either AMHSA employees or contract trainers who have demonstrated their ability to instruct other AMHSA courses.

Student evaluations are conducted on all instructors and courses, and the results are shared with the instructor and with AMHSA's Executive Director. The Executive Director or Team Leader will meet with the instructors regularly to review the material, discuss any concerns, and provide *Partnerships* program updates.

The course content will be reviewed and updated when changes to the *Partnerships* program occur, and at least every 2 years. All course materials (participant manuals and exams) are approved by *Partnerships*.

Audit Quality Assurance Analysts

AMHSA Audit Quality Assurance Analysts are AMHSA employees or qualified consultants who:

- have a background in health and safety
- extensive experience with health and safety management systems and the Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool

All AMHSA Audit Quality Assurance Analysts are required to sign and follow AMHSA's Policy for Audit Quality Assurance Analysts. New Audit Quality Assurance Analysts will work with more experienced personnel to ensure that they can correctly administer the Audit Quality Assurance Tool.

All PIR audits (internal, external, and SECOR) are to be reviewed in a timely manner by AMHSA. We strive to conduct the initial review and provide feedback within 45 days of receipt of the audit, but cannot guarantee this during peak audit season (audits submitted October-November).

If the quality assurance process reveals a consistent pattern of problems or issues, a system check will be performed to determine if auditors may have received incorrect information during training. If this is the case, AMHSA will ensure that the instructor and all course participants receive the correct information.

All Audit Quality Assurance Analysts must adhere to AMHSA's code of ethics for Analysts and are required to provide a signed copy to AMHSA. The key ethical considerations for Analysts are:

- to apply the principals of auditing in a professional manner in completing their review
- to be objective and impartial in conducting the review
- to ensure they are complete and comprehensive in their review
- to maintain confidentiality
- to seek assistance or clarification from AMHSA if uncertain about any aspect of the audit review

AMHSA's Executive Director will investigate any complaints about Analyst conduct. If warranted, the Analyst will be counseled to improve his/her performance, and may lose his/her status as an Analyst.

Certificate of Recognition Process

AMHSA as Certifying Partner

AMHSA agrees to act as Certifying Partner for its regular members. This includes any municipal government in Alberta which has a Workers' Compensation Board industry code of 95100 (villages), 95101 (towns), 95102 (municipal districts and counties), or 95104 (cities).

In addition, AMHSA may agree to be the Certifying Partner for an organization that is not a municipality, but whose function is related to a municipality's operation. Each request will be reviewed individually to determine appropriateness. If AMHSA agrees to act as Certifying Partner for a non-municipal organization, administrative fees will be levied to offset costs.

Achieving, Maintaining and Renewing Certificates of Recognition

In order to achieve or renew a Certificate of Recognition, a municipality must pass an external audit of their health and safety management system. The pass mark is 80% overall, with a score of at least 50% in each of the 8 system elements. The audit must be completed using the AMHSA Municipal Health and Safety Audit Tool approved by the Alberta Employment and Immigration *Partnerships* Team.

The auditor submits the completed audit to AMHSA for a Quality Assurance review. If the audit meets the Quality Assurance standard, and the municipality has passed its audit, AMHSA will process the audit (forward information to WCB/AEI via the CORRS database). A Certificate of Recognition will then be issued by AEI, sent to AMHSA for signature by the Team Leader, and sent to the successful municipality. A copy of the COR and related correspondence will be kept on file for 3 years.

The COR must be maintained through the performance of an internal maintenance audit, or equivalent maintenance activity (see Action Plan section), in each of the following 2 calendar years, and expires 3 years from the date of issue.

In order for a municipality to stay in good standing within the *Partnerships* program, it must pass an external audit before the end of the calendar year in which it's COR expires. What this means is that a COR might expire a few weeks/months before the new external audit is conducted. As long as the audit has been conducted in the same calendar year, the gap does not affect the municipality's PIR status. However in that time between COR expiry and new audit, the municipality's name will be removed from AEI's and WCB's COR list. This is an administrative issue, and will be rectified once the current audit information is forwarded to AEI.

Any participating municipality that **does not undergo an external audit, or fails its external audit, or its auditors fails quality assurance review will not have met the *Partnerships* program requirements and will not achieve/renew its COR.** In addition, any municipality that fails to conduct an internal maintenance audit will not have met the *Partnerships* program requirements and will lose its COR.

At the end of each year AMHSA will review the COR status of all participating municipalities:

**Requires an External Audit
(to achieve/renew COR)**

**Requires an Internal Audit
(to maintain COR)**

- Passed audit – receive COR
 - Failed audit – do not receive COR
 - Did not request audit – do not receive COR
- Performed audit – maintain COR
 - Did not perform audit – lose COR

Note that in order for a municipality to meet the Partnerships standard and achieve, renew or maintain its COR, the audit must be submitted to AMHSA and meet the Quality Assurance standard (see page 24 for more information on quality assurance).

The other *Partnerships* program requirements to be followed are: to have an adequate number of employees certified as auditors (see AMHSA recommendations in the following table); and have some employees trained in the Workers' Compensation Board's Disability Management course.

Number of Employees	Minimum Number of Auditors Recommended
Less than 50	2
50 – 149	3
150 – 249	4
250 – 349	5
350+	6+

6-month and 1-year Certificates of Recognition

As previously stated, Certificates of Recognition are valid for 3 years, assuming all maintenance requirements are met. However there are times when a COR could be issued for a shorter period.

AEI would issue a 6-month COR if it determined that the workforce levels were significantly lower or activities limited during the external audit. In these cases there would not be enough information to warrant issuing a full 3-year COR. However, **AMHSA does not offer a 6-month COR option.** If a municipality does not have a fully active operation, it must wait until work activities are up to normal status before requesting an external audit.

A 1-year COR may be issued by AEI if either of the two following situations applies:

- an employer is new to the *Partnerships* program and has been in the process of expanding their operation in the last few months (this is not likely applicable to municipal operations)
- the municipality's health and safety management system has only recently been implemented, and does not have a sufficient history to allow for a full assessment

AMHSA does not offer a 1-year COR option.

Review of COR

Alberta Employment and Immigration reserves the right to review the COR status of any municipality at any time. If the health and safety performance of a municipality raises any concern, AEI has the discretion to revoke the COR.

A COR review will be initiated if:

- AEI staff identify areas of concern when completing a check prior to issuing a COR to a municipality
- An inspection by AEI staff of a municipality with an existing COR indicates a concern
- A municipality with a COR experiences a fatality or serious incident or injury
- A properly substantiated complaint about a municipality's management system is received by either AEI or AMHSA

In addition, if AMHSA has any concerns about health and safety issues within a municipality it will contact the AEI *Partnerships* team to discuss the issues and any actions that should be taken.

All COR reviews are conducted jointly by AMHSA and AEI, following AEI's policy and procedures. If the review leads to a suspension or revocation of a COR, or results in a COR not being issued, the municipality must wait one year before requesting another external audit in order to achieve a new COR.

Partnerships in Injury Reduction Program

Municipalities registered in the Workers' Compensation Board's Partnerships in Injury Reduction (PIR) Program are eligible for a financial discount from the WCB if they hold a valid COR on December 31st of the measurement year.

A municipality will be awarded a discount for one of three criteria from the WCB:

- Achieving/maintaining a COR
- Improving performance (must have a valid COR)
- Maintaining industry leadership (must have a valid COR)

Municipalities will earn a 5% industry premium rate discount for having a COR, or as much as 20% for either of the other two performance measures. First time COR holders will receive a 10% rebate in the first year of achieving a COR.

AMHSA receives a list of municipalities registered in the PIR program each January from the WCB. These are compared to the database, and any new participants added.

AMHSA tracks all municipalities participating in PIR to ensure that *Partnerships* requirements have been met for the year. Before AMHSA can determine if the requirements have been met, each municipality's audit (whether internal or external) must be reviewed for audit quality. Only audits that meet the audit quality requirements are considered valid audits for *Partnerships* and for the PIR financial incentive.

AMHSA informs AEI of each municipality's *Partnerships* status shortly after the end of the measurement year. AEI then processes the information and informs WCB of each municipality's eligibility status. Information provided by AMHSA to AEI includes:

- Municipality name and their WCB account number & industry code
- Type of audit conducted (external or internal)
- Date of audit
- Whether a valid COR is held as of the end of the year
- Whether the municipality met all *Partnerships* requirements

The Workers' Compensation Board issues PIR cheques in the spring following the measurement year.

COR Database

A PIR database (Certificate of Recognition Registry System - CORRS) has been created to track audits. The following information will be collected.

Municipality Data:

- name, address, WCB account number and industry code
- contact name, phone number, fax number, e-mail address
- names of auditors on staff
- registered in PIR (yes/no)
- date of COR and expiry
- date of last external audit, and score
- date of last internal audit, and score

Auditor Data:

- municipality, and contact information
- date trained in HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, and HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AUDIT
- Date certified as a Peer Auditor
- Date of last audit, type (certification, internal, external, auditor maintenance) and quality assurance score

This data will be used to generate reports on the status of all municipalities in the program every year (i.e. have they met the *Partnerships* program requirements for the measurement year). Reports will also be generated on all auditors to verify that they performed an annual audit, and that the quality was adequate. The database will also allow AMHSA to ensure that all municipalities implementing a health and safety management system are registered in the Partnerships in Injury Reduction program, and flag municipalities who are eligible to achieve or renew a COR.

Communication

Communication with Municipal Managers

Every spring, once each municipality's status in the *Partnerships* program has been determined for the previous year, AMHSA will send a letter to participating municipal managers. This letter explains whether the municipality met all program requirements for the previous year, if it is eligible to receive a PIR discount, and what is required for the upcoming year.

Communication with Auditors

Every time that an auditor completes an audit (internal audit, external peer audit, auditor maintenance audit, or certification audit) AMHSA will complete an Audit Quality Assurance review. A copy of this review will be shared with the auditor so that he/she can continually improve his/her auditing skills.

Employers can request a copy of the quality assurance review from the auditor(s).

In addition, because there are ongoing changes to the *Partnerships* program, AMHSA will provide program updates to all auditors on a regular basis. These Auditor Updates are emailed to all active auditors and posted on the AMHSA website.

It is the auditor's responsibility to keep AMHSA informed regarding information such as address, telephone and fax number, email address, etc.