

AUDIT PHRASES
Refresher

Prep → Data Gathering → Reporting → QA

A successful COR audit depends on a clear understanding of the audit lifecycle, which includes **four distinct but interconnected phases.**

This guide outlines AMHSA's expectations and requirements for each phase through its COR & Auditing procedures and auditor resources.

1. Pre-Audit Preparation

This phase sets the tone for the entire audit. Before any evidence collection begins:

- Submit a completed Audit Registration Form and obtain approval.
- After registration is approved, AMHSA will send you the most current audit tool to use for sampling approval.
- Confirm scope, sites, workforce counts, and WCB account coverage.
- AMHSA requires that you obtain sampling pre-approval prior to starting all COR audits.
- Request required employer documents for planning (not review), maintaining awareness that early access can trigger the official audit start date.

2. Data Gathering (Documentation, Interviews, Observations)

This is the evidence collection phase, where the bulk of scoring is determined. Auditors must ensure:

- Documentation is current, complete, and covers the previous 12 months.
- Interviews represent all workforce levels appropriately.
- Observation tours reflect the variety of task types, operations, and worksite conditions. Observation tours are not inspections.

3. Reporting (Justification Notes, Scoring, Strengths & SFIs)

Great audits are distinguishable by the clarity of their justification notes. AMHSA guidance states that justification notes must:

- Describe what was reviewed (documents, interviews, observations).
- Link findings directly to required question criteria.
- Quantify documentation and observation findings.
- Provide examples that support the scoring decision.
- Avoid copying over notes used in other audits. Repetition can trigger governance concerns.

Reporting must be completed and submitted to AMHSA within 21 days of concluding data gathering.

Critical Deadlines

- **Max 45 days:** Data Gathering Window (starts the moment any documentation is received by the auditor).
- **Max 21 days:** Report writing and submission deadline after data-gathering ends.
- **Dec 1:** All COR audits must be submitted to AMHSA for the current year.



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4. Quality Assurance Review (QA)

Once the audit is submitted, AMHSA's QA team reviews it for accuracy, consistency, sampling validity, proper use of validation methods, justification quality, and compliance with legislated requirements. Auditors may be asked for revisions if:

- Notes lack required detail
- Validation methods are incorrect
- Sampling is not representative
- Quantification requirements are missing

AMHSA aims to provide QA feedback within approximately **two weeks** for Certification audits and within **four weeks** for Maintenance audits.

Validation Methods (D/I/O) & How Quality Writing Reduces Rework

Validation is the backbone of scoring. Each audit question specifies which method(s) apply (Documentation, Interviews, Observations, or a combination). AMHSA's auditor resources emphasize that findings must always be backed by evidence appropriate to the method.

Documentation (D) - Documentation validates that the system is established. Examples include policies, hazard assessments, inspections, training records, and incident investigations. Documentation questions often require auditors to verify detailed legislative criteria (e.g., Violence & Harassment Plan requirements).

Interviews (I) - Interviews validate that the system is understood and implemented. Interview justification notes must:

- Reference levels interviewed, where applicable
- Include examples or summary themes,
- Avoid inserting quantification inside the note (the tool calculates this automatically).

Observations (O) - Observations confirm that controls, practices, and procedures are visible and in use. Many questions—such as access to legislation at worksites (Q1.11)—require observation-based verification, and points are awarded only if 100% of sampled sites meet expectations. Observations are not inspections.

Why Address Validation Methods:
A well-written justification note that directly addresses required criteria drastically reduces QA back-and-forth, accelerates approval, and improves the employer's understanding of their system performance.

Do you have questions, concerns, or need more guidance with your audit?
Reach out to audits@amhsa.net

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