

Glossary of Terms

Source: Government of Alberta. 2025. *Partnerships Standards Manual*, Appendix N1. Updated September 8, 2025.

The Glossary of Terms provide context and define commonly used language found in the Partnership Standards, the Occupational Health and Safety System Building Courses, Auditor Training Courses, as well the various audit instruments. The definitions found in this document are not intended to replace or replicate definitions found in legislation.

Audit	<p>An evaluation of an organization’s health and safety management system against an approved standard.</p> <p>Audit Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Baseline Audit: an evaluation using a standard audit instrument and intended as a preliminary review of an employer’s health and safety system.○ Certification Audit: a formal health and safety evaluation conducted by a certified auditor external to the employer to achieve a Certificate of Recognition (COR).○ Maintenance Audit: a formal health and safety evaluation conducted by a certified auditor for an employer to maintain their COR status between recertifications.○ Qualification Audit: a formal health and safety evaluation conducted by an auditor candidate pursuing auditor certification.
Auditor	An individual certified by a Certifying Partner to conduct health and safety audits.
Audit End Date	The date the auditor concludes the review of documentation, interviews, and observations for the purpose of auditing the employer’s health and safety management system.
Audit Start Date	The date the auditor receives access (on or off site) to an employer’s health and safety documentation for the purpose of auditing the employer’s health and safety management system. This can be paper or electronic. This does not include activities to define the audit scope.
Best Practice	An agreed-upon method for conducting a specified task usually established by industries, trades or groups of peers.
Boilerplating	This practice involves copying all of an audit note, recommendation or strength from one audit area and then re-using it for another area of the same audit or in a different audit.

Code of Ethics	Statement which defines the ethical behaviours expected from a group or individual.
Code of Practice	Selection of appropriate regulations and procedures specific to hazardous work.
Competent Worker	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Continuous Improvement	Always striving to innovate, implement and improve on current conditions.
Contracting Employer	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Critical Task	A task with high potential for serious loss or injury.
Data Gathering Activities	A systematic process auditors use to collect information for the evaluation of an organization's health and safety management system. Data gathering activities include documentation review, interviews, and observations.
Documentation Review	A validation method used in a health and safety audit, designed to determine if an employer has the required processes, policies, and procedures in place, and if adequate records are being kept.
Electronic Audit Tool	Software application or platform designed to facilitate and assist in the process of an audit, specifically for collecting findings and analyzing data, such as scoring and the calculation of positive indicators.
Employee	Anyone who works for an organization (e.g., senior managers, managers, supervisors, and workers).
Equipment	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Harassment	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Hazard	<p>As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.</p> <p>Includes physical, chemical, biological or psychological hazards that have the potential to cause harm.</p> <p>Health Hazard: Has the potential to cause an acute or chronic condition, illness or disease from exposure (e.g., noise, dust, heat, etc.).</p> <p>Safety Hazard: Has the potential to cause immediate injury (e.g., shear points, working at heights, etc.).</p>
Hazard Assessment	<p>A written process to recognize existing and potential hazards at work before they cause harm to people or property.</p> <p>Formal Hazard Assessment: Involves a step-by-step, ongoing process to identify hazards, evaluate risk (in order to prioritize hazards), and determine and assess control measures for an organization's overall operations.</p>

	<p>Site-Specific Hazard Assessment: The process to check for the introduction of any unexpected hazards, or hazards for which additional controls may be needed. These are used when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work is conducted at temporary/mobile work sites, • workers are conducting activities at a work site not owned by their employer, and/or • a new activity has been temporarily introduced at the work site
Hazard Control	<p>Methods used to eliminate or control risk:</p> <p>Engineering Controls: Preferred method of hazard control if elimination is not possible; physical controls are implemented at the design, installation, or engineering stages (e.g. guards, auto shutoff, etc.).</p> <p>Administrative Controls: Processes developed by the employer to control hazards not eliminated by engineering controls (e.g. safe work policies, practices and procedures, job scheduling or rotation, etc.).</p> <p>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): equipment used or clothing worn by a person for protection from health or safety hazards associated with conditions at a work site (e.g. gloves, safety glasses, fall protection, etc.). Used when engineering or administrative methods cannot fully control the hazards.</p>
Health and Safety	Health and safety includes physical, psychological and social well-being.
Health and Safety Program	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Health and Safety Representative	A worker who is designated as the health and safety representative for an employer as required by OHS Legislation.
Incident	An undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that results, or has the potential to result, in physical or psychological harm to a person or damage to property (loss or no loss).
Inspection	A planned, systematic evaluation or examination of an activity or work site, checking or testing against established standards.
Interview	A validation method used in a health and safety audit to gather and verify information about an organization's health and safety system. Includes either formal discussion using standard questions, or a questionnaire.
Job	The position or role a person has in an organization.
Job Inventory	A list of all jobs produced from a systematic review of the organization's operations.
Job Specific Training	Training provided to support the safe and healthy performance of tasks related to a job.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (HSC)	A committee composed of workers and employer representatives as required by OHS Legislation.
Legislation	Provincial or federal government standards in the form of written acts, regulations, and codes.
Manager	A person who directs (and/or supervises) the affairs of a business, office, or organization.
Manufacturer's Specifications	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Near Miss	An undesired event that under slightly different circumstances could have resulted in personal harm, property damage, or loss.
Observation	A validation method used in a health and safety audit designed to allow an auditor to observe and verify specific conditions at a work site.
Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)	A health and safety management system is a mature OHS program that is fully integrated into the culture, values, identity, and everyday operations of a workplace. A health and safety management system is led by employers, enacted by everyone in a workplace, and continually evaluated and improved through regular, formal assessments.
Occupational Illness/Disease	A disease or state of ill health arising out of and directly related to an occupation.
Orientation	A process used to familiarize employees to an organization and communicate the employer's expectations and critical information about a new job or situation.
Owner/Operator	An owner/operator is a company where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the company qualifies for a WCB account; • all work is done by the owner; • there is one owner with the allowance of an unpaid family member performing administrative work; • it does not have workers as per the COR definition.
Personal Protective Equipment	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Policy	The documented principles by which an organization is guided in its management of affairs and overall commitment.
Pre-audit Activities	Steps completed by the auditor in preparation for conducting an audit. These pre-planning activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathering information about the organization; • developing the audit plan; • preparing the pre-audit letter;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of previous audit reports. <p>These activities are not considered when determining the audit start date.</p>
Preventative Maintenance	Routine servicing of equipment, vehicles, facilities, and tools to detect or prevent failures and extend their useful life.
Quality Assurance Audit	<p>An evaluation of the Certifying Partner's or an auditor's work against the approved standards.</p> <p>Audit Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comprehensive Audit: A Comprehensive Audit is a planned evaluation of a Certifying Partner's quality assurance reviews, including the accuracy and timeliness of audit data submitted to the Certificate of Recognition Registry System (CORRS). It is based on a sample selection from a pre-determined timeframe. The audit may also include a review of the Certifying Partner's processes required to meet or implement the Partnership Standards. ○ Focused Audit: A Focused Audit is a targeted evaluation of how a Certifying Partner is administering and applying specific components of the Partnerships Standards. These audits are smaller in scope and may be conducted on- or off-site. The time required to complete a focused audit depends on the available resources and the audit's scope and scale. ○ On-Site Audit Review (OSAR) Audit: This is a post-audit review process that evaluates auditor performance to ensure audit standards and processes are followed by external auditors. OSARs are conducted by Partnerships Consultants at the employer's location and focus on verifying auditor results by reviewing a selection of document-based audit questions.
Quality Assurance Review	Quality Assurance (QA) Review is a process conducted by the Certifying Partner (CP) to ensure that an audit meets the required standards before it is accepted as complete and a Certificate of Recognition (COR) is issued. This review involves evaluating all audit questions for accuracy and completeness, including scoring, validation methods, and suggestions for improvements (SFIs). Errors identified in the audit report are addressed by the auditor during this stage. The audit must successfully pass the QA Review prior to the report being provided to the employer.
Readily Available Documentation	Documentation that can be accessed in paper form or is downloaded or stored electronically.
Records	Employer documents retained on file as proof of activities.
Right to Refuse Dangerous Work	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 3, Section 17(2), Dangerous Work and Disciplinary Action.

Risk	The chance of injury, damage, or loss.
Root Cause	The absence of a best practice or failure to apply knowledge that would have prevented the problem. The process and/or management level deficiencies which contribute to an incident.
Safe Work Practice	A written set of guidelines which establish a standard of performance for an activity or work process.
Safe Work/Safe Job Procedure	A written, step-by-step instruction of how to perform a task from beginning to end.
Senior Manager	The most senior person(s) accountable for the operation under the scope of the audit.
Site Familiarization	Brief escorted tour or discussion to allow the auditor to become familiar with the work site(s) and any areas where special caution is required.
Supervisor	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions. Supervisor is a function, not necessarily a job or job title.
Task	Any activity related to a specific job.
Team Audit	More than one auditor participating in the audit.
Templating	This practice involves using pre-crafted ready-made notes, recommendations or strengths for multiple audit reports. These notes, recommendations or strengths may be modified to include some specific findings but are for the most part unoriginal.
Temporary Staffing Agency	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Training	Give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject-matter and to require a practical demonstration that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject-matter.
Undue Hazard	In relation to any occupation includes a hazard that poses a serious and immediate threat to the health and safety of a person.
Unsafe Act	Inappropriate action taken by a person that could result in loss.
Unsafe Condition	A condition that could result in loss.
Violence	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Visitor	Any person present at the work site who is not under the direct control of the employer (e.g. courier). This does not include customers (e.g., students, hotel guests, etc.).
Worker	For COR audit purposes, any person engaged in a job who is not a manager or supervisor. This may include volunteers.

Worker Participation	Active involvement of workers in work site health and safety activities such as safety discussions, inspections, investigations, health and safety committees, etc.
Work Site	As defined in the OHS Act, Part 1 Definitions.
Work Site Parties	Every workplace is unique and any of the following can be considered a work site party: employers, supervisors, workers, suppliers, service providers, owners, contractors, prime contractors, temporary staffing agencies, and self-employed persons. Reference OHS Legislation.