



# **National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO®) National Health and Safety Administrator (NHSA™) Terms of Participation**



## **INTRODUCTION TO NCSO®**

The primary objective of this program is to recognize individuals who possess construction safety knowledge and skills through a combination of entry-level safety training and field experience.

A National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO®) is a person who understands basic regulatory requirements and how they can be applied to a construction site in a way that allows workers, members of the public and the environment to function safely together. Persons who achieve the NCSO® designation will possess at least three years of practical construction experience; providing a valuable resource to management in the administration and implementation of a company's health and safety program.

## **HISTORY OF NCSO®**

Through a Memorandum of Understanding and Reciprocity Agreement, the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Association (CFCSA) came together with Construction Safety Associations (CSA's) to introduce the National Construction Safety Officer designation. The NCSO® is a new national safety designation designed to replace several similar provincial designations. It was approved by the CFCSA after several years of discussion and consultation with stakeholders across the country.

The objective was to develop a nationally recognized level of competency in relation to construction safety and raise the bar. This new national standard aims to strengthen the NCSO® designation, making it more credible while allowing ease of transferability amongst other provinces and territories.

The British Columbia Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA) offers a path to obtaining the National Construction Safety Officer designation. In BC, NCSO® replaced the Construction Safety Specialist (CSS) certificate, previously offered by the BCCSA. The NCSO® offers several benefits for both safety professionals and employers. The program will provide practical training in various construction safety management skills and principles. Each aspect of the application process addresses critical skills and experience needed in everyday, real-life settings on-site. For example, the Code of Ethics mandates daily activities while a knowledge verification test assesses competency. Maintenance points promote ongoing professional development and keeping current with industry trends in a safety capacity. BC NCSOs may also be able to serve as Internal Auditors for the Certificate of Recognition (COR) program. (Please note, if you have a valid COR Internal Auditor certificate from another province, please email [training@bccsa.ca](mailto:training@bccsa.ca) for details on how to obtain equivalency.)

## ADVANTAGES OF NCSO® DESIGNATION

Many employers recognize the NCSO® designation as a value-added asset associated with someone who has an interest in pursuing a career in health and safety within the construction industry. Meeting the requirements of the NCSO® designation demonstrates a person's skill level, education, and commitment to workplace safety.

The NCSO® designation is recognized Canada-wide by all the provincial Construction Safety Associations. Through a commitment to professional development in the NCSO® Terms of Participation, individuals holding this designation will remain current and up-to-date with legislative changes and industry trends.

Employers that hire an NCSO will have an employee who:

- Possesses at least three years of practical safety-related construction experience, with formal training
- Has the professional mobility to transfer between other provinces, making it easier for inter-jurisdictional companies to comply with regulations
- Is a valuable resource to management in the administration and implementation of a company's health and safety program
- Supports the management team in health and safety related matters
- Assists management in implementing, maintaining, and monitoring health and safety systems
- Plays a key leadership role in effective health and safety management
- Is committed to continual improvement and professional development
- Stays current with changing health and safety standards and legislation along with evolving technology
- Is knowledgeable and understands the fundamentals of various construction-related health & safety management systems, skills, and principles
- Has training in safety legislation, auditing, inspections, investigations, injury and claims management, and first aid
- Communicates effectively with government, management, clients, and workers regarding health and safety
- Works closely with all parties in the workplace to ensure they have the information, skills, and tools required to do their job safely
- Utilizes statistics and analysis to track trends related to health and safety within the company
- Maintains documentation and records such as training matrixes and hazard assessments
- Identifies and reviews various health and safety concerns specific to the work site
- Promotes awareness of construction health and safety
- Exercises due diligence

As you can see, NCSOs offer many benefits to employers! Employers recognize the NCSO® designation as a value-added qualification associated with someone who has an interest in pursuing a career in health and safety within the construction industry. The advantage of pursuing NCSO® over equivalent entry-level safety designations is the NCSO's recognition inter-provincially. NCSOs can take their training in BC and apply it effectively across Canada

## INTRODUCTION AND ADVANTAGES OF NHSA™ DESIGNATION

The British Columbia Construction Safety Alliance offers two construction safety designations: National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO®) and National Health and Safety Administrator (NHSA™).

The National Health and Safety Administrator (NHSA™) designation provides formal, entry-level training-to individuals who are active in the administration of their company's health and safety program, but do not currently possess a minimum of three years construction safety related field. NHSA™ indicates to employers that the participant has practical and theoretical knowledge in various health and safety management skills and principles. An NHSA™ designation holder offers valuable administrative support to the company and NCSO® in implementing and maintaining the company health and safety program. The NHSA™ designation is the first step towards a becoming a leader in the construction safety field!

## REQUIREMENTS (NCSO® & NHSA™)

Each applicant will be required to demonstrate:

- Training: The applicant must complete the 10 compulsory courses and 2 electives listed in the Required Training section.  
**NHSA™ applicants will only be required to complete the 2 days of training for the COR Internal Auditor course, and not the student audit assignment.**  
**Note: A COR Internal Auditor certificate will only be issued to those who complete the Student Audit Assignment.**
- Construction Safety Field Experience: The applicant must have a minimum of 3 years (within the past 10 years) of field-level experience in the construction industry to receive the NCSO® designation. The definition of construction experience is a construction worker (laborer or skilled construction tradesperson) working directly and actively in the construction field (i.e: residential, commercial, industrial, road building, pipeline construction, mobile equipment operations, etc.); or, an individual who is directly and actively engaged in safety (i.e: site safety coordinator) or responsible for the supervision (i.e: site superintendent) of the construction worker, who also works directly and actively in the construction field.
  - At least two out of the three required years of field-level construction experience must have been in Canada. BCCSA will accept up to one year of field-level construction experience gained outside of Canada towards your NCSO® application.

**Please note experience is not required for NHSA™ applications.**

- Site Safety Proficiency: The safety proficiency assignment is a mandatory component for all applicants. It is a tool used to evaluate the participants' ability to apply what they have learned in the classroom. The assignment contains 4 parts: (1) Toolbox Talk/ Safety Meeting, (2) Site Inspection, (3) Hazard Assessment, (4) Incident/Near Miss Investigation. Download the document titled NCSO Safety Proficiency Assignment.
- Commitment to the NCSO® /NHSA™ Terms of Participation & Code of Ethics: BCCSA requires all NCSOs/NHSA™'s to sign the Terms of Participation and Code of Ethics. The Terms of Participation also outlines the designation's maintenance program requirements which includes a commitment to continuous professional development.

- **Successful Examination:** Applicants will be expected to complete the Provincial and National Exam. If you currently hold an NCSO® from another provincial Construction Safety Association, please review the section below titled 'Interprovincial Recognition of the NCSO®'.

## **REQUIRED TRAINING**

*See page 4 for approved training equivalencies.*

### **A. COMPULSORY COURSES**

To obtain an NCSO® /NHSA™ designation you must complete the following 10 compulsory courses:

#### BCCSA Specific Training

- BC Construction Safety Legislation and Administration (2 days)
- COR Internal Auditor Training (2 days)
- SiteReadyBC – Online (4-6 hours)
- Leadership for Safety Excellence (2 days)
- Principles of Health and Safety Management (PHSM) – Online (4-6 hours)
- Principles of Injury Management (1 day)
- Train the Trainer (1 day)
- WHMIS Train the Trainer (1 day)

#### Compulsory Training (Offered by an Approved Training Provider)

- Basic First Aid (1 day)
- Fall Protection (1 day)

### **B. ELECTIVE COURSES**

To obtain an NCSO® /NHSA™ designation, you must complete 2 of the following elective courses:

#### BCCSA Specific Training

- Traffic Control Person (2 days)

#### Elective Training (Offered by an Approved Training Provider)

- Utility Locating Specialist Training (3 days)
- Confined Space Entry/Monitor (1 day)
- Ground Disturbance 201 Standard (British Columbia)
- Respirator Protection and Fit Tester (3.5 hours)
- RoadReadyBC – Online (Basic or Complete) (7-13 hours)
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods – Online (2 hours)

## INTERPROVINCIAL RECOGNITION OF THE NCSO®

NCSO®'s will be recognized province-to-province as having met the requirements of a National standard through the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA). However, as each province has its specific legislative requirements related to health and safety, an NCSO® designation holder from another province must complete the following steps when applying for equivalency in British Columbia:

1. Enroll in the application process
2. Upload a copy of their NCSO® certificate
3. Complete the following courses:
  - BC Construction Safety Legislation and Administration
  - COR® Internal Auditor (Out of province certificate accepted if current)
  - Fall Protection Course by an approved training provider (if not already complete)
4. Submit your application
5. Once your application is submitted and approved; register and successfully complete the Provincial Exam. NOTE: If you possess a pre-2017 NCSO® designation from a provincial construction safety association, you will be required to write the National Exam as well.

## MAINTAINING YOUR NCSO®/NHSA™ DESIGNATION

### Part A: Professional Development

The NCSO® /NHSA™ designation must be verified every 3 years. As part of the maintenance component of the NCSO® /NHSA™ designation, the applicant is required to complete professional development courses beyond the required compulsory NCSO® / NHSA™ courses.

**A total of six (6) class hours (in-person or online) must be completed** (any number of courses can be taken if the time completed amounts to 6 hours) and must be taken within 3 years of receiving the NCSO® /NHSA™ designation or last renewal. Examples of professional development:

- Conferences, such as Bridging the Gap, NCSO® conference, Western Conference on Safety
- Occupational health & safety courses or seminars

### Part B: Continued Work in the Construction Industry

The participant must provide proof of their continued construction field experience and provide the following:

- Personal resume outlining the criteria below, which must include:
  - Start date and end date of employment (since the date you received your NCSO® designation)
  - Your job title/position
  - Percentage of time, based on a weekly average, in the construction field versus in the office
  - References for each place of employment including contact information

**\*Please note Part B does not apply to NHSA™ applicants.**

**Part C: Submit current certificates for all expired training certifications i.e. First Aid**

To maintain your designation, you will be required to submit updated copies of any completed certificates that have expired from the date you receive your NCSO® / NHSA™ designation.

Failure to submit the above documentation before their respective expiry dates will result in having to re-write the NCSO® National and Provincial Exams, as well as re-submission of all required documentation to have your designation reinstated.

# STEPS TO BECOMING AN NCSO® /NHSA™

## STEP 1 – Review Terms of Participation

Read the NCSO® /NHSA™ Terms of Participation to familiarize yourself with the requirements.

## STEP 2 – Complete 10 Compulsory and 2 Electives Courses

To register for BCCSA courses visit the course schedule located on the BCCSA website.

To register for non-BCCSA courses visit the list of Approved Training Providers on the BCCSA website

\*Please note there is no time frame for completion of training; however, all course certifications must be current at the time you submit your application for the NCSO® /NHSA™ designation.

## STEP 3 – Collect and Submit Documented Experience (does not apply to NHSA™ applicants)

An NCSO® must have a minimum of 3 years of construction field experience within the last 10 years.

**Definition of construction field experience:** a construction worker (laborer or skilled construction tradesperson) working directly and actively in the construction field (i.e: residential, commercial, industrial, road building, pipeline construction, mobile equipment operations, etc.); or, an individual who is directly and actively engaged in safety (i.e: site safety coordinator) or responsible for the supervision (i.e: site superintendent) of the construction worker, who also works directly and actively in the construction field.

Examples of how to submit your experience verification:

- A copy of your journeyman construction tradesperson certification (and upgrade where applicable).
- Letter(s) from your current or past employer(s) signed by management. Please note, this must include:
  - Start date and end date of employment (length of combined construction related experience must be at least 3 years within the past 10 years)
  - Your job title/position
  - Percentage of time, based on a weekly average, in the construction field versus in the office
  - Signature from management (current employer cannot sign off on work that was not done under their employment)
  - Contact information for the individual who signed the letter
- Letter from your construction trade union verifying length of membership term and qualifications in your trade, including number of hours logged during tenure.

- Your personal resume or CV outlining the criteria below, which must include:
  - Start date and end date of employment (length of combined construction related experience must be 3 years or more in the past 10 years)
  - Your job title/position
  - Percentage of time, based on a weekly average, in the construction field versus in the office
  - References for each place of employment including contact information

The measurement of actual construction field experience is determined from applicable references provided, and furthermore based on the percentage of time spent on a weekly average directly in the construction field versus the office.

## **STEP 4 – Complete Safety Proficiency Assignment**

All applicants must complete the Safety Proficiency Assignment. The assignment consists of four components which must be submitted via your online NCSO® application. All documentation submitted must:

- Have been completed by you.
- Include your name and signature.
- Completed individually. (Employees from the same company may not conduct an investigation as a group and then submit that same investigation for all participants).

## **STEP 5 – Agree to the NCSO® /NHSA™ Terms of Participation and Code of Ethics**

All NCSO® /NHSA™ applicants must agree to this Terms of Participation and the Code of Ethics before submitting their application.

## **STEP 6 – Submit Application Form**

Through the NCSO® /NHSA™ Application Portal, submit your completed application along with the non-refundable fee of \$125.00 + tax online to the BCCSA. A confirmation of receipt email will be sent to you. Please expect 3-4 weeks processing time for your application to be reviewed.

## **STEP 7 – Write Exam(s)**

Once you have successfully completed the application process, the NCSO Coordinator will grant access to register to write the exams. Successful completion of both National and Provincial Exams is required to obtain the NCSO® and NHSA™ designations.

Applicants who have previously completed the National Exam with a participating CFCSA member must provide proof of completion prior to taking the Provincial Exam.

The cost of the National Exam is \$60 + tax; Provincial Exam is \$40 + tax.

Applicants must achieve a minimum score of 75% on both exams to pass.

If a candidate completes an exam unsuccessfully, they will be required to wait 90 days before reattempting the exam. A second unsuccessful attempt will result in a 12-month waiting period. After 3 consecutive unsuccessful attempts, the candidate will have to repeat all NCSO®/NHSA™ compulsory and elective courses and restart their application before being eligible to write the exam again.

Each additional attempt costs \$60 + GST for the National Exam and \$40 + GST for the Provincial Exam.

Any unsuccessful attempts in other provinces will not affect your status with the BCCSA.