

Frequently Asked Questions

Partnerships in Injury Reduction Off-Site Audit Review

What is an Off-Site Audit Review?

Off-Site Audit Reviews (OSARs) are conducted on the work of auditors participating in the Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program and are designed to verify audit findings and validate that auditors are following the Partnerships in Injury Reduction (Partnerships) Standards.

The review is completed within 120 days of the audit end date. It includes a short interview with the employer, and a review of health and safety documentation reviewed by the original auditor.

COVID 19 Impacts:

To respect social distancing restrictions due to COVID 19, OSARs have been adjusted to take place remotely. A process must be agreed upon between the employer and Off-Site Audit Reviewer (OSA Reviewer) for the safe transfer of health and safety records (e.g. electronic transfer, safe pick-up and return, etc.).

Why is there an OSAR program?

Partnerships was mandated by the Office of the Auditor General (AG) to verify work completed by auditors participating in the COR program (April 2010). A one-year pilot project was completed in 2011 to determine if a post-audit on-site review process to enhance the Certifying Partners (CP) regular quality assurance process would be beneficial.

Findings from the pilot project along with the AGs mandate reinforced the implementation of a post-audit on-site review process. In 2012, Partnerships fully implemented the OSAR Program to foster continuous improvement to the COR program. Since 2010, the OSAR Program has been periodically reviewed by the AG.

OSARs provide feedback to auditors and their CPs, and help identify trends for COR Program improvements.

Who conducts the OSAR?

OSARs are conducted by the Partnerships/OSA Reviewers. The OSA Reviewer works with the CPs to ensure the intent of their audit process and audit instrument is being met.

What are OSA Reviewers looking for?

Areas the OSA Reviewer will consider include the following:

- Does a review of documentation validate the auditor's findings?
- Were interviews conducted on a representative sample of the employer's workforce?
- Is the audit start date recorded in the audit report consistent to the date provided by the employer?
- Have key audit steps been followed?

Who selects the auditors to be reviewed?

Partnerships, in consultation with CPs, will select the auditors to be reviewed.

How are auditors selected for an OSAR?

Auditors are selected through a process using the following criteria:

- Size of audit;
- Time of year the audit took place;
- CP/Partnerships recommendation

Auditors may be selected for an OSAR by a CP or Partnerships for a number of different reasons including questions on the quality of their work, an employer complaint, a newly certified auditor, an auditor not yet sampled for OSAR, etc. They may also be selected if they were recently re-certified after a period of suspension.

How long will the OSAR take?

Typically, OSARs are scheduled for one day and will be arranged by appointment. OSARs are limited reviews of documentation only in order to minimize disruption to employer's business.

Which CPs participate in the OSAR program?

All CP's are required to participate in OSAR.

Which employers participate in the OSAR Program?

Employers with an active COR are required to participate in the OSAR program. Not cooperating with the OSAR process can lead to an employer's COR being cancelled.

Will the OSA Reviewer see a copy of the auditor's report before they start their review?

Yes. The OSA Reviewer will have the findings from the original audit.

What documentation does an OSA reviewer require?

The OSA reviewer is required to review the same health and safety documentation that was made available to the original auditor. It is important that the employer provide the same documentation to both parties.

Are auditors informed of the results of an OSAR completed on their work?

Yes. Auditors receive a copy of the OSAR report from their CP.

Are employers informed of the results of an OSAR?

Only gaps to the employer's health and safety management system, not identified in the audit report, will be shared with the employer. The OSA reviewer is required to discuss these gaps with the employer after the documentation review has taken place, and will also provide an email documenting the gaps.

What OSAR findings require follow up?

Examples of areas that require the CP to follow up with an auditor can include:

- Audit start date not confirmed – e.g. audit start date recorded in the audit is significantly different than what was identified by the employer contact.
- Unable to confirm audit team – e.g. auditors not identified in the audit report but were known to have been involved in data collection
- Unable to confirm audit sampling – e.g. sampling details off, all levels not interviewed
- Interviewees not selected by auditor – e.g. interviewees selected by the employer
- Interview timelines unreasonable – e.g. interviews less than 15 minutes; interviews greater than 2 hours
- Correct audit process not followed – e.g. auditor did not conduct a pre-audit and/or post-audit meeting, etc.
- Audit findings not verified– e.g. three or more scoring differences equal or greater than or equal to 50% and/or three or more questions in which the OSA Reviewer is unable to verify an auditor's findings.

What happens if significant deficiencies are identified?

If OSAR findings show serious errors or omissions including code of ethics violations, the auditor's CP will be required to investigate further, and take appropriate educational or disciplinary actions. The CP may also prohibit the auditor from conducting the next certification audit for the sampled employer.

The OSAR is not meant to be punitive to the employer. However, if the OSAR findings identify significant gaps in the employer's health and safety management system, further follow up with the employer to close those gaps will take place.

Where do I get more information about OSAR?

- Your CP
- Email the LBR.PIROSAR@gov.ab.ca for more information