

NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SAFETY OFFICER (NCSO™) EXAM

Do I have to write the NCSO™ Exam?

You must pass the NCSO™ Exam to meet the new NCSO™ standard.

You may upgrade to the new NCSO™ standard if you finished your NCSO™ program before July 1st, 2017. You can do this by completing any additional courses required and then successfully writing the NCSO™ Exam. Upgrading to the new NCSO™ standard is voluntary.

Are You Eligible?

You must meet all the following requirements before you can apply to write the NCSO™ Exam.

- You have completed all course requirements to become an NCSO.
- You are an ACSA-certified COR auditor.
- Your LSE Proficiency has been approved.
- Your construction field experience submission has been approved.

What does the NCSO™ Exam Cover?

The NCSO™ Exam covers content from selected ACSA courses and skills you should have gained through your work experience as a safety person. There is more information about the format and content of the exam at the end of this document.

How do I apply to write the NCSO™ Exam?

Complete the attached NCSO™ Exam Application form on the next page and email it to nco@youracsa.ca.

When will I get my NCSO™ Exam results?

ACSA will contact you by email within four to six weeks to let you know if you were successful or not. Note that ACSA uses a Pass/Fail reporting system for this exam and not percentages. This is because the NCSO™ Exam is a *certification* examination and ACSA considers everyone who is successful to be equally qualified.

What happens if I'm unsuccessful on the NCSO™ Exam?

You will receive a breakdown of how you scored on each part of the NCSO™ Exam Blueprint. You can use this information to identify your areas of strength and those areas that you need to focus on.

You can apply to rewrite the NCSO™ Exam if you were unsuccessful on any attempt. You must wait between attempts and pay a \$60 administrative fee each time you apply to rewrite.

- If you were unsuccessful on your first attempt, you must wait at least three months after the date of the first attempt to rewrite.
- If you were unsuccessful on your second attempt, you must wait at least six months after the date of the second attempt to rewrite.
- If you were unsuccessful on any additional attempts, you must wait at least twelve months between each attempt.

What if I'm an NCSO from outside of Alberta?

You do not have to write the NCSO™ Exam if you are an NCSO from outside of Alberta. However, ACSA needs to verify that you are familiar with Alberta's OHS legislation. You can provide that verification in one of two ways.

You can successfully complete ACSA's Alberta OHS Legislation Awareness (LEG) course or you can write the NCSO™ Alberta OHS Legislation Challenge Exam. Email ncso@youracsa.ca for more information about challenging this exam. You will also need to provide proof of your NCSO certification from the province or territory you are coming from before you can challenge the exam.

Please note that there are no rewrites allowed on the Alberta OHS Legislation Challenge Exam. If you are not successful on the challenge exam, you must successfully complete ACSA's Legislation Awareness course.





NCSO™ EXAM APPLICATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

ACSA Student ID or Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please indicate your preferred date:

Edmonton

- October 14, 2022
- November 18, 2022

Calgary

- October 19, 2022
- November 16, 2022

Fort McMurray

- November 4, 2022

Additional Information

- There is limited seating for each exam.
- Exam dates will be filled on a first come basis.
- Should your preferred date be filled, you will be contacted to discuss an alternative date.
- Application cut-off is three (3) business days prior to scheduled exam.
- You will be notified after we process your application.

NCSO™ EXAM OVERVIEW

June 2022

Purpose of the NCSO™ Exam

The NCSO™ Exam has been designed in consultation and agreement with many industry stakeholders and oversight from the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA).

NCSOs must understand general safety concepts and be able to apply those concepts to identify and solve problems within the industry. The NCSO™ Exam is not considered to be a final exam for the NCSO™ program. The NCSO™ Exam is a certification exam for people who want the NCSO™ designation based on their general knowledge of safety concepts, and on the basic safety skills that people at this level of safety training should have. The NCSO™ Exam is intended to assess the understanding and application of these concepts.

Format of the NCSO™ Exam

The NCSO™ Exam is a two-hour, closed book exam, made up of three parts. The pass mark is 75% and you will receive with a Pass or Fail grade based on your score.

The table below provides the format of the exam. Specific details about the exam are in the NCSO™ Exam Blueprint on the next page.

NCSO™ Exam Format			
Part	Question or Item Type	Total Marks	Categories of questions or items
A	Multiple Choice	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four-option multiple choice questions covering general concepts
B	Short Answer	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordering a sequence of events or steps in a procedure Listing or identifying requirements in the ACSA Audit Tool Identifying required components of a document or plan Identifying hazards and providing appropriate controls
C	Long Answer	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing safety-related documents and providing rationale and corrective actions Analyzing a scenario, assigning a risk rank, and providing appropriate control measures Analyzing a scenario, planning appropriate training, and supervisor follow-up actions

NCSO™ EXAM OVERVIEW

June 2022

Topic (Selected ACSA Courses)	General Concepts & Basic Skills	Total Marks	Part A (Multiple Choice)	Part B (Short Answer)	Part C (Long Answer)
Hazard Control & Risk Assessment (LSE, PHSM, LEG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Formal and site-specific hazard assessments, hierarchy of controls Skill: Analyzing a scenario, risk ranking, and identifying respective controls 	25	6 marks	11 marks	8 marks
Training & Orientation (ATP, LSE, PHSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Assessments, evaluation, verification, and monitoring methods (e.g., OJT or ongoing training) Skill: Analyzing a scenario, determining appropriate training, planning a training session 	16	1 mark	5 marks	10 marks
Inspections (LSE, PHSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Inspection procedures, formal and informal inspections, COR requirements for inspections Skill: Analyzing inspection reports, evaluating corrective actions 	11	2 marks	4 marks	5 marks
Investigations (LSE, PHSM, WIB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Investigation processes, procedures, incident causation, SMART corrective actions Skill: Analyzing a scenario, evaluating corrective actions 	11	11 marks	--	--
Audits & Auditing (ATP, PHSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: COR Audit process and procedure, audit timelines, documentation review and timeframes 	10	5 marks	5 marks	--
Health and Safety Management Systems (ATP, PHSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Elements of a health and safety management system (as per COR requirements) 	10	3 marks	7 marks	--
Documentation and recording keeping (ATP, LSE, PHSM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Identification governing and supporting documentation required within a health and safety management system Skill: Analyzing a policy or procedure, identifying areas of improvement, justifying answer 	9	5 marks	--	4 marks
First Aid & Emergency Preparedness (PHSM, LEG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: COR and Alberta legislated requirements for first aid and emergency response 	3	--	3 marks	--
Adopted Standards (LEG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Common organizations responsible for creating adopted OHS legislation as noted in s.3 of the Alberta OHS Code (e.g., CSA, ANSI, ISO) 	2	2 marks	--	--
WHMIS (WHMIS TTT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: WHMIS 2015 TTT components (i.e., includes worker education, site-specific training, SDSs, workplace labels, hazard communication) 	2	2 marks	--	--
Criminal Code of Canada (LEG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts: Occupational health and safety related duties specified in the Criminal Code of Canada (CCC) 	1	1 mark	--	--
Pass mark for the NCSO™ exam is an overall score of 75%. Score is recorded as PASS or FAIL.		100	38	35	27

Selected ACSA Courses	
LEG	Alberta Legislation Awareness
PHSM	Principles of Health & Safety Management
ATP	Auditor Training Program
LSE	Leadership for Safety Excellence
WIB	Worksite Investigation Basics
WHMIS TTT	WHMIS Train The Trainer
<p>The NCSO™ Exam is heavily weighted on foundational concepts from these selected ACSA courses. Many candidates find it helpful to start their preparation through a review of the course books for these courses.</p>	

Exam Tip!

Prioritize your preparation – Start your study regime with LEG, PHSM, and ATP. Then move forward with LSE, WIB, and WHMIS TTT. Overall, focus on the knowledge objectives and exemplar documents within each course book.

Terminology

While the NCSO™ Exam and designation is nationally recognized, it is helpful to note that terminology from one jurisdiction to another may differ. The NCSO™ Exam administered through the Alberta Construction Safety Association will reflect Alberta statutory definitions, generic construction focused terminology, and generic safety terminology. These terms may also differ from company-specific uses.

<i>Examples:</i>	Formal inspections	Informal inspections
	OJT (on-the-job training)	Joint health and safety committee
	Formal hazard Assessment	Site-specific hazard assessment
	Action plan	Hierarchy of controls
	Toolbox talk or tailgate meeting	Tickets
	Direct, basic, and root cause	PIR (Partnerships in Injury Reduction)
	Hazard report	Health and safety representative
	Safety Statistics (e.g., LTFR, ISR, TRIF)	Readily available
	Safe job procedure (SJP)	Safe work practice (SWP)

Sample Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. Which one of the following tools is used by workers to assess task(s) and site related hazards?
 - a) Training matrix
 - b) Formal hazard assessment
 - c) Project safety plan
 - d) Site-specific hazard assessment

Use the information shown in the box below to answer Question 2.

A pallet was dropped during movement at the main shop. An investigation determined the pallet had been overloaded, the operator had been short forking the load (i.e., the tines of the forklift had not been fully inserted into the pallet before lifting), and the area supervisor was away from the location for most of the day.

2. Based on the information above, which two components of the company health and safety management system should be reviewed to prevent a similar incident from occurring again?
 - a) Operator training and supervisor responsibilities
 - b) Project safety plan and health and safety policy
 - c) Preventative maintenance and incident reporting
 - d) OHS legislation and corrective action plans
3. Which one of the following documents provides workers with practical *dos* and *don'ts* for a particular task?
 - a) Policies
 - b) Safe work practices
 - c) Safe job procedures
 - d) Roles and responsibilities

Short Answer:



1. List the three components of competency. (3 marks)

2. List two examples of documentation used by auditors to confirm health and safety orientations are provided to contracted employers or visitors. (2 marks)

Possible Answers:
1 Adequately qualified, suitably trained, sufficient experience to work with minimal or no supervision
2 Review of orientation records or sign-off logs for contractors and visitors

Long Answer:

Use the following form to answer Question 1.

Orientation Record	
<p>Worker Name: Jasper Karl (Labourer)</p> <p>Hire Date: 31-10-2022</p> <p>Orientation Date: 28-11-2022</p> <p>Signature: </p>	<p>Supervisor Name: Anna Bogdanic</p> <p>Signature: </p>
<p>General Safety</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health & Safety Policy</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site orientation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rules</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progressive discipline policy</p>	<p>Emergency Response Procedure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Alarm System</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site first aiders</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site fire warden</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muster point</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency Contact Numbers (phone/radio)</p>
<p>Hazards</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Hazard Assessment (Labourer)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazard reporting</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workplace violence and harassment plans</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incident and near miss reporting</p>	<p>Personal Protective Equipment</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use and inspection</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Replacement</p>
<p>WHMIS</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location of SDSs</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spill response</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Storage and disposal</p>	<p>Procedures and practices:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loading and unloading materials</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site cleanup</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skid Steer Operation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equipment delivery with truck</p>

1. Using the completed Orientation form, identify three areas with specific issues or errors. For each area, provide an appropriate solution or correction and a valid reason for your selection (3 marks)

1A	Specific issue/error	
	Appropriate solution/correction	
	Valid rationale/reason	
1B	Specific issue/error	
	Appropriate solution/correction	
	Valid rationale/reason	
1C	Specific issue/error	
	Appropriate solution/correction	
	Valid rationale/reason	

Possible Answers:

Orientation was completed approx. 1 month after hire

Follow up with Supervisor regarding Orientation timelines:

Orientations should be completed before the worker starts work.

General Safety excluded Worker Rights

Revise orientation to include the three worker rights: Supplement this topic for previously orientated workers.

All orientations must include the three legislated work rights (right to know, right to participate, right to refuse)

Missing items such as review of the progressive discipline policy and alarm system not covered.

Follow up with Supervisor regarding Orientation uncovered topics. Supplement these topics with the orientated worker.

All orientations must include a review of the progressive discipline policy and the emergency alarm or alert systems.

Testing Taking Practices

To be in the best position possible, consider the following test taking practices throughout preparation and while writing the NCSO™ Exam.

- ✎ **Prioritize your time.** Answer items you know well to maximize your success. With the remaining time, return to items you may have been unsure of and reassess or confirm your answer.
- ✎ **Narrow it down.** Multiple choice answers will present four options (one is the correct answer and the remaining three will be plausible). It is helpful to narrow them down by eliminating the 1-2 options you know to be incorrect and reviewing the question again with the remaining options.
- ✎ **Read and re-read the question.** Often, we are eager to answer a question based on what we thought it was asking. But, re-read it, understand what it is truly asking and attempt to pull key words from it that may assist you in your response.
- ✎ **Keep it generic.** Many companies have internal jargon and terminology. You will not see this on the NCSO™ Exam. Using company specific terms for processes and documents may not be beneficial. Keep your short and longer answers as generic as possible and reflective of the intent of the action, process, observation, document. (e.g., using *hazard assessment* rather than terms such as PHA, PTA, FLRA, PJTA, etc.)
- ✎ **Still keep it generic.** Company processes may differ from that of processes covered in ACSA courses. Neither may be “incorrect” or “better”. Rather, know that questions will reflect ACSA course content and Government of Alberta legislative requirements (i.e., the minimum standard).