



Purpose of the Exam

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

The NCSO®/NHSA™ Exam is a written exam for individuals who pursue the NCSO® or NHSA™ 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 Exam is intended to assess the understanding and application of these concepts.

Format of the Exam

The NCSO®/NHSA™ Exam is a two-hour, closed book exam, made up of 120 multiple choice questions.

The pass mark is 75% and you will receive 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 Exam Blueprint on the next page.

ACSA offers a free two-hour vILT NCSO®/NHSA™ Exam Preparation Session that is available through your MyLearning account.

Exam Format			
Part	Question or Item Type	Total Marks	Categories of questions or items
A	Multiple Choice	120	Four-option multiple choice questions covering general concepts



Topic (Selected ACSA Courses)	General Concepts & Basic Skills	Total Marks
Hazard Control and Risk Assessment (LSE, PHSM, LEG)	Concepts: Hazard assessments, hierarchy of controls, elements of risk assessment, hazard categories	24
Training and Orientation (ATP, LSE, PHSM)	Concepts: Assessments, evaluation, documentation, verification, and monitoring methods (e.g., OJT or ongoing training)	15
Inspections (LSE, PHSM)	Concepts: Inspection procedures, formal and informal inspections	10
Investigations (LSE, PHSM, WIB)	Concepts: Investigation processes, procedures, incident causation	18
Audits and Auditing (ATP, PHSM)	Concepts: COR Audit process and procedure, audit timelines, sampling, documentation review, timeframes and action plans	16
Health and Safety Management Systems (ATP, PHSM, LEG)	Concepts: Elements of a health and safety management system (as per COR requirements), legislation	18
First Aid and Emergency Preparedness (PHSM, LEG)	Concepts: Emergency response	1
WHMIS (WHMISTTT)	Concepts: WHMIS 2015 TTT components (i.e., includes worker education, site-specific training, SDSs, workplace labels, hazard communication)	9
PPE (WHMIS, LEG, LSE, PHSM)	Standards, types of PPE, PPE controls and legislation	9
Pass mark for the NCSO®/ NHTSA™ Exam is an overall score of 75%. Score is recorded as PASS or FAIL.		120



Selected ACSA Course	
LEG	Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Legislation Awareness
PHSM	Principles of Health and Safety Management
ATP	Auditor Training Program
LSE	Leadership for Safety Excellence
WIB	Worksite Investigation Basics
WHMIS TTT	WHMIS Train the Trainer
The NCSO®/ NHSA™ 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.	

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 exemplary documents within each course book.

Terminology

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

Examples:

- Formal inspections
- OJT (on-the-job training)
- Formal Hazard Assessment
- Action plan
- Toolbox talk or tailgate meeting
- Direct, basic, and root cause
- Hazard report
- Safety Statistics (e.g., LTFR, ISR, TRIF)
- Safe job procedure (SJP)
- Informal inspections
- Joint Health and Safety Committee
- Site-specific Hazard Assessment
- Hierarchy of controls
- Tickets
- Partnerships in Injury Reduction (PIR)
- Health and Safety Representative
- Readily available
- 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



Test Taking Practices

To be in the best position possible, consider the following test taking practices throughout preparation and while writing the NCSO®/ NHTA™ 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®/ NHTA™ 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 those 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).