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## Frequently Asked Questions: Standard 3.12 – Employer Audit Quality Assurance (EAQA) Process

### **What is the employer audit quality assurance (EAQA) process?**

The purpose of the EAQA process is to ensure the validity of certification for employers. The EAQA process is mandated by Standard 3.12 in the [COR Program Standards and Guidelines](#) (S&G) and aims to fulfil the requirements the S&G has for employer audits. Identifying employers who do not meet the COR program's minimum requirements and having an established process to remove their certification is required to maintain the program's integrity.

Recent changes to the EAQA process are described in an [addendum](#) and are effective January 1, 2016.

### **Which employers must go through the EAQA process?**

All employers with COR certification are subject to the EAQA process. Employers with at least one indicator are subjected to a more detailed analysis by WorkSafeBC. Examples of these indicators include the following:

- Repeat or frequent Prevention orders from a WorkSafeBC officer
- Serious or fatal injuries
- WorkSafeBC penalties
- Complaints from WorkSafeBC officers, the public, other employers, or auditors about specific COR-certified employers or their COR programs

The presence of these indicators may imply a potential failure in the employer's occupational health and management system (OHSMS).

### **What is a WIVA?**

WIVA stands for WorkSafeBC-initiated verification audit and is an external verification audit. Following the detailed analysis of employers that have an indicator, a determination is made by WorkSafeBC as to whether a WIVA is warranted. The WIVA will confirm if the employer possesses the minimum OHSMS standards required for COR certification.

### **Will the occurrence of an indicator always prompt a WIVA?**

No. WorkSafeBC will conduct a detailed review of each employer that has one or more of the indicators listed above to determine if a WIVA is required.

### **Will my certifying partner contact me if a WIVA is necessary?**

Yes, your certifying partner (CP) will contact all employers who are required to participate in the WIVA process. Also, WorkSafeBC will send a letter, copying your CP, to inform you that you have been selected for a WIVA.

### **I have been selected for a WIVA. What happens next?**

Your CP will contact you and explain that:

- a) The WIVA must be conducted in your next scheduled COR audit as a re-certification audit for that quality assurance year.
- b) An external auditor, selected by the CP, is required to conduct the WIVA.
- c) Your CP will bear the cost of hiring the external auditor.

### **Is my participation mandatory if I have been selected for a WIVA?**

Yes. By joining the voluntary COR program, you have agreed to abide by the program's [Standards and Guidelines](#), which includes the possibility of being selected for a WIVA. Not agreeing to participate fully in the WIVA will result in a lapse in your COR certification.

### **What if I have multiple classification units (CUs) in my account?**

The WIVA will only include CUs that are COR-certified.

### **What if I have both an occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS) COR certification and a return- to-work (RTW) certification?**

If you have a current RTW COR, both the OHSMS and RTW system will be audited at the same time.

### **Who pays for the external auditor conducting the WIVA?**

The certifying partner of the employer administers the WIVA process and pays for all direct costs relating to the external auditor.

### **We have a qualified internal auditor. May he or she join the WIVA to meet the requirement of conducting a minimum of two audits within the three-year cycle?**

Yes, if you have a trained and qualified internal auditor, he or she may be permitted to participate in the WIVA, but an external auditor is required to be the lead auditor and signatory to the audit report. Please arrange with your CP directly regarding your qualified internal auditor joining the WIVA.

### **What score do I need to pass the WIVA?**

To receive a "Pass" categorization from the WIVA, your total audit score needs to be 80 percent or more, and the score on any individual element cannot be less than 50 percent. If you receive a "Pass" on the WIVA then your COR certification remains valid.

There are three other possible results following a WIVA. These are:

- a) Minor nonconformity – Your total score is more than 70 percent but less than 80 percent, and the score on any individual element is not less than 50 percent.
- b) Major nonconformity – Your total score is less than 70 percent, or the score on one or more individual elements is less than 50 percent.
- c) Non-compliance – You did not participate in the WIVA fully.

If you receive a “Minor nonconformity” or “Major nonconformity” result from the WIVA, there are additional steps you must go through before you are considered to have passed the WIVA. For more details about these steps, see sections 4.4 and 4.5 of the [EAQA process addendum](#).

If you do not participate in the WIVA fully, your COR certification will be considered to have lapsed in that quality assurance year.

**I’ve just passed the WIVA. Am I expected to complete my regular maintenance or re-certification audit in addition to this?**

No, if you pass the WIVA, it will serve as a re-certification audit for the year it’s performed.

**What if I receive a “Fail” or “Non-compliance” result on my WIVA?**

Unfortunately, your COR certification will be considered to have lapsed in that quality assurance year and you will not be considered for an incentive for that year.

**If my COR is considered to have lapsed, how can I re-certify?**

In order to re-enter the COR program after your COR certification has lapsed due to a “Fail” or a “Non-compliance” WIVA result, you will need to apply to your CP for COR re-certification and undergo a full COR re-certification audit conducted by an external auditor.

Keep the following in mind:

- a) You are responsible for choosing the external auditor and for all costs associated with this full re-certification audit.
- b) You will not be eligible for an incentive payment related to the quality assurance year when the WIVA was required.
- c) You are not permitted to re-certify during the same quality assurance year that your certification lapsed in.
- d) All employers, regardless of size, can only be re-certified at any point in the future by undergoing a full re-certification audit conducted by an external auditor.

**My COR certification has lapsed due to my WIVA result. What if I don’t agree with this decision?**

If your COR certification is considered to have lapsed due to a “Fail” or “Non-compliance” WIVA result, then there is a review process you can initiate to have the decision reconsidered. Visit WorkSafeBC’s [review and appeal page](#) for details.

For any concerns related to WIVA audit results or the auditor that performed the WIVA, contact your certifying partner.

**Where can I find more information about the WIVA and the EAQA process?**

For more information about the EAQA process, contact your certifying partner. You can also contact WorkSafeBC's Partners Program at 604.244.6164 (toll-free 1.866.644.6164) or via email at [partners.program@worksafebc.com](mailto:partners.program@worksafebc.com).

Visit WorkSafeBC's [Partners Program webpage](#) for additional resources, and to access the [EAQA process addendum](#) to the [COR Program Standards and Guidelines](#).

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FAQs on COR S&G Addendum to Standard 3.12 EAQA