

## 1.3 AFPA Certificate of Recognition Process

A Certificate of Recognition (COR) is awarded to employers who have successfully implemented a basic workplace health and safety management system. The following explains the Alberta Forest Products Association's (AFPA) COR process.

### GETTING YOUR CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION (COR)

- The employer company selects the AFPA as their Certifying Partner.  
*In order for the AFPA to act as a company's Certifying Partner, the company must either be a member of the association, or work as a contractor for an AFPA member.*
- The employer registers with the WCB for the Partners in Injury Reduction (PIR) Program (*optional*).  
*Participation in PIR—which makes the employer eligible for WCB rebates—is free and **voluntary***
- The employer or an employer representative takes *Leadership in Health and Safety* training through the AFPA (their Certifying Partner).  
*Training sessions are designed to help the employer implement a health and safety program, or determine that their existing program is on the right track. Optionally, training can also be used to begin the process of certifying a candidate as an Internal or Peer Auditor.*
- When the employer is ready to conduct the health & safety audit, they select the audit protocol they want to use, and either contract a Certified External Auditor, or advise the AFPA that they would like to take part in the Peer Audit process.  
*You should always advise the AFPA of your plans for the audit. They can then provide you with a list of certified auditors, help you arrange for a Peer Audit, and/or advise if there is anything you should know about before proceeding. Audits must take place on an active work site.*
- Once the audit is completed, the auditor writes up the report and submits it to the AFPA for quality control.  
*The AFPA's report deadline is 2 weeks from the last day of the audit. If circumstances make it difficult for the auditor to complete the report within that time, note that the report **must** be submitted to the AFPA within a maximum of 45 days. Audit reports submitted after 45 days can not be accepted by the AFPA or Alberta Human Resources & Employment.*
- If the employer passes the audit with a minimum of 80% overall, and at least 50% on each element, the AFPA will submit a COR request to Alberta Human Resources & Employment on their behalf.

- Once the COR is received by the AFPA, it is signed by the association's president and sent to the employer.  
*The COR is good for 3 years, providing the employer performs the annual maintenance audit for the next 2 years. This can be done internally if the company has a Certified Internal or Peer Auditor on staff. If not, an External Auditor will be required to fulfil program requirements. The deadline for COR renewal is December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.*
- In the COR renewal year, the employer must undergo an external audit to renew their COR and maintain their status.

### **COR MAINTENANCE**

The Certificate of Recognition is renewed every three years through the completion of an external health and safety audit, but the certification will lapse if the employer fails to complete an approved internal maintenance process in years 2 and 3 of the audit cycle. While employers always have the option of performing an external audit every year, and thereby renewing their COR annually, for those who wish to *renew* once every 3 years, there are currently 3 methods of *maintaining* a Certificate of Recognition between renewal years.

- Complete a maintenance audit.  
*Using an AFPA approved PIR Audit instrument, complete the audit process using an AFPA Certified Auditor internal to the company.*
- Complete the Action Plan in Lieu of Internal Audit option.  
*Employers that have completed one 3-year PIR Audit cycle can apply to the AFPA for approval to use an Action Planning process instead of completing an internal audit in maintenance years 2 and 3.*
- Complete the Correction Action Report (CAR) option.  
*Employers who have completed one 3-year PIR Audit cycle and who have achieved a minimum of 90% on their last external audit can apply to the AFPA to use this maintenance process. Note that CAR must be completed by an AFPA certified auditor who is very familiar with the operation.*

For more details on the above maintenance options, see the AFPA web site, or contact the AFPA.

## **EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is important for the employer to remain an active part of the COR process. In particular, the employer must:

- Keep the AFPA apprised of any audit plans and activities.
- Book the audits early to make sure that there will be someone available to conduct the audit before the Dec. 31 deadline.
- Book the audit for a time when the work site will be active.
- Ensure that both the Certifying Partner and the auditor are aware of all the WCB account numbers and Industry Codes to be covered in the audit. Anything missed will not be covered by the COR.
- Be available for the auditor, and prepared to supply all the information they need to complete the audit.
- Call the AFPA if there are any questions or concerns about the audit process.
- Keep in touch with the auditor to ensure report deadlines are being met.

## **AFPA RESPONSIBILITIES**

The AFPA is available to help guide you through the process of getting and maintaining your Certificate of Recognition. Specifically, the C.P. is responsible to:

- Provide training in the development and maintenance of improved health and safety programs.
- Develop acceptable audit instruments.
- Train and certify Health and Safety Auditors.
- Provide quality control for the audits of Partnerships participants.
- Request Certificates of Recognition (COR) for employers who meet an acceptable health and safety standard.
- Maintain records of the COR processes for at least 2 years.
- Remind COR holders of their maintenance requirements at least annually.
- Inform Alberta Human Resources & Employment of registrants' COR status at least annually.
- Answer any questions participants may have.
- Ensure confidentiality of all audit information. (The only parties who will have access to audit reports/scores are the employer to whom the information is relevant, and Alberta Human Resources & Employment - *Partnerships*.)
- Maintain an updated list of COR holders and their COR numbers on the *Members Only* side of the AFPA web site. (This information is also available to the public on the AHR&E web site.)

## **AUDITOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Perform health and safety audits in an unbiased, efficient, and confidential manner, as per the Code of Ethics in the Audit Protocol Introduction.
- Provide both the employer and the AFPA with a Pre-Audit Letter detailing the scope of the audit, the dates on which the audit will take place, and any information that will make the employer aware of the auditor's needs.
- Provide a complete, professional report of audit findings based on the audit protocol, and which represents a true picture of the health and safety program of the company being audited.
- Submit this report for quality control to the AFPA within the established deadlines (2 weeks), and if necessary, rework as indicated by the audit reviewer.
- Once the audit report has been cleared by the AFPA, the auditor must submit it to the employer in a timely fashion, and be available to discuss any issues that may arise.