



# SAFE Work Certified – FAQs

## Worker participation in safety and health certification

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### 1. What is occupational safety and health certification?

Occupational safety and health certification provides a way to recognize employers for meeting a standard for safety and health performance in the workplace. This includes safety and health requirements and practices that are a part of a comprehensive safety and health management system, and includes quality assurance as well as processes to ensure continuous improvement.

### 2. For a workplace to obtain safety and health certification, it must be audited. What is an audit?

An audit is an evaluation of an organization's safety and health management system against an approved set of criteria. Auditors will look at work sites, documentation and will interview employees. As a result of the audit, a workplace will receive a pass or fail and the auditor will make a recommendation for or against certification. The auditor will also provide a report that outlines strengths and weaknesses identified during the audit process, as well as make recommendations for improvement.

### 3. How do workers participate in the process for a workplace to obtain safety and health certification?

Workers' participation is essential to an effective safety and health program. Workers need to have an active role and an empowered voice to work together with co-workers and managers in making meaningful safety and health improvements. This includes open dialogue where workers' input into safety and health is not only requested, but is also valued, encouraged and welcomed.

During the audit process, workers' participation and opinions about the safety and health of their workplaces will be assessed. The audit will assess:

- Do workers understand and are they engaged in the carrying out of their safety and health rights and responsibilities?
- Is there an active and effective workplace safety and health committee or worker representative in the workplace?
- Are there specific protections for vulnerable workers and provisions for their inclusion in safety and health programming?
- Do workers express confidence in the safety and health of their work and workplace.

In addition to this worker participation and interviews, a co-chair of the workplace's safety and health committee or a worker representative will be asked to represent the workers of his or her organization during the audit process and will receive training to fulfil this duty effectively.

The co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative asked to participate will:

- attend the pre-audit meeting
- review certification audit outcomes with the auditor and sign off on the audit
- participate in the development of action plans to address weaknesses identified in the audit
- share information with the safety and health committee and other workers.



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#### 4. Why is the co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative asked to sign off on the audit?

The participating co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative are asked to sign off on the audit to confirm that:

- the audit content has been reviewed
- the audit process has been explained
- there has been an opportunity to ask questions.

#### 5. Does signing an audit mean that I agree with the findings?

No. Signing off on an audit does not mean that as the co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative you agree or disagree with the findings. It only confirms that you were made aware of the audit findings.

#### 6. What are my options if I disagree with the audit findings or have concerns about how an audit was conducted?

As the co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative involved, you have the option to raise concerns regarding the certification process, audit results or audit process with the Certifying Partner for your industry. Certifying Partners include:

##### Construction

- [Heavy - Manitoba Heavy Construction Association](#)
- [Industrial, commercial and residential - Construction Safety Association of Manitoba](#)

##### Manufacturing

- [Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters - Made Safe](#)

##### Transportation

- [Motor Vehicle Safety Association of Manitoba](#)
- [Manitoba Trucking Association - RPM Trucking Industry Safety program](#)

#### 7. If I sign off on the audit as a co-chair of my safety and health committee or worker representative, could I be held liable if a safety incident occurs in my workplace?

No. If you have signed off on an audit as a co-chair of your safety and health committee or worker representative, you will not be held liable for any safety incidents that occur in your workplace. Your signature on the audit is only to acknowledge that you've been made aware of the audit outcomes.



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**8. What do employers need to do to ensure that the designated co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative is actively involved during the safety and health certification process?**

As part of the safety and health certification process, employers have the responsibility to ensure that the co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative have completed the required training as directed by the Certifying Partner. Employers are also required to make the audit report accessible to and consult with them in the development of the action plan.

**9. What's an action plan?**

An action plan is a document that addresses weaknesses which were identified during the audit process. An action plan also describes actions to be taken to address these weaknesses, expected outcomes and timelines.

**10. What role does the co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative have in the development of an action plan?**

The co-chair of the safety and health committee or worker representative should be consulted about the development of the action plan so that he or she can provide suggestions and feedback. He or she will also be asked to sign off on the action plan along with the employer.