

**WSIB H&S Accreditation  
for  
Construction Employers**

**Discussion Paper**

**Prepared by**

**Construction Safety Association of Ontario**

**January 2007**

The WSIB is considering an “Accreditation” program for employers with successful H&S programs.

Unlike CAD-7 or MAP Experience Rating (which is based strictly on WISB claims experience), Accreditation would be based on a company’s H&S program meeting certain standards.

This document provides some background information on Accreditation plus, where appropriate, some suggestions from CSAO.

CSAO’s suggestions are based on prior discussions with various construction groups and the experiences of the construction safety associations in the other provinces.

The WSIB is seeking input on several different aspects of accreditation prior to proceeding with a detailed proposal later in 2007.

Your comments on Accreditation, including CSAO’s suggestions are welcomed.

## **WSIB Accreditation for Construction Firms**

### **Background**

Under the WSIAct, the WSIB has the authority to:

***“develop standards for the accreditation of employers who adopt health and safety policies and operate successful health and safety programs.”***

The WSIB had some initial discussion of Accreditation in the early 1990’s but nothing resulted.

In 2005, the WSIB established an Accreditation Working Group. Construction, Manufacturing, Petrochemical, Mining and Health Care sectors represented. That group submitted a report to the WSIB in 2006.

The WSIB is proceeding with consultations Jan- Apr /07 with a view to having a proposal in place for piloting in the Fall of 2007.

Today, most provinces have implemented accreditation-type programs, particularly for Construction firms.

In some provinces, the Accreditation is ONLY for construction firms. In others, it applies to other sectors as well.

In NS, NB and NFLD , a COR (Certificate of Recognition) is required in order to bid on government contracts and most major clients have adopted it as an eligibility requirement.

In Alberta, the COR program is layered overtop of the general experience rating program and in addition to the 5% for “passing”, additional rebates are available for improved performance.

<b>Province</b> (year Accreditation prog. Started)	<b>WSIB/WCB Incentive</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirement for Bidding</b>
Newfoundland (2005)	5 % Rebate	Yes- some major clients
Nova Scotia (1996)	No	Yes- for major clients + prov. gov't
New Brunswick (1998)	No	Yes- for major clients including provincial gov't contracts
Manitoba	No	Yes- some contracts ( City of Winnipeg)
Saskatchewan	No	Voluntary program
Alberta (1992)	5% to 20% discount	Yes - for major buyers of construction
British Columbia ( 2002)	5% rebate	Voluntary Program
Yukon (2005)	5% rebate	Some major buyers of construction

A “National” construction H&S audit was developed to assist firms that work in more than 1 province. It contains many common elements that apply in all provinces plus the feature to address special provincial requirements ( e.g. Ontario has JHSC's and “Certification”)

COCA ( The Council of Ontario Construction Associations) had established several points that needed to be addressed:

1. Program should be voluntary
2. Must offer a direct financial incentive
3. Must have external audit element
4. Must include provisions for auditing site conditions

### **H&S Program Elements**

The Accreditation Working Group had recommended the following elements be addressed in the H&S Program/System:

1. Leadership
2. Responsibilities and Accountabilities
3. Hazard/Risk Assessment
4. Safe Work Practices /Procedures
5. Emergency Preparedness
6. Training and Communications
7. Workplace Inspections
8. Accident/Incident Investigation
9. Contracting
10. Performance Measurement
11. Return to Work

These elements are common in most of the recognised international or provincial OH&S System standards ( eg.. ISO OHSAS 18000 ( Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series ), ANSI Z10 Standard, CSA Z1000, ILO OSH 2001, WSIB WORKWELL, The only one that is not normally included is “Return to Work”. Since the WSIB in Ontario is making early and safe return to work a priority, it must be addressed in Ontario’s program

**Issues:**

There are several issues that need to be addressed regarding an Accreditation program in Ontario:

- Is there adequate support to proceed ?
- What Type of Incentive should be offered and how big should it be?
- What are the Roles of WSIB, CSAO or others ?
- Are the proposed H&S Program Elements Ok?
- What processes should be utilized in an Accreditation Program ?

Each of these will be discussed in more detail.

**General Support Issues:**

There are some General Support Issues. The purpose of H&S Accreditation is to “tilt the playing field” in favour of employers who invest in H&S.

There are some factors, however, that might work against this goal.

- Although other provinces have Accreditation programs, their injury performance is not as good as Ontario
- Injury Rate improvement may lag implementation since early adopters have very low injury rates already.
- Costs of rebates may cause premiums to rise ( roughly 1 cent increase in premium rate for each \$1,000,000 in rebates)

These issues may affect support for the accreditation program in general.

One of the major support issues is the expected delay in realizing improvements to the overall injury/cost rate for the WSIB.

The early adopters are likely to be the larger firms that have effective programs in place already.

It may take a couple of years to get enough firms into the program to have a measurable effect on injury frequency and/or cost rates.

Accreditation should be viewed as a long term strategy that requires some up-front investment in order to achieve later success.

## Incentive Issues

There are some basic questions about the potential Incentive.

- Should it be a Rebate or Discounted Premium?
- How big should it be 2 %- 5% - 7 %?
- How does Accreditation link to CAD-7, MAPP, NEER?
- How does it link with SCIP, Safety Groups?

From prior discussions with COCA and others, it appears that the incentive should be a REBATE that is layered on top of any general experience rating effects.

For example, if a firm received a 20% CAD-7 rebate, their accreditation would result in a further 5% rebate.

If a firm had a 20% CAD-7 surcharge, but had successfully achieved accreditation, they would still get a 5% rebate to help offset the 20% penalty due to claims effects.

Regarding SCIP/Safety Groups – a firm could choose to be in any 1 incentive program, SCIP, Safety Groups OR Accreditation.

There has been some discussion about requiring firms to be in one of these programs for a specified time before being eligible for Accreditation.

Although firms that have completed 5 or more years in the Safety Groups Program are likely to be accredited more easily than those who have not, there is concern that having a requirement like this could be a barrier for some firms.

If the WSIB moves forward with Accreditation, there may be changes to the Safety Groups program. The changes ( if any) would depend on what emerges in the Accreditation program.

## Roles

In order for the WSIB to bring forward a detailed proposal, they are looking for input on who should do what?

- WSIB – oversight only or a more involved role ?
- CSAO – Comprehensive Audits, Validation Audits, Auditor Training ?
- Independent consultants or other agencies?

In most provinces that have an Accreditation Program, the WSIB/WCB issues the actual accreditation, however, the services that lead to accreditation are provided by the provincial Construction Safety Association.

Most of them have structured their programs to require the applicants to take specific training programs and to have an audit

conducted. These are all “fee-for-service” functions for those Associations.

Depending on what emerges as Ontario’s H&S Accreditation Program, CSAO may be offering similar services to those in other provinces. E.g. it may be appropriate for CSAO to offer an Accreditation Workshop to prepare firms for the Accreditation Process.

There is also a widely held view that CSAO should perform the third-party audits.

CSAO’s view is that any special training or auditing services related to Accreditation would have to be provided on a Fee-for-service basis, since its current funding is already under pressure to meet existing workloads.

### **Audits**

There are several questions that need to be addressed regarding Audits

- Single H&S Audit used by all sectors ?
- Construction –specific audit?
- Site Conditions?
- Self Assessment with external validation?
- Comprehensive external audit?

- Equivalency issues?
- Costs?

From the WSIB’s perspective, a single audit (like Workwell) would be simpler and easier to administer.

However, CSAO believes that there are differences in construction practices and conditions that should be accommodated in a Construction Specific Audit.

Both COCA and CSAO believe that site conditions need to be assessed as part of the audit.

Under CSAO’s existing audit design, site conditions account for 25% of the final score.

In order to “pass”, a firm must score at least 80% overall with at least a 60% score on every element .

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick use “self audits” with a spot check done on a sample of all of the audits.

Alberta requires a comprehensive audit to be done by an external auditor from a set of auditors linked to the Alberta Construction Safety Association (some are contract auditors, not ACSA staff).

Comprehensive Audits exam all elements of the audit, whereas a “validation” audit would examine a portion of the elements and apply that to the overall score.

There are likely to be some questions about “equivalency” – since other provinces have COR’s in place- would a firm that has a COR from Nova Scotia automatically get accredited in Ontario?– Also, Sarnia has had a audit program based on CSAO’s Audit for a number of years – should those firms still have to have an audit done by the Safety Association?

CSAO estimates that “Validation” audits would cost in the order of \$3,500 to \$4,100 each ( Salaries, Benefits + Expenses)

Comprehensive audits would be more expensive, perhaps by a factor of 3.

### **CSAO Comments**

Based on these factors and the experiences of the construction safety associations in the other provinces, CSAO proposes the following :

CSAO strongly believes that the specific requirements with the System Elements should reflect construction practices and conditions. As a result, the Audit to asses and measure those should also be Construction Specific.

CSAO is also concerned that the Accreditation System should be intended to reach well beyond just the large construction firms.

The injury patterns in construction in Ontario clearly show that as company size increases, the LTI rate decreases. The largest firms are also those with the lowest LTI rates.

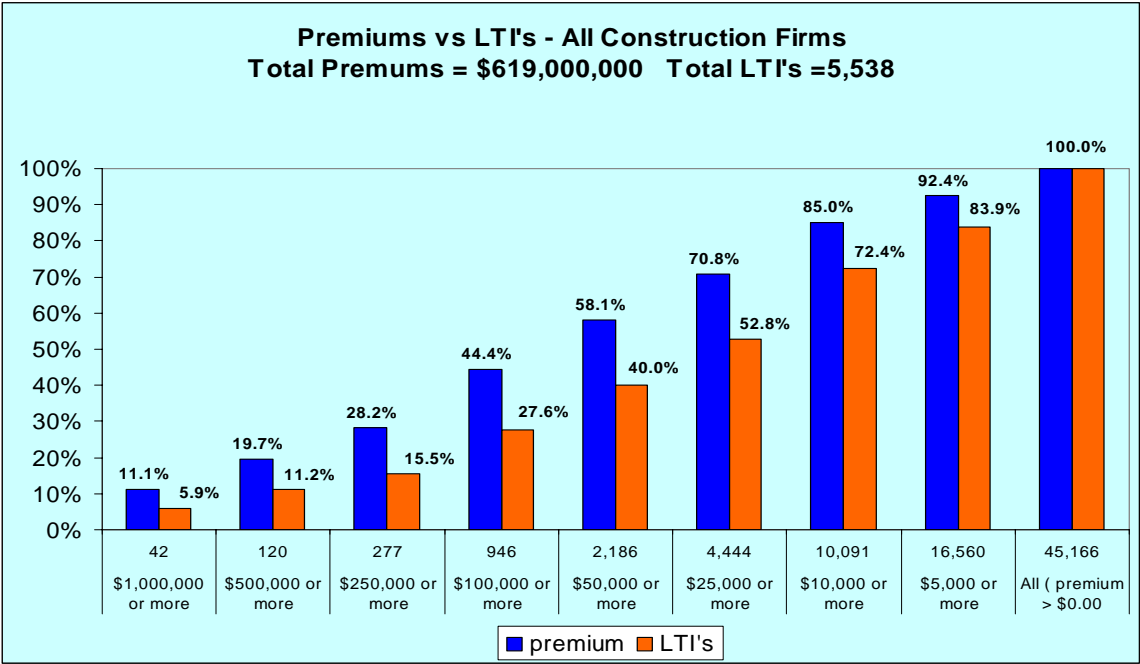
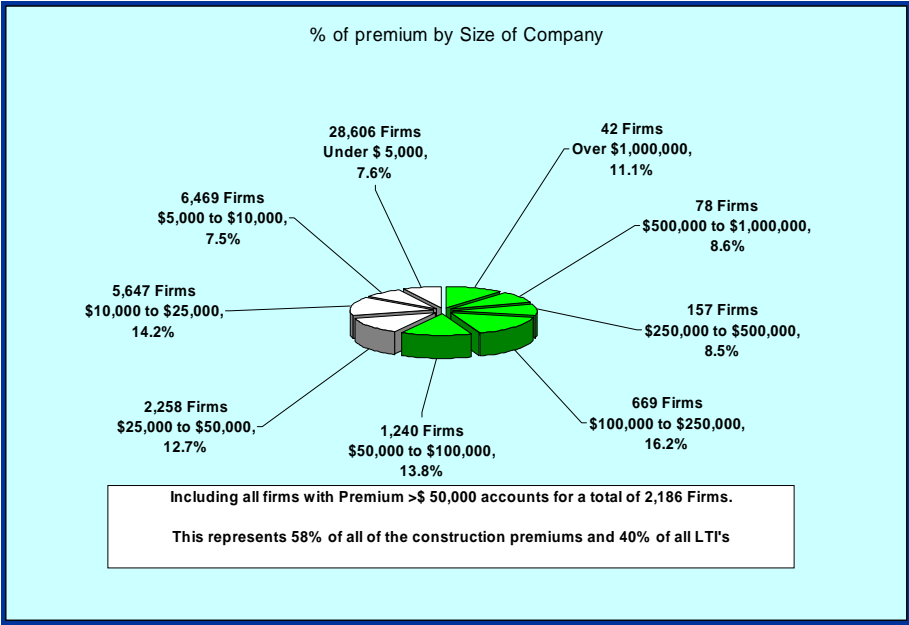
While it is reasonable to assume that the early adopters of accreditation will be the larger firms, efforts should be made to reach to at least those firms that pay \$50,000 or more in WSIB premiums.

That group would include 2,186 firms that pay 58% of all of the WSIB construction premiums and account for 40% of all LTI’s.

The WSIB’s role should be to oversee the overall Accreditation Program, however, the service delivery including establishing the specifics of a “construction” H&S program including the Audits should be left with CSAO.

Accreditation should be layered on top of any general experience rating program ( e.g. CAD-7, MAPP, NEER)

Some background data on firm sizes as well as a proposal for an accreditation process for construction follows.



## H&S System Elements

Element	Content/Processes/Comments
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Policy statement</li> <li>◦ Management commitment to H&amp;S</li> <li>◦ Active Role in H&amp;S Activities</li> <li>◦ Lead by Example</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibilities and Accountabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ General and specific responsibilities should be set out for all levels including CEO, Managers, Supervisors and Workers</li> <li>◦ Include H&amp;S performance measures in general performance reviews for all supervisors/managers</li> </ul>
<b>Hazard/Risk Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Review the hazards/risks that may be encountered in the scope of work performed by the company</li> <li>◦ Ensure that major fatality, injury or occupational illness risk factors that are prevalent in the business sector served by the firm are addressed</li> <li>◦ Establish effective controls for common risks</li> <li>◦ Establish effective control strategy for dealing with unexpected risks</li> <li>◦ Link H&amp;S practices with other company practices</li> </ul>
<b>Safe Work Practices/Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Develop and implement effective practices and procedures to address risk factors</li> <li>◦ Ensure practices and procedures are communicated effectively to all affected employees</li> <li>◦ Establish Company Rules to address common H&amp;S risks/controls and ensure that these are communicated effectively to all employees</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Develop and implement effective measures to deal with emergencies that may arise within the company's scope of work</li> <li>◦ Complexity of preparedness plans may range from addressing first Aid requirements to more sophisticated requirements depending on the scope of work normally performed, site conditions, work location and the availability of external emergency services</li> </ul>

<b>Training and Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ensure that managers, supervisors and workers are trained in accordance with the requirements of the company's H&amp;S program as well as applicable legislated requirements</li> <li>◦ Ensure that H&amp;S information is communicated effectively throughout the company ( including but not limited to safe work procedures, MSDS's, H&amp;S bulletins)</li> </ul>
<b>Workplace Inspections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ensure that H&amp;S Inspections are conducted regularly by competent persons and that any deficiencies are recorded as well as the corrective action taken</li> </ul>
<b>Accident/Incident Investigation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ensure that there is an effective system in place to report and investigate accidents/incidents</li> <li>◦ Ensure that persons investigating these events have been trained in accident/incident investigation</li> <li>◦ Ensure that the results of the investigation and any corrective actions are recorded and communicated to all appropriate parts of the company</li> </ul>
<b>Contracting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ensure that contractors are qualified to perform the work safely and that contractors have taken appropriate measures to perform to your company's H&amp;S requirements</li> <li>◦ Establish H&amp;S performance expectations for contractors</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Measurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ensure that there are measures to evaluate the company's H&amp;S performance and internal compliance with its H&amp;S program requirements</li> <li>◦ Provide for periodic external validation of internal audits</li> </ul>
<b>Return to Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ensure that the company has policies and practices ( e.g. modified work, early medical intervention and regular communications) in place to assist with safe return to work for injured workers</li> </ul>

Proposed Accreditation Process - CSAO

