

Ask the Auditor

An SCSA Audit is a structured process used to verify the performance of a health and safety management system through comparison to an industry standard. The SCSA National Standard Safety Program Evaluation Tool — often referred to as the “Audit Tool” — is a workbook designed to record, measure and present the results of a safety audit. The questions for this edition of the Ask the Auditor are taken from Section 10.0: Investigations and Reporting of the Audit Tool.

Audit Tool Section 10.0: Investigations & Reporting

Health and safety program management is a dynamic process that requires the maintenance of comprehensive records. These records provide readily available insight into program activities and results. They also provide the information necessary to assess the program, to make necessary modifications, and to plan for future activities. Additionally, some records are required by Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

10.1 Is there a written investigation policy and reporting procedure(s)?

10.2 Is the policy being followed?

The company safety manual should contain a policy statement on investigations. Such a policy should set out the objectives of investigations, as well as procedures for deciding when to do an investigation, and general procedures and responsibilities for completion.

The company investigation policy and reporting procedure must be followed at all times. It is crucial to the success of the investigation and reporting section that the stated requirements are achievable and hold value to the company’s safety program. The auditor will review the requirements stated in the policy/procedure and cross reference that information with the completed report and investigation forms.

10.4 Do the workers know the reporting procedures?

In order to maintain a successful investigation and reporting program, all levels of employment should be made aware of the company’s investigation and reporting policy/procedures. The information employees should be informed of should include what they are to report, when they should report it, and to whom they are required to report it to.

10.5 Have supervisors been trained in investigation and reporting procedures?

As a requirement of the SCSA National Standard Audit Tool, all supervisors must have completed training specific to their responsibilities for conducting investigations. Ensure that all individuals who are in position that is considered to be a supervisory role have received the necessary training. The SCSA Leadership for Safety Excellence course covers all of the required training elements for supervisors conducting investigations.

10.6 Are appropriate personnel involved in the investigations?

It is beneficial to have more than one individual complete and participate in the investigation process to help ensure multiple views of the accident/incident can be recognized. When one single individual performs the same task on a frequent basis, there is the potential for complacency. Members from all levels of the organization should be included in the investigation process. This consists of management, supervisors, and workers, or the worker representatives from the Occupation Health Committee. It is important that all parties who participated in the investigation are clearly identified on the form to ensure that applicable documentation is present for the auditor.

10.7 Are near misses being reported?

A near miss is an incident that results in no visible injury or damage, but has the potential to do so. Near misses are often overlooked in comparison to accidents and incidents; however, this should not be the case. Ensuring workers report near misses will help prevent the potential for actual injury or property damage. Near misses of a less serious nature may be reported and discussed at safety meetings, while incidents that have the potential to cause serious injury or property damage should receive a full investigation. It is vital to the success of the near miss reporting procedure that all personnel are aware of the differences between an accident/injury and a near miss. This information can cut down on confusion during the interview portion of the audit.

10.8 Are recommendations for prevention/remedial action implemented in a timely manner?

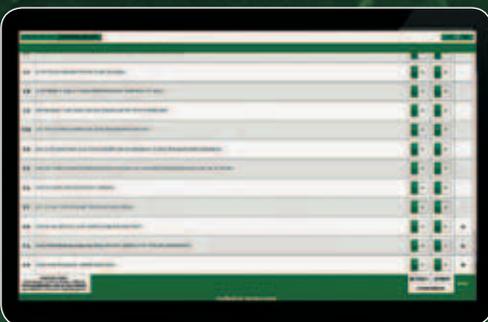
Many investigation reports never end up entirely complete. This is often caused when the implementation dates for the recommendations for prevention/remedial action are not documented. Often times, investigation reports indicate the target date for the intended recommendations of prevention/remedial action, but are missing the information recording the completion dates for these actions. It is important for companies to include both the target and completion dates for recommended actions in order to have a complete and comprehensive investigation form that includes all of the necessary details from start-to-finish.

10.10 Are investigation reports reviewed by senior management?

It is a requirement of the SCSA National Standard Audit Tool that all investigation reports are reviewed and signed by a member of senior management. Senior management should use this opportunity to recognize any further recommendations and ensure that the remedial/corrective action(s) have been put in place.

When verifying documentation for Investigations and Reports, ask yourself the following:

- Is the policy and procedure being followed?
- Are all supervisors trained in investigation and reporting procedures?
- Are appropriate people involved during the investigation process?
- Were the remedial/corrective actions implemented in a timely manner and was that information included on the investigation form?
- Were all the investigation reports reviewed and signed by a member of senior management?



E-Audit Tool Now Available

The SCSA Electronic Audit Tool is now available!

Email scsaprograminfo@scsaonline.ca to request the E-Audit Tool package to use for your upcoming internal COR maintenance audit.