

# 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 document 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 9.0: Inspections of the Audit Tool.

## Audit Tool Section 9.0: Inspections

### What is an Inspection?

An observational tour of the workplace for the specific purpose of identifying unsafe acts and unsafe conditions and determining the levels of compliance with established Safe Work Practices, Procedures, Site and Company rules.

### What is the difference between Hazards Assessments and Inspections?

Hazard assessments look at tasks and work processes to find potential hazards. Inspections look at the bigger picture and take sites, conditions, equipment, and behaviours into account.

### What is the difference between Informal and Formal Inspections?

- *Informal, ongoing inspections* are performed by everyone on the job. These are basically keeping an eye out for any new hazards while working. Often these are not documented.
- *Formal, planned inspections* happen on a regular schedule, are documented, and have both supervisors/management and workers performing the inspections together. On these sheets, problems must be identified, prioritized, have a corrective action, and state by whom and when the corrective action was implemented.

### 9.1 Is there a written policy for inspections?

The company Inspection Policy should set out the objectives of the inspection process, give direction, and state responsibilities and frequency of inspections. Each company must have a succinct and easily-comprehensible Inspection Policy.

### 9.2 Does the policy include frequency of inspections?

The policy must clearly state the frequency of inspections. With this, the company is set up to enforce and track the inspection process. It is up to the company to determine the inspection schedule. While companies that have many small jobs may wish to stick to a more open schedule and randomly choose which sites to inspect (e.g. 3rd week of every month, or 2 inspections/month, etc.), other companies that stay on projects for longer periods of time may have completely different schedules that run closer to the jobsite requirements.

### 9.3 Is the required frequency being met?

It is imperative that inspections happen regularly and meet or exceed Inspection Policy requirements. The documentation must reflect the requirements set out in the policy.

### 9.4 Is there a form or checklist used for inspections?

Documentation must demonstrate that people are conducting inspections as directed. A checklist is great for ensuring items aren't looked past or forgotten. Open-ended forms are useful in case something is seen that isn't found on the form. A combination of both is typically the most effective; however, it is up to the company to decide what best suits them. Forms should include:

- the hazard description;
- a priority index;
- a corrective action for each problem identified;
- the time/date the corrective action was put in place; and
- name(s) of the individual(s) who completed the corrective action

## 9.5 Are the supervisors performing inspections as required?

Records must show that supervisors are involved in the inspection process. Supervisors are considered those that work directly with workers and supervise their daily jobs. They have a bigger responsibility for ensuring hazards are mitigated which is why they must be part of the inspection process. In smaller companies, the same people may be both supervisors and senior management, which is ok.

## 9.6 Are worker's involved in the inspection process?

Records must show that workers are involved in the inspection process. Workers have the right to know the hazards of their workplace and have a responsibility to be aware and understand the risk associated with their work. This is an opportunity to work in cooperation with workers to increase safety culture. Documentation must reflect that workers are involved.

## 9.7 Are all areas inspected as required?

All spaces carry hazards for employees. Ensure that areas such as yards, offices, basements, storage facilities, etc. are not being excluded from the inspection process. Hazards such as ergonomics, paths of travel, lifting, stacking of boxes/ tools/equipment, or overheating electronics, are just a couple examples of hazards that may be found in offices/storage/yards, etc. This is a legislated requirement.

## 9.8 Are identified deficiencies corrected in a timely manner?

Records must indicate when corrective action has been taken. This means that corrective actions must have, at minimum, a date attached to their completion. In some cases the time it is corrected may be appropriate as well. The goal is to prove the deficiency was corrected quickly enough to prevent a potential

incident. This is how the inspection loop is closed; therefore showing follow up and due diligence of the company.

## 9.9 Does senior management participate / review the inspection process?

Senior management must, at minimum, be reviewing and signing the inspections so that they are aware of hazards in their workplace and for their employees. Better practice is to have senior management participate periodically throughout the year so they experience the same work conditions as workers.

## 9.10 Are inspection reports posted and / or communicated to appropriate personnel?

In accordance with employees' legislated "right to know" the hazards in their workplace, inspection reports must be made available for everyone. They can be posted on a wall, sent in a communication, etc. Best practice is to review inspections during Tool Box Talk / Safety Meetings.

When reviewing the Inspection portion of the safety management system, consider the following:

- Is the frequency appropriate for your company? Busy times versus slow times of year may require different frequencies.
  - Avoid generic forms or 'hand me downs,' except as reference when building your own.
- How well do employees understand the inspection process and why they occur?
- Is the documentation clear, concise, and easy to follow? Do people know what to do with the documentation once the inspection/corrective actions are completed?



## E-Audit Tool Now Available

*The SCSCA Electronic Audit Tool is now available!*

*Email [scsaprograminfo@scsaonline.ca](mailto:scsaprograminfo@scsaonline.ca) to request the E-Audit Tool package to use for your upcoming internal COR® maintenance audit.*