



2021 SAFE Companies audit submission requirements

By Martin Ridgway, SAFE Companies Supervisor, Quality Assurance

Internal Audits

Small employers (IOO, ISEBASE and SEBASE) are generally expected to perform their usual audit in 2021 at their normal (pre-COVID-19) time. All audits should contain evidence from the last 12 months before the audit submission date, even if that causes overlaps or gaps from the last audit. For example, if you submit in late August 2021, include September 2020 through August 2021 even if your last audit was sent in December 2020 due to COVID-19 delays. If you are unsure if you should submit a maintenance audit or a recertification, contact our office for specific information or default to a recertification audit which will reset your regular audit date.

BASE Maintenance Audits

While the ideal BASE audit scores answers from each question and question section, due to safety concerns travelling to various sites, scoring in-person observations and interviews may not be possible until restrictions on in-person site visits are lifted. While some

interviews can be done through video conferencing or by telephone (if video is not possible), these alternatives may not be practical if the worker is out of cell range or has an unreliable internet or phone connection. Questions (or parts of questions) that are omitted can be scored as 'not applicable'. The number of interviews could also be reduced, or the timing of the audit adjusted with sufficient justification. The auditor needs to clearly explain on the NOAA why their plan is the best achievable plan for their audit.

BASE Recertification Audits

BASE recertification audits, with the exception of certain silviculture and camp operations, are expected to have documentation, interviews and in-person observations. If the pandemic is severely impacting your company's operations, contact us to discuss audit solutions.

Silviculture and related audits

Recertification of certain BASE-sized silviculture and related camp-based

operations are subject to specific Provincial Health Orders. Reduced interviews and/or altered observation scopes and practices can be arranged on a case-by-case basis with WorkSafeBC approval.

Regaining COR status

To help companies regain COR status after the last year's unprecedented circumstances, BCFSC is offering free online auditor training to company representatives for those companies with someone previously trained in IOO or SEOHS. The 2021 audit submission should be submitted by the auditor as soon as practically possible after completing training, even if it is less than 12 months since the last audit in 2020. This offer is only available for a limited time from now through August 31, 2021 and does not include in-person or other instructor-led classes. Companies who do not have a previously trained IOO or SEOHS person are not eligible. For questions and enrollment information contact safeco@bcforestsafesafe.org.



Send your audit submissions electronically

By Cherie Whelan, Director SAFE Companies

The 2020 audit processing season is finally complete! With COVID-19 restrictions and BCFSC staff working remotely, submitted audits took us longer to process than in years past. We appreciate your patience in working through these difficult times.

Due to the restrictions, we have adjusted some business processes to ensure we can meet our deadlines with WorkSafeBC. One of those changes is we will no longer be returning your audit submission due to staff limitations. If you require a copy of your audit, contact our office and we will provide a scanned version.

This past year, we received many audit submissions in binders with tabs separating the material. We recognize the work, time and money it takes to assemble this information and ship it out and we want to help you save that precious time and cost. By using our electronic audit submission options, you will not only save on printing and shipping, but your documents will already be in digital copy format submitted by you so you will not require your audit to be returned. If our electronic audit submission options do not work for you, you can still submit your printed audit submission materials but we request they be sent in audit question sequence



without staples, clips, tabs or binders. It's easier for us and much less work for you!

Earlier this year, I had an eye-opening discussion with an employer dropping off his audit materials in a neatly organized binder to our office. We discussed the new electronic audit tool (OAT) we recently launched and he told me he

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felt the printed materials submitted in a binder with tabs was an easier way for the Safety Advisors to review the audit materials. When prodded further, he said they can simply flip through the binder to access the information. I appreciated that he was thinking about our Safety Advisors when he put his materials together and he was trying to make our work easier. But in actual fact, printed audit materials are much more difficult to manage and take much longer to process on our end. Our filing system is now 100% electronic and staples, clips and tabs require considerable administrative effort for our limited staff to prepare the printed materials for scanning, not to mention the potential damage to our scanners should a staple or clip get missed. Once the paper audit is free of staples, clips, etc. and reorganized for scanning, our admin staff then process it and upload the scanned audit into our systems for the Safety Advisors to review. So although you may think your binder is an easy way for us to review your audit, it actually causes a lot of unnecessary work for both parties and is never actually reviewed in printed form by the Safety Advisors.

The most efficient and effective way to submit your audit is using our electronic audit tools. Consider one of the following for your next audit submission.

1. **Use our new ONLINE AUDIT TOOL (OAT)** (85MB max per file).
2. **Upload** via our website (for files 8MB or larger)
3. Email (files less than 8MB) to **audits@bcforestsafes.org**
4. Send by fax: **250-741-1068**
If paper audit submissions are your only option (and we will always process paper audits) they can be submitted by:
 1. Courier or delivery service to the BCFSC Nanaimo office.
 2. Drop off to the BCFSC Nanaimo Office between 8:30am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday. Upon arrival, masks are required with social distancing procedures in place.

Note: We request paper audits submissions be submitted **without** staples, paper clips, binder clips or binders to help reduce the processing time and allow us to get your results back faster! 🍀



New opportunity for COVID-19 in 2021: Virtual Site Visits

By Mike Sexton, BCFSC Safety Advisor

If you have been selected for a site visit in 2021- there still may be an option for a site visit.

While travel is currently suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions, the BCFSC will continue providing you with personal service by offering virtual site visits. This option will not replace regular site visits but offers supplemental service during provincial health restrictions, especially for companies that just want their audit done!

The requirements for virtual site visits are not much different from in-person visits but does require video technology ability through digital applications such as FaceTime for Apple mobile users or What's App for Android mobile users. If your mobile phone doesn't have these options, a laptop with a camera can also be used with an online video platform such as Zoom or GoToMeeting.

Observations and chats with you and your workers would be done using video interaction. A designated person in your company would show the BCFSC auditor what they need to see on site using the device's camera and documents can also be displayed on camera or sent electronically.

We do not expect this would work for everyone but for those with the technological ability, it's an option that can easily be put in place. If you have been selected for a 2021 site visit and would prefer to wait until COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted that is easily managed. But if you want your audit done ASAP, contact us and let's see if we can make this virtual option work for you! 🍀

WorkSafeBC COR Proof of Concept update

BCFSC continues to work with the other Certifying Partners and WorkSafeBC on plans for a future COR audit. WorkSafeBC is currently developing a preliminary working copy of an audit tool and will be working towards its testing phase to ensure it functions properly. The current Proof of Concept (POC) stage is like a scale model test in its primary phase. It is even more preliminary than a pilot audit and not ready for a real test pilot.

Several POC companies and external auditors across various industries have been selected to test the new tool and will use POC audits from May to November this year. As the Certifying Partner with the most companies, BCFSC has the most audits. Many of our external BASE auditors also audit other industries, so over half the POC auditors are veteran BASE auditors.

The auditors and Certifying Partner QA staff have been trained but companies are not expected to change or alter their safety systems for the audits. A good investigation should be a good investigation no matter how you measure it. A company with years of 98% scores should not suddenly do a lot worse than a newer company that only grew from 81% to 84% in the three-year certification.

WorkSafeBC has posted all available public information regarding the POC on their [WorkSafeBC website](#). We will continue to keep you informed as things progress over 2021 and 2022. 🍀