

Want to know what's made COR™ the 'BUZZ' word in the construction industry of Southern Ontario?

COR™ is a health and safety certification program. It is a national standard supported by the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA). COR™ is aimed at driving positive and safe workplace behavior and consistent practices, which lead to improved performance.

Why COR™?

In Ontario, COR™ has become a pre-requisite for many organizations such as Metrolinkx, GTAA, TTC, Infrastructure Ontario, York region, City of Brampton, City of Milton, and City of Toronto. Moreover, COR™ audits help you demonstrate how well you evaluate, assess, control, and manage risks for your workers.

COR™ provides you with the competitive edge among peers in the project bidding process and ensures that you comply with the legal requirements of the OHSA. One of the biggest advantages with COR™ is that it encourages higher worker participation in occupational health and safety process while enhancing your organizational culture. Further, COR™ boosts your corporate image as a company committed towards creating a strong safety culture by attracting safety-conscious customers.

How does COR™ program happen?

COR™ is a three-year certification provided by the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association (IHSA). IHSA is the only approved provider (registrar) of COR™ in Ontario. IHSA provides the certification only if the employer performs and successfully completes internal maintenance audits in year 2 and 3 while complying with the terms and conditions of the COR™ program.

Moreover, IHSA issues a Letter of Good Standing for each year certifying that the training elements and audit standards were maintained. Further, in year 4, the employer must reapply for the COR™ program and kick-start the process again. Key to COR™ accreditation success lies in an organization's ability to demonstrate consistent application of its OHS program throughout the organization.

How to get started with the COR™ accreditation? Remember, it's a part of your Business Strategy

COR™ accreditation is a process for consistency throughout the organization. You need to start by looking at each element of the COR requirements as setting up a process to capture and maintain that information. That's where it becomes an integral part of your 'business strategy'. Thus, you cannot just perceive COR™ as just another 'business tactic'.

The worst strategy to take for COR™ accreditation is the act of simply collecting information as one would do during a bidding process. COR™ looks at a working system and proof of documentation on the activities that happen in an organization.

COR™ process looks at two major aspects:

- Documentation of your policies, processes, and procedures to meet compliance
- Performance of internal and external audits to ensure that whatever is being documented is actually happening

5 step implementation of the 'COR™ Strategy'

Once the process is established, you must set up resources to get started with the accreditation. These processes can be divided as follows:

Step 1 – Gap Analysis

- It is recommended to perform a gap analysis on what is being done and what needs to be done to get the accreditation.
- This gives a road map on where the organization is and where it needs to go.

Step 2 – Implement an online system

- Next, you are recommended to implement an online system to capture and store records largely for documentation.

Step 3 – Training frontline supervisors

- The next step is to get all your frontline supervisors and managers trained on understanding their responsibilities and the change in processes along with its requirements as the implementation takes place.

Step 4 – Provide comprehensive training for all employees

- It's good to ensure that all your employees undergo all the mandatory training and hazard-specific training
- It's also important to ensure that they get trained in all the new ways of carrying out their daily activities as well as filling in the required forms and checklists.

Step 5 – Thorough monitoring

- Lastly, monitoring the process of ensuring that activities mentioned in the policies and procedures are being performed within the required deadlines is crucial for COR™ success.

Getting Help

The COR process requires significant changes in how activities are documented and managed in the organization. Senior Management must understand that it is a strategic change that will need dedicated resources and may require changes on how business is conducted in the organization. That's what makes COR™ a business strategy and not just another tactic.

The easiest and the most efficient way to get things done for COR™ implementation is to engage the services of experts who have taken the companies through this process as well as the use of an established safety management system. The role of the expert will be to engage in the one-time activities, and then guide and coach the employees in the company to run and maintain the system.

COR pushes the company to have a culture and a systematic way to maintain the program for the years to come, since the company needs to be re-accredited every 3 years, while performing the internal audit every year. It is crucial to establish a health and safety management system so that the program can be sustained in an effective way without having to depend on any key individuals in the organization. There must be a process and a program to maintain the ongoing management such as training, inspections, investigations, and follow-up process.

Here's how safety management systems make OHS easier, especially for gaining successful COR™ accreditation:

- Performing hazard assessment, analysis, and control
- Conducting health and safety training and communication
- Performing workplace inspections
- Carrying out investigations
- Laying down accident reporting procedures
- Gathering key statistics, analytics, and facts to improve OHS processes
- Improving compliance through online filing of due diligence
- Communicating safe work procedures
- Improving emergency preparedness through effective communication

-article by Sobi Ragunathan

Thursday
September 21
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM
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