

# Workplace Safety North Reference Guide for the Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit

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## Purpose

You strive to ensure every worker goes home safe and healthy, and so does Workplace Safety North (WSN).

The Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit Guideline (Ministry Guideline) is intended to help in maintaining the effectiveness of modular training programs provided by mining firms like yours.

WSN is providing this Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit Template (WSN Audit Template) to ensure organizations have the information needed to successfully participate in the Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit.

WSN provides organizations with effective training and consulting to assess and strengthen their health and safety management systems. The WSN Audit Template describes the process for maintaining the audit criteria in accordance with the Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit Guidelines requirements.

## Background

### **In-House Training Program Evaluation for Ontario Mining Sector** Guidelines for the required annual audit of signing authority

The purpose of the audit is to ensure trainer skills, employee performance, and program quality remain current at the highest standard throughout the province.

Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit evaluates:

- quality of training
- maintenance of training records
- competency of company employees for modular accreditation

To achieve this, an audit must be conducted, and the results must be communicated to site senior management with any deficiencies identified.

The annual audit report serves as the starting point for next year's audit.

Results of the audit need to be kept on file for Ministry inspections.

This WSN Audit Template is not intended to measure legal compliance, replace, or audit a complete health and safety management system.

Ministry rationale

Based on industry research by subject matter experts in their sector, the Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit Guideline (Ministry Guideline) process focuses on the modular training program performance as it relates to the mining industry and the transfer of knowledge to workers.

The purpose of the modular training programs is to improve industry high-risk hazard training delivery to:

1. Ensure trainees who are exposed to the hazards in the workplace receive high quality and consistent training.
2. Strengthen workplace safety culture by elevating the profile and importance of industry-specific training.
3. Reduce the number of workplace injuries, illness, incidents, and fatalities.

Training has been identified as an area for improvement within the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (Ministry) [Risk Assessment Initiatives](#).

The Ministry Guideline was implemented through the efforts of the Mining Tripartite Committee, with the support of WSN and Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (herein known as the Ministry).

The Ministry Guideline is in support of the Ministry mining modular programs and the employers supporting training program.

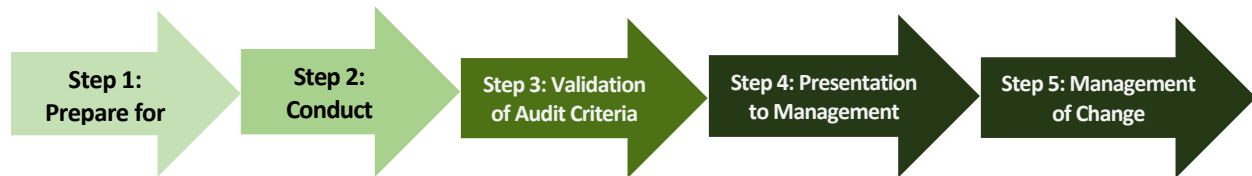
The Ministry Guideline takes a systemic approach to recognize when key health and safety training practices are in place and functioning to keep workers safe and healthy.

## Process for the Signing Authority Audit

To validate the guidelines, a firm must satisfy the following combination:

1. Satisfy the Ministry Guideline criteria (document/ records)
2. Satisfy the Ministry Guideline on-site training component(s) (observation/interview)

## WSN Template for Signing Authority Audit Criteria



### Key steps

#### Step 1: Prepare for your internal audit

##### Validation of Mining Signing Authority program being audited

This audit process only applies to the following Mining Modular Programs:

1. Program #770010 - Common Core for Underground Hard Rock Miner - Specialty Modules for Underground Hard Rock Miner
2. Program #770121 - Common Core for First Line Underground Mine Supervisor—Underground Hard Rock Mining
3. Program #770130 - Common Core for Basic Underground Soft Rock Miner - Specialty Modules for Underground Soft Rock Miner
4. Program #770131 - Common Core for First Line Underground Mine Supervisor—Underground Soft Rock Mining
5. Program #770141 - Common Core for Generic First Line Supervisor—Surface Miner, Surface and Underground Diamond Drilling Operations and Surface and Underground Mining Trades
6. Program #770150 - Underground Diamond Driller (includes Helper Level, Runner Level, and one Specialty Module)
7. Program #770200 - Surface Diamond Driller—Common Core Helper Level and Runner Level
8. Program #770210 - Surface Miner (includes Common Core and Specialty Modules)
9. Program #770225 - Common Core for Basic Underground Hard Rock Mine Service Types

10. Program #810050 - Common Core for Basic Mill Process Operator—Mineral Ore - Specialty Modules for Mill Operator—Mineral Ore
11. Program #810080 - Common Core for Basic Smelter Operations—Mineral Ore
12. Program #810090 - Common Core for Non-Production workers in a Smelter Operation—Mineral Ore
13. Program #500100 - Municipal Pit and Quarry

Preparing for an internal audit requires organization and planning. To help ensure a smooth process and success the employer or designate should gather up various documentations and records (hard copy or electronic) and store them in one location such as a physical file folder or an electronic folder to have all material in one area that can be easily accessed.

This audit process applies to the employer, the employer’s signing authority, trainers, instructors and all trainees within the modular program being audited. Please note that each mining modular program must be audited annually by the respective signing authority.

These responsibilities reflect the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the specific company responsibilities for the trainees and supervisors.

### **Steps for performing the Ontario Mining Industry signing authority audit**

Determine the date of Audit.

- When the employer’s signing authority was approved by the Ministry, they would have received a verification letter or acknowledgement of the assignment of signing authority. The date of the letter determines the date for compliance with annual audit.
- If an annual audit has not been completed, an immediate audit should be performed to determine interim compliance. Maintain audit criteria for annual assessment based on the date of Ministry acknowledgement.

Once the date of annual audit has been confirmed:

- Set a date to meet with senior management to engage the various workplace parties (employer, employer’s signing authority, trainers, instructors, and trainees) in the process and the roles and responsibilities within the process.
- Review the objectives of the audit criteria of “Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Audit Guidelines” (Ministry Guideline) that you would have received with your verification letter.
- Prepare for the audit activity.
  - Using the Ministry Guideline, gather documents to support audit objectives. To complete the internal audit portion of the Audit the employer or designate should gather the following written copied documents and records:
    - Training policy
    - Employers legislated training program for the Modular Program to be audited.

- Roles and responsibilities for the various workplace parties
  - Training resources
  - Written lesson plans for various pieces of equipment including all steps required by the performance objective.
- Records of:
  - Risk assessment (annual)
  - Ministry modular training applications
  - Ministry modular training reports
  - Ministry modular standard booklets
  - Signing Authority application and designation
  - Request to disclose training transcripts documentation
  - Training records to support competencies
  - Equipment and machinery inventory
- Hold opening meeting and include results previous audit including:
  - Refer to Ministry Guideline and define the scope of the audit and extent of audit criteria
  - Financial resources required
  - Audit methods
  - Co-ordinate and schedule of audits and other activities relevant to the audit criteria
  - Determine the extent of compliance to the Ontario Mining Industry Signing Authority Guideline
  - Evaluate employer, signing authority, trainer, trainers in meeting objectives of Ministry Guideline

## Step 2: Conduct the Audit according to Ministry Guideline

The purpose of the audit is to ensure the employer’s in-house training program is internally audited to the Ministry Guideline. This ensures trainer skills, employee performance, and program quality remain current at the highest standard throughout the province.

Based on the annual audit referenced in the Ministry Guideline, the signing authority will collect documents and records, and findings from observation and interviews to satisfy the base guideline requirements of the WSN Audit Template.

This involves describing your organization’s audit experience as it relates to the Ministry Guideline requirements and supplying support for your experience with **three types of evidence**, such as documents, observations, records, or interviews as described below.

Evidence is a form of proof to demonstrate something is true. Examples of evidence types a firm may provide for senior management are:

Evidence Type	Details	Evidence Type	Details
<b>1. Document</b>	<p>A written process, procedure, policy, or program typically setting out expectation, providing direction, providing information to the user including steps to be taken or what to do.</p> <p>Typically addresses the questions of what, when, why, who, how and where.</p>	<b>3. Observation</b>	<p>Visual observation or verification of an action or event.</p> <p>In the context of this process (online submission), the firm would need to <b>provide three</b> records of observations, following the record requirements. *</p>
<b>2. Record*</b>	<p>Documented proof of an occurrence, demonstration that something took place.</p> <p>When submitting records, firms must submit <b>three records</b> to ensure the verifying party can establish a trend to maintain integrity in the verification process.</p>	<b>4. Interview</b>	<p>Confirmation through a verbal discussion with a workplace party that the relevant event or action occurred, or a concept or required action is understood.</p> <p>In the context of this process (online submission), the firm would need to provide three records of interviews, following the record requirements. *</p>

\*Records should be dated within the last 12 months from the date of audit.

\*Initial internal audit records should encompass the timelines of the signing authorities since inception.

### Step 3: Document the audit findings using WSN Audit Template

Use separate excel document provided. [LINK]

Upon completion of audit template:

- Determine audit findings considering:
  - Follow-up of previous audit records and conclusions
  - Requirements of the audit standard (Ministry Guideline)
- Record conformities (criteria met)
  - Audit evidence that supports conformity to the Ministry Guideline
- Record non-conformities (Opportunities for Improvement (OFI))
  - Description or reference to Audit Criteria
  - Nonconformance of audit evidence
  - Related audit findings (if any)

Section 1: Training Program		A training program (or program) is a documented and planned sequence and combination of activities designed to establish standardization, develop employee knowledge, skills and abilities to ensure consistent outcomes.			
Sub-Section		Audit Criteria	Auditor Findings		
			Criteria Met	OFI	Finding Details
1.1	Establishment and Scope	The Employer has established training program	Workbook last saved: Just now		
		The scope of the training program applies to/includes modular training	Yes		Please view index 1.1 for trainingprogram details
		The program identifies competency requirements		Required	Please view modular program 770121 within index 1.1 OFI identified gaps in documented competencies required under the modular program 770121
1.2	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities for workplace parties including the organization/employer are identified in the program		Required	requirements - OFI was identified to further include Employer requirements
		Senior leaders representing the employer are aware of these identified roles and responsibilities		Required	Senior leaders did not have documente awareness of their roles and responsibilities.
		Roles and responsibilities for workplace parties including the Signing Authority (SA) are identified in the program	Yes		Please see index 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities
		The organizations Signing Authority(ies) is(are) aware of these identified roles and responsibilities	Yes		Please see attestation indicating understanding of the roles and responsibilities.



## Step 4: Presentation to Management

According to the Ministry Guideline, a meeting must be held to communicate the results of the audit with any deficiencies identified to site senior management.

### Signing Authority Audit Results Meeting

The organization should have a written procedure for the meeting that can include:

1. Roles and Responsibilities of:
  - a. The Employer
  - b. The Signing Authority
  
2. Audit information (inputs) is supplied to senior management:
  - a. Annual evaluation of the trainers to determine the effectiveness and compliance with:
    - i. Safety
    - ii. Quality
    - iii. Performance
  
3. Signing authorities' evaluation of:
  - a. legislated training program provided by the Employer for changes in:
    - i. Legislation
    - ii. Changing technology
  
4. Evaluations of compliance with legal requirements from the following workplace parties:
  - a. The Employer
  - b. The Signing Authority
  - c. The trainer(s)
  - d. The trainee(s) for items that may require updating such as accidents, incidents, near misses, progressive discipline etc.
  
5. Changing circumstances related to occupational health and safety. This can include developments in legal requirements or technology, identified barriers to worker participation in the Modular program training program, such as:
  - a. changing technology
  - b. accommodation of unique training needs
  - c. taking into consideration different levels of responsibilities
  - d. language skills and abilities
  - e. literacy

6. Recommendations for improvement
  - a. As recommended by the Signing Authority
  - b. The employer determines and notes the following recommendations (outputs) from the Audit:
    - i. Policy updates
    - ii. Procedural updates
    - iii. Legislative Training Program updates
    - iv. Lesson Plan updates
    - v. Training requirements updates
    - vi. Revisions to roles and responsibilities as required.
    - vii. Employer Action plan to achieve desired results.
    - viii. Removal of barriers to trainee performance within the modular program requirements

### **Step 5: Management of Change and Continuous Improvement**

Change in any organization is necessary to adapt to new ways of doing things, as business grows or evolves, new legislation is introduced or a multitude of other reasons.

Management of Change is an important process, eliminating workplace hazards that could lead to injury, equipment damage or environmental impact.

The employer is required to have a written procedure for management of change that will include:

1. Responsibilities for the listed roles as a minimum
  - a. Employer
  - b. Senior Management:
  - c. Signing Authority
  - d. Trainers
  - e. Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or Worker Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
2. Management of change procedure shall be implemented within the following change listed:
  - a. The construction or design of a mine or mining plant
  - b. The construction of a major structure or system at a mine or mining plant
  - c. The introduction or use of a new mining technique, method, technology, or process
  - d. The introduction or use of new equipment
  - e. A major addition to, or major alteration of, a matter referred to in paragraphs 1 to 4

3. Identification of when the management of change procedure is required to be implemented, which includes, at a minimum:
  - a. Changes in legal requirements
  - b. Significant changes in work processes, control measures, equipment, organization, or work locations
  - c. Introduction of new products, processes, or services
  - d. Introduction of new developments in occupational health and safety knowledge or technology.
  
4. A completed hazard assessment based on the change with the following identified:
  - a. Controls to be initiated
  - b. Controls to be reviewed and evaluated
    - i. Identification of the various workplace parties to be notified of the proposed changes
    - ii. Identification workplace party authorizing the changes
  - c. Controls to be implemented
  - d. Communication techniques used to communicate to the various workplace parties
  
5. Evaluation techniques used to validate:
  - a. Implementation of changes
  - b. Effectiveness of changes

## **WSN Support for the MLITSD Initiatives 2023-2024**

[Workplace compliance initiatives | ontario.ca](https://www.workplacesafetynorth.ca)

### **About Workplace Safety North**

Your health and safety partner

An independent not-for-profit, Workplace Safety North (WSN) is one of four sector-based health and safety associations in Ontario. Headquartered in northern Ontario, WSN supplies province-wide Ministry-approved workplace health and safety training and services for the mining and forest products industries. As a leading provider of health and safety training and consulting, businesses call upon WSN for expert advice and information.

For more information, please contact your local WSN Health and Safety Specialist or visit [workplacesafetynorth.ca](https://workplacesafetynorth.ca)