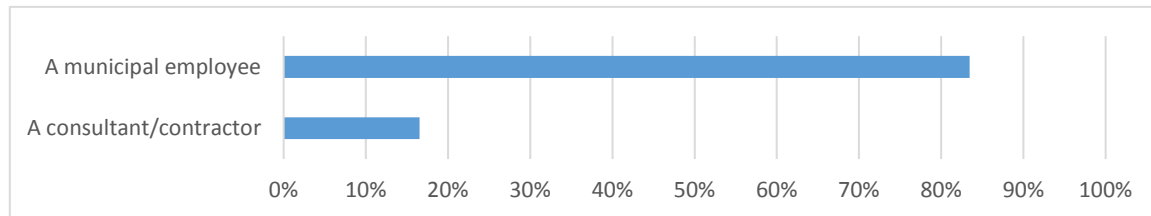# 2017 AMHSA Survey for Auditors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thank you to all those who participated in the survey. As a result of the survey the following changes have been undertaken by AMHSA:

- ✓ AMHSA will now offer two platforms for audits: Excel (currently [available](#)) and eCompliance (launch date TBA).
- ✓ AMHSA has extended the audit submission deadline to December 1st, for all audit tools.
- ✓ AMHSA has made a concerted effort to improve all audit-related training – Health and Safety Management Systems, Health and Safety Auditing, and Audit Refresher
    - ✓ Free of charge – an optional second day of Audit refresher training was created for participants who wanted the opportunity to have more hands-on experience with the new audit tool.
    - ✓ All training was revised to meet the new Government Standard (December 2016)
    - ✓ AMHSA is incorporating 3 new videos in our Health and Safety Management Systems course
    - ✓ AMHSA has improved its consistency in training and is using a single highly qualified instructor for all audit courses
- ✓ AMHSA is communicating with our auditors more than ever, via email, our website, and social media
- ✓ AMHSA is providing more options for this transitional time - the new tool will not be mandatory until January 2019
- ✓ AMHSA is forming an Auditing sub-committee to meet twice/year to allow auditors the opportunity to ask questions, learn from each other, and provide feedback to AMHSA staff in-person
- ✓ AMHSA is striving to improve consistency in quality assurance process and provide reviews to auditors in a timely fashion
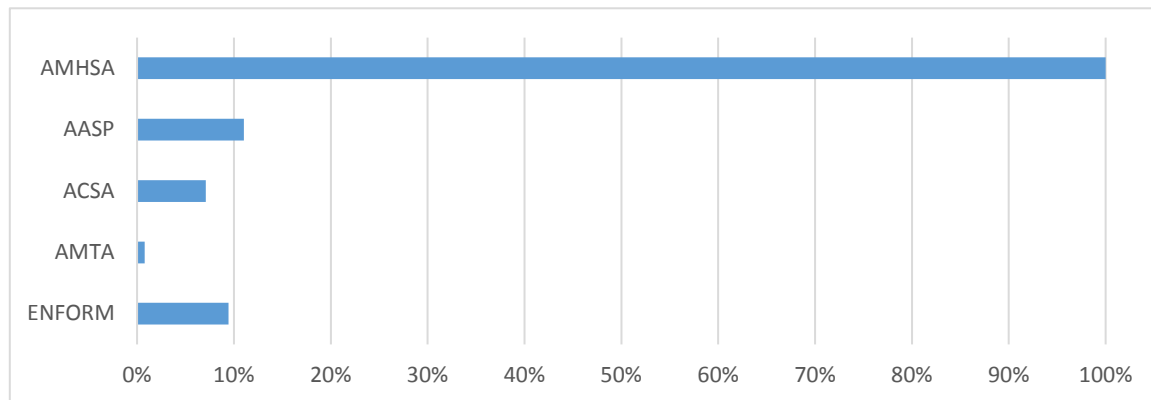
Summary of Results

1. I am:

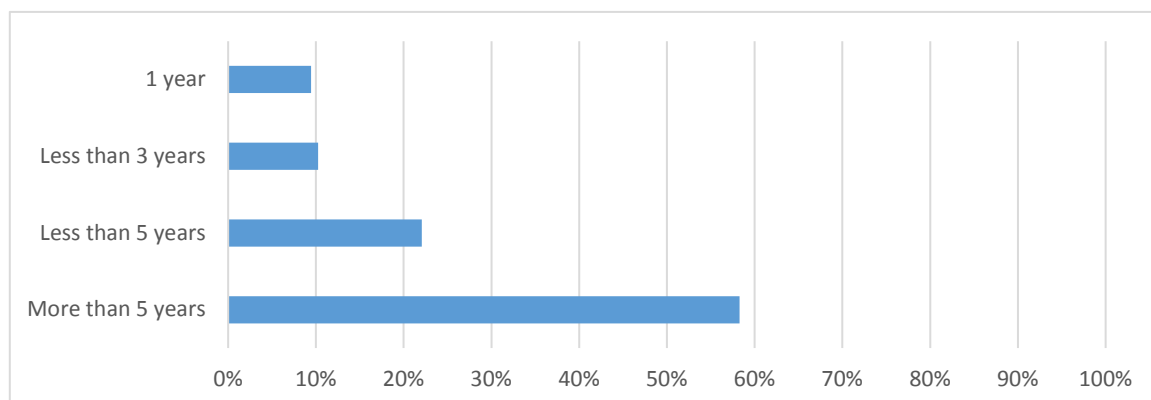2. Which certifying partner(s) are you certified with as an auditor?

AASP: Alberta Association for Safety Partnerships
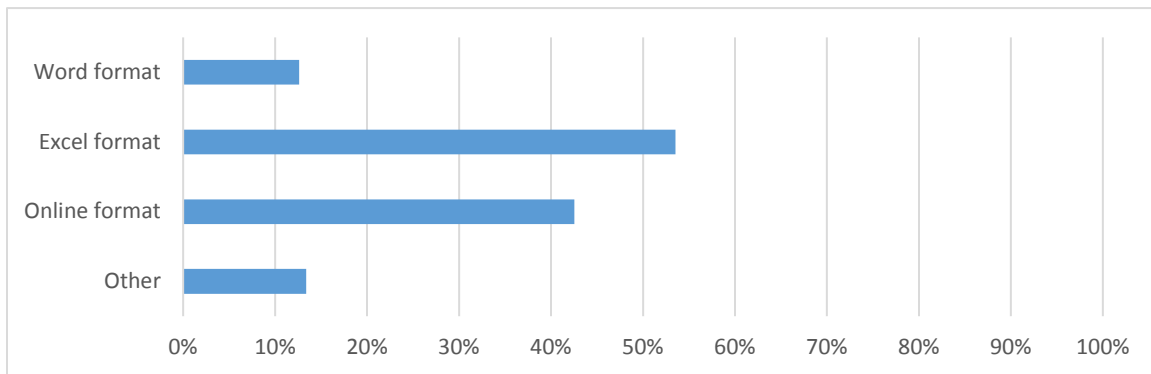*ACSA: Alberta Construction Safety Association*
AMTA: Alberta Motor Transport Association
ENFORM: Alberta Oil and Gas

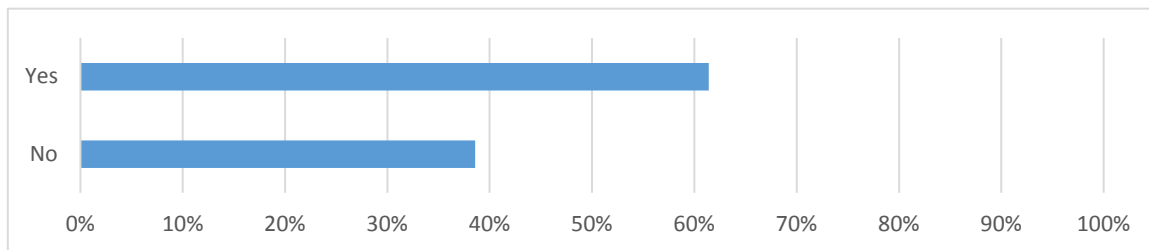3. How long have you been an auditor?

4. The Alberta Government has recently updated the audit standard. Which format would you prefer for the audit tool?

Summary of Comments:
- ECompliance style
- Excel
- Different online format
- No experience with different formats (no preference)
- Either Excel or eCompliance
- Word or Excel

5. Do you have experience using the audit tool from eCompliance?

6. If yes, what did you like and/or dislike about the eCompliance audit tool?

Summary of Positive Comments:
- Online access
- Sampling methodology
- Ability to merge team audits
- Automatic calculations, automated executive report, typing interview responses
- Navigation/dashboard, process flow
- Easy to use, ease of navigation, organizing information
- Never experienced issues
- Online but ability to print as needed
- Reduces time
- Action plan creation

Summary of Negative Comments:
- Issues related to operating system compatibility, not Apple friendly
- Audits take longer
- Too involved (requires computer skills), not user friendly
- Having to use computer for whole audit process, during interviews
- Lack of hard copies, needs better print options, control of font size, hard to manipulate format of report
- Not enough training, need more experience using the tool
- Entering information multiple times
- Issues attaching documents, PDF files
- SFI for all deficiencies instead of threshold
- QA times and revisions, increased QA revisions
- Lack of eCompliance helpdesk support
- Problems merging audit data
- Lack of functionality - unable to import photos/graphics, no thesaurus
- Navigation concerns
- Access – license keys are time sensitive, requirement for license keys and software download
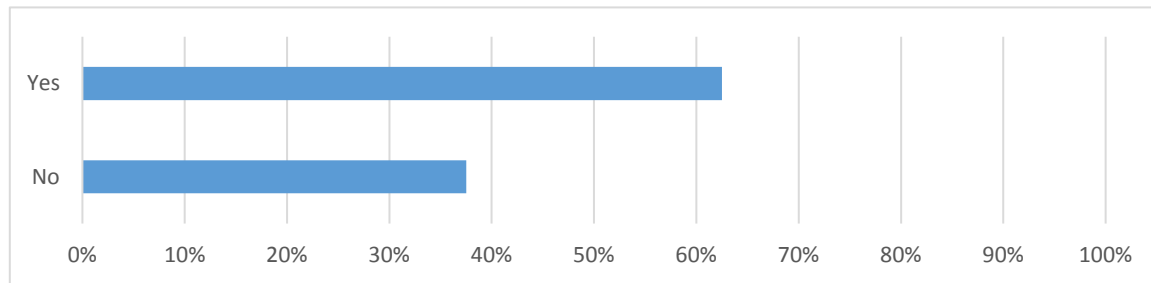- Cost

AMHSA Response: Generally the positive comments were received from consultant auditors with experience using the eCompliance tool with other Certifying Partners, and the negative responses were from peer auditors. There were many contradictory opinions between the two groups, whether it was user friendly or not, liking/disliking the interviews being done on a computer, liking the ability to merge audits vs finding the merging challenging, etc.

Larger employers who have multiple auditors also found value in merging data and the ability to obtain audit reports specific to various departments or business areas.

There were some comments about the actual audit tool itself (e.g., question details, validation methods), and its size and content, but these concerns are not related to whether the format is eCompliance or Excel. Audit content and standards are determined by Partnerships, however AMHSA does bring member concerns to Certifying Partner meetings.

Our tool has now changed to meet the 2016 Partnerships standard.

7. Would you like AMHSA to continue to offer the audit tool in the eCompliance format?

AMHSA response: We will be continuing to make our audit available in both eCompliance and Excel formats. This was announced in the April 12th email to auditors with the general survey results. Additional information regarding the eCompliance tool will be provided when available.

8. AMHSA is revising its courses to reflect the new audit standards. What changes would you recommend to improve the learning process?

Summary of Comments:
- Increase class time, add more hands on time
- Reduce time, keep to one day
- Content: Include the basics, theory, focus on new questions and functionality of new tool, include comparison of old tool content to new content, add more example scenarios to practice, include terminology, explanation of intent of questions
- Separate course for consultant auditors
- More clarity on what the quality assurance people are looking for, focus on QA revisions
- Better quality instructors, have instructor available for questions after training
- Online training
- Keep and improve access to learning tools, resources, online courses and support
- Train appropriate personnel to be auditors
- Teach students the art of auditing not just the mechanics of using the audit tool
- Establish mentoring of new auditors
- Written confirmation from a municipality that the Municipality supports the auditor, and that the municipality values PIR audits. Requirement for all municipalities to be in PIR, rather than contract out.
- Adopt a tool and offer it for years to come
- Include the ability to include "temporary worksite" as part of the audit
- No changes
- Make it free of charge
- Incorporate videos re: interviews and observations
- Less time on general PIR requirements
- Offer training more frequently
- Allow more time for exam

AMHSA response: Several responses were received suggesting a mentoring process or change to requirements for auditors conducting external audits. At this time AMHSA does not distinguish between internal and external auditors – all of our auditors are able to conduct any type of audit. We do not want to make it more challenging for municipalities to train peer auditors, or require them to keep different levels of qualified auditors on staff. For the same reason, we encourage municipalities to participate in the peer process, but allow them the option of hiring consultant auditors.

There was a response about not being informed of Standard changes and AMHSA's transition process. We endeavour to communicate all information as soon as possible through a variety of vehicles including AMHSA's quarterly newsletters, regular auditor updates, and through social media. All newsletters and updates are also available on our website.

- **Auditor Updates:**
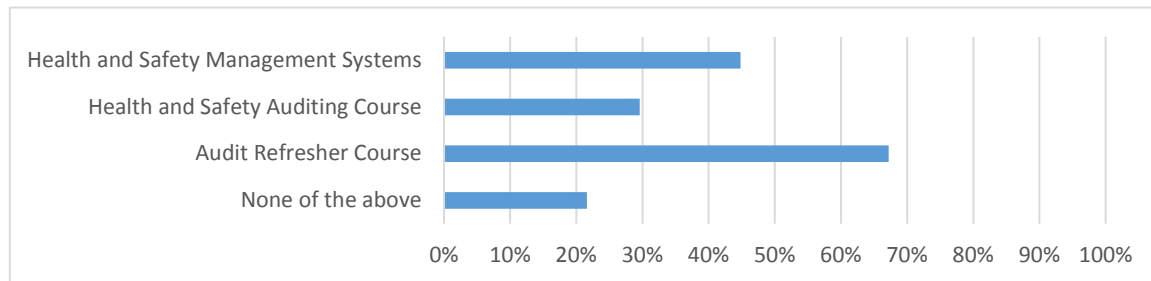 - June 2016 (Initial announcement)
    - Details and FAQ
  - August 2016
    - New audit instrument progress
  - October 2016
    - Audit instrument developed by CPs and approved by Partnerships
    - Comparison of standards
  - March 2017
    - Audit tool transition
  - April 2017
    - Preliminary survey results
  - May 2017
    - New training for Refresher, transition to new tool
  - June 2017
    - New audit tool available, information on upcoming HSMS and Auditing courses

- **Newsletter:**
  - Fall 2016
    - Audit instrument developed by CPs and approved by Partnerships
  - Spring 2017
    - New COR logo, auditor update
  - Summer 2017
    - Auditor Update, new training

There were comments related to the content of the tool and quality assurance – content is dictated by a provincial standard and AMHSA has since adopted the 2016 Partnerships audit tool which has an increased focus on elements 2 and 3. It should be noted that AMHSA quality assurance does not focus on grammar/sentence structure, but uses guidelines presented to auditors during training.

AMHSA is offering our revised courses in a variety of locations across the province and anticipate focusing on increased offerings of Audit Refresher during the transition to facilitate training of current auditors. As of July 31, 2017, more than 70 currently certified auditors have attended, or are registered to attend, the new Audit Refresher training.
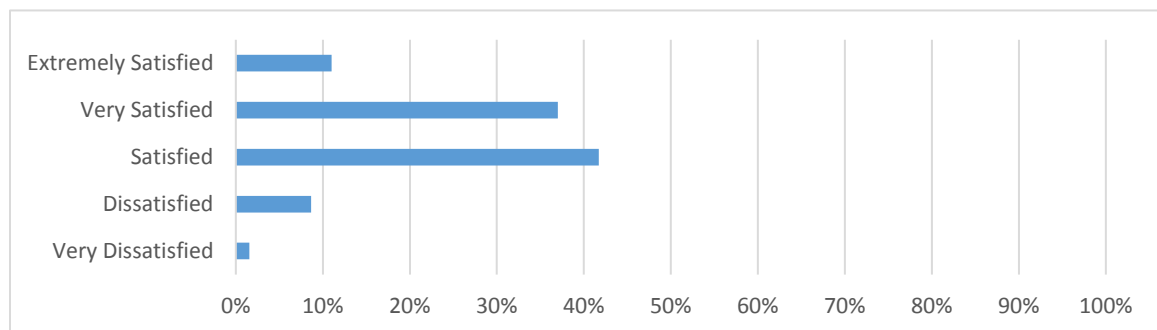
Our revised Audit Refresher training includes an optional second day of free hands-on training to help auditors gain more experience using the new tool and to allow them to spend more time with the instructor. We are also currently utilizing one instructor for all audit-related training. Our instructor has been involved in the development of the new Excel audit tool and updating of all of the course materials. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive on both the new course and instruction.

9. If possible, which courses would you like AMHSA to make available online?

AMHSA Response: While we understand the benefits of online training, particularly for more remote members, we are unable to offer Health and Safety Auditing, Health and Safety Management Systems, or Audit Refresher as online courses. Partnerships currently requires that audit-related training be conducted in-person and on-site in a classroom setting. AMHSA will continue to explore options for our members and will encourage Partnerships to do so as well.

10. To help us ensure we meet your expectations for quality customer service, how satisfied were you with the turn-around time for processing your last several audits?
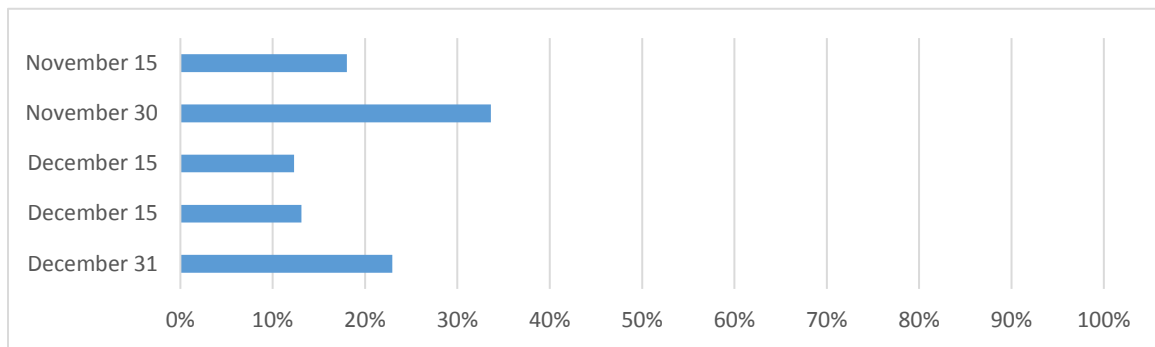

Summary of Comments:
- Took too long
- Was quick
- QA reviewers are helpful
- Set deadlines for review
- Professional
- Revisions are picky

AMHSA Response: We strive to meet the following QA timelines: 2 weeks for COR certification audits, and 6 weeks for COR maintenance and auditor qualification audits. Trends found in quality assurance are shared with auditors by email, reminders are sent about critical issues that require revisions, and reviewers are available to assist auditors throughout the province.

The goal of QA is to ensure consistent quality of audit reports – providing actionable suggestions for improvement and overview of program-level strengths in the executive report, and sufficient justification notes. Reviewers follow guidelines set by the provincial government and the Certifying Partner group. We are training all reviewers in the 2016 audit tool this fall and initial QAs will be reviewed for consistency. Report-writing hints for all AMHSA audit tools were distributed in the June 2017 Auditor Update.

11. What audit submission deadline would best meet your operational needs?

AMHSA Response: We have changed the submission deadline for all audits to December 1st. This was shared in the April 12, 2017 email that summarized survey results as well as the May 2017 Auditor Update.

12. Do you have any recommendations to help AMHSA ensure a smooth transition to the new audit standard?

Summary of Comments:
- Increase transition time, make tool available as soon as possible
- Communication - re: options, training, changes, QA requirements
- Options for training, offer frequently throughout province, quality training
- QA consistency, quick QA turnaround
- Opportunities for providing feedback, continue to make improvements
- Provide online resources and accessibility to support
- Development of more templates, explanation guide re: new questions
- Focus training on changes, impacts on HSMS
- AMHSA manages transition well
- Offer support for auditors using new tool
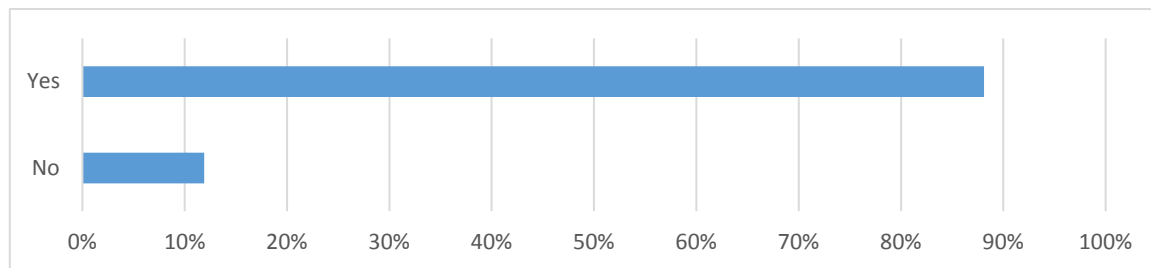- Take learning styles and computer knowledge into consideration

AMHSA Response: Several auditors noted that there was no communication about the new standards and our transition to new tools, however AMHSA's first communication about the changes was sent in June 2016, and included a detailed announcement and answers to frequently asked questions about the transition. Information has also been distributed via Auditor Updates, at member meetings (ACSC, NASC, and SASC), at AMHSA Board of Directors meetings, and via the quarterly newsletters. We encourage auditors to subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on Facebook for the most up to date auditing news.

One individual noted that municipalities using the new standard were failing their audits. We believe this is a misconception as there have been no audits conducted using the 2016 standard, and none were failed using the older standard in the eCompliance format. If a municipality is concerned that their safety program may not meet requirements, we encourage them to contact AMHSA's audit team.

We created several methods to obtain auditor feedback about our new tool's functionality including forming a group that performed testing on several early versions of the 2016 tool and surveying current Auditors regarding their needs. We launched the tool as soon as possible, and created a comparison chart and presentations about the new content for members. Our Audit Instructor has also been collecting feedback from students who have attended the new Audit Refresher training and we will be using that information for additional content and tool adjustments before the bulk of auditor training occurs in the fall. Students who have already attended training will receive the revised content when available and AMHSA thanks them for their excellent feedback and comments!

One respondent requested changing submission date to spring, but there is little support for this in the municipal sector. Individual municipalities are free to submit before the December deadline, but leaving the deadline later in the year provides flexibility for all involved.

13. Do you receive AMHSA's Auditor Update emails?

AMHSA response: Subscribe or email krystal@amhsa.net to sign up to Auditor Updates. All auditor updates are also available on our website – see Audit Tools and Resources. There were 4 emailed updates in 2016, 4 emailed updates to date in 2017, and another scheduled update for distribution before September.