

# YOUR OPINION MATTERS.

## Professional Development for SCOs

---



Alberta: a safe place to live, work, and play

The Safety Codes Council is proposing a professional development program for safety codes officers (SCOs) to support them in their occupation and enhance the safety codes system as a whole. After in-depth research and consultation with technical sub councils, we've worked hard to bring you this proposal and **we want your feedback.**

---

- ▶ The program presented in this information package is a proposal—it's not a 'done deal'. Your response is important and will help shape the final recommendations and program.

See the details of the proposed program inside, and share your thoughts about it by completing a short online survey at [safetycodes.ab.ca](http://safetycodes.ab.ca). This survey will be open until **August 29, 2014.**

**We are committed to keeping you informed.**

**A summary of this consultation will be posted on our website in the fall of 2014.**



## The Objective

The Council is proposing this program to enhance the ability of SCOs to fulfill their responsibilities under the *Safety Codes Act* in a competent and professional manner. Some specific objectives include:

- ▶ Enhancing SCOs' knowledge and skills
- ▶ Helping SCOs keep aware of current issues, trends, and practices
- ▶ Establishing a more consistent level of professional development amongst SCOs
- ▶ Aligning SCO certification requirements with those of other regulated occupations
- ▶ Supporting accredited organizations in delivering effective and efficient safety codes services

## The Proposed Program

The proposed program was developed by a working group made up of representatives of the nine technical disciplines governed by the *Safety Codes Act*. The working group considered input from technical sub councils and looked at other similar programs, such as those administered by ASET, AAA, and APEGA, to help them develop this proposal.

The working group designed this program to be flexible, relevant, and achievable. The program recognizes a broad range of learning activities to accommodate all technical disciplines under the Act, and it would allow SCOs to participate in training and activities that are appropriate to their needs and circumstances.

SCOs learn and hone their skills in a variety of ways, including on the job. That's why this program would recognize a wide array of activities and provide credit for working as an SCO. Each SCO would decide which professional development activities are best for themselves. In many cases, SCOs would earn points for things they already do, like mandatory code update training.

The proposed program for SCOs is based on a points system.

SCOs would have to obtain 30 points over a three year reporting period.

10 points per year is recommended but not mandatory.

# There are four categories of activities from which an SCO can earn points

## 1. FORMAL

## 2. INFORMAL

## 3. PARTICIPATION

## 4. PRACTICE

\* An SCO would have to obtain points from at least 2 of the formal, informal, and participation categories in each reporting period.

1 point = 1 hour spent doing one of the activities listed.

2 points = 2 hours  
3 points = 3 hours  
4 points = 4 hours  
5 points = 5 or more hours

### 1. FORMAL

Structured learning activities for which an SCO would provide evidence of attendance, assessment, or completion.

- ▶ **Courses**  
*5 points max per course*
- ▶ **Conferences**  
*5 points max per conference*
- ▶ **Webinars**  
*5 points max per webinar*
- ▶ **Workshops**  
*5 points max per workshop*
- ▶ **Seminars**  
*5 points max per seminar*
- ▶ **Lectures**  
*5 points max per lecture*

# 1

### 2. INFORMAL

Learning activities for which an SCO would not provide evidence of attendance, assessment, or completion.

- ▶ **Courses**  
*5 points max per course*
- ▶ **Conferences**  
*5 points max per conference*
- ▶ **Webinars**  
*5 points max per webinar*
- ▶ **Workshops**  
*5 points max per workshop*
- ▶ **Seminars**  
*5 points max per seminar*
- ▶ **Lectures**  
*5 points max per lecture*
- ▶ **Being mentored in a formal mentoring program**  
*5 points max per reporting period*
- ▶ **Trade shows**  
*5 points max per reporting period*
- ▶ **Self-study or research**  
*3 points max per reporting period*
- ▶ **Professional tours**  
*3 points max per reporting period*
- ▶ **Discussion groups**  
*3 points max per reporting period*
- ▶ **Public or community boards/associations**  
*2 points max per reporting period*

# 2

### 3. PARTICIPATION

Activities where an SCO participates in developing or spreading knowledge, standards, and practices relevant to the safety codes system.

- ▶ **Delivering presentations**  
*5 points max per presentation/lecture*
- ▶ **Teaching, facilitating, and course advising**  
*5 points max per course, seminar, or workshop*
- ▶ **Preparing course or presentation material**  
*5 points max per course, workshop, seminar, or presentation*
- ▶ **Membership on Council or a Council working group**  
*5 points max per Council or working group*
- ▶ **Involvement in a professional or industry association**  
*5 points max per association*
- ▶ **Involvement in code or standard committees**  
*5 points max per committee*
- ▶ **Being a mentor in a formal mentoring program**  
*5 points max per reporting period*
- ▶ **Professional writing**  
*5 points max per reporting period*

# 3

### 4. PRACTICE

Working as an SCO, as indicated by a designation of powers validated by an accredited organization.

- ▶ **Work as an SCO**  
*6 points max per reporting period*

1 point = 6 months working as an SCO

# 4

# Program Examples

See more examples at [www.safetycodes.ab.ca](http://www.safetycodes.ab.ca)

1 Safety Codes Officer A – Building SCO working for an urban municipality			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Part 9 code update training (5 points)</li> <li>▶ Being mentored in a formal program (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Part 3 code update training (5)</li> <li>▶ Council Conference (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Two hours staff supervision training (2)</li> <li>▶ Two hours at trade show (2)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	
12 POINTS	12 POINTS	6 POINTS	30 POINTS

2 Safety Codes Officer B – Fire SCO working for a rural municipality			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Three hour project management webinar (3)</li> <li>▶ AFCA Conference (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ One day AFC update training (5)</li> <li>▶ Five hours of reading technical journals (3)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Fire SCO Inspector course (5)</li> <li>▶ Facilitate three “lunch and learn” discussion groups with coworkers (3)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	
10 POINTS	10 POINTS	10 POINTS	30 POINTS

3 Safety Codes Officer C – Plumbing and Gas SCO working for an accredited agency			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Building SCO HVAC course (5)</li> <li>▶ Two hour “negotiating effectively” course (2)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Formal mentoring of a new SCO (5)</li> <li>▶ Four hour at-grade PSDS presentation (4)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ One day NPC update training (5)</li> <li>▶ AMOS Conference (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	
9 POINTS	11 POINTS	12 POINTS	32 POINTS

4 Safety Codes Officer D – Electrical SCO working for an accredited corporation			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Attending EIAA conference (5)</li> <li>▶ Serving on ECAA Chapter Executive (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Two hour organized tour of a new power generation facility (2)</li> <li>▶ Formal mentoring of a new SCO (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ One day attending trade show (5)</li> <li>▶ Two day high voltage training (5)</li> <li>▶ Practice (2)</li> </ul>	
12 POINTS	9 POINTS	12 POINTS	33 POINTS

## 1 How would SCOs benefit from having a professional development program?

Participation in a professional development program could benefit SCOs in many ways, including:

- ▶ helping SCOs maintain and enhance their knowledge of current practices, technologies, and trends in their respective discipline(s) and the safety codes system;
- ▶ supporting SCOs in their career development and in meeting performance or learning goals set by their employers; and
- ▶ enhancing the credibility and professionalism of the occupation by demonstrating a commitment to excellence, increasing individual accountability, and achieving greater consistency with other regulated occupations.

## 2 How would employers benefit from a professional development program for SCOs?

Accredited organizations would benefit because the program would enhance the skills, knowledge, and abilities of SCOs, which in turn would help accredited organizations deliver effective and efficient safety codes services under their quality management plans. It could also encourage participation in training provided by employers or support the performance and succession planning programs that many organizations already have in place.

## 3 Which SCOs would this program apply to?

All SCOs would need to meet the program requirements to maintain their certification(s), whether they're working as an SCO or not.

## 4 What types of activities would be eligible for credit under the proposed program?

The proposed program is designed to be flexible and recognize a broad range of activities and delivery methods. This would allow the program to accommodate differences in things like individual interests, learning styles, resources, and geographical location. General descriptions of eligible activities are listed in the program proposal.

To be eligible, activities should relate to one or more of the following:

- ▶ the technical discipline(s) in which an SCO is certified;
- ▶ long-term career growth and development;
- ▶ needs or interests of the SCO's employer or professional associations; and
- ▶ public safety or the safety codes system.

*For some specific examples of eligible activities, see the Examples in this information package.*

Practicing your occupation plays a significant role in maintaining and enhancing competency, so the proposed program would give points for actively working as an SCO. In addition, you would earn points for completing mandatory code update training.

## 5 Who decides which training and other activities I should obtain under the proposed program?

Each individual would be responsible for selecting relevant activities to support their own professional development and meet the program requirements.

The Council would encourage SCOs to discuss their professional development plans and goals with their employers, and to consider the requirements of other professional associations they may belong to. Many activities that are required or requested by an employer or professional association could also be used to meet the proposed program requirements.

**6 Could I ask the Council to evaluate an activity ahead of time to make sure it would be recognized?**

Yes. If you're unsure whether an activity would be recognized under the program, please ask Council staff. The Council would be able to evaluate activities not specifically recognized by the program and give points if appropriate.

**7 I live and work in a remote location. How would I be able to satisfy the requirements without having to spend a lot of time and money to travel to courses?**

The working group developed the proposed program to be accessible for SCOs working throughout Alberta. For example, the proposed program recognizes a broad range of professional development activities, including those that are delivered online or through distance learning. Safety codes officers could also receive credit for participating in learning activities delivered by their employers or by completing the mandatory update training that is required after Alberta adopts new codes and standards. The proposed program would also provide up to six points per reporting period for those who are actively working as SCOs, regardless of where in the province they're working.

**8 How do I track and report on my learning activities?**

Each individual would be responsible for tracking their activities. The Council would provide a template to help with tracking and reporting. At the end of a 3-year reporting period, SCOs would submit a report that shows the activities they took part in and how many points they earned for each activity. Unless an SCO is audited, he or she needs to submit supporting documents (such as a certificate of completion or confirmation of attendance) only for points earned in the Formal category.

**9 What if I have more than 30 points at the end of the reporting period?**

You can carry over a maximum of 5 points to the next reporting period.

**10 What could happen if an SCO did not satisfy the requirements of the proposed program?**

SCOs who didn't obtain the specified number of points in a reporting period would be subject to progressive corrective action, which could ultimately result in suspension of their certification(s). Before suspending a certification, the Council would take steps to work with individuals who didn't meet program requirements in order to achieve compliance. This process would be established in Council policy and communicated to all SCOs so that the process and expectations are clear.

*Exemptions could be provided in specific circumstances such as illness, disability, or parental leave. These exemptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would need to be supported by appropriate evidence.*

**11 How would the Council help safety codes officers understand and meet the program requirements?**

The Council would commit to helping SCOs understand and meet the program requirements. For example, the Council would provide tools to help SCOs track their activities and would let SCOs know about upcoming professional development activities that may be of interest. The Council could also provide or sponsor additional training opportunities through its annual conference and other venues.

More FAQs are answered on the Council's website at [safetycodes.ab.ca](http://safetycodes.ab.ca)

