Accreditation Application
Review and Approval Process Overview

For complete accreditation information, please reference the OCal regulations commencing with section 10400. Registration will be issued concurrently with accreditation and must be renewed by January 2 each year.

Completeness Verification

The Department will review accreditation applications to ensure that all required information is included in the application and attachments. The applicant will then be notified that the application is complete and has been accepted for further review, or, if the application is incomplete, the Department will provide the reasons for incompleteness and the date by which the missing information must be submitted (30 calendar days from the date of notification). Instructions for payment of the accreditation application fee will be included in this notification.

Desk Audit

Once the application has been accepted, the Department will conduct the documentation adequacy review, or "desk audit," to determine the applicant's ability to comply with the OCal regulations. During this review, staff will evaluate the applicant's certification policies, procedures, and personnel qualifications and experience. OCal staff may contact the applicant if more information is needed to evaluate their ability to comply.

Desk Audit Report

When the desk audit is complete, the Department will issue an audit report to the applicant detailing its findings. Initial accreditation will be issued if the findings indicate the applicant is able to comply with the OCal regulations. Continued accreditation for the duration of the five-year accreditation period will depend upon the results of onsite certification reviews, conducted throughout the accreditation period, that will evaluate the certifying agent's compliance with the OCal regulations.

On-Site Certification Reviews

The Department will assess the certifier's compliance with the OCal regulations through onsite reviews of certification activities. The onsite reviews will include witness audits, a review audit, and a certification file review.

Witness Audits

During the witness inspection audit, a staff member will accompany an inspector on an inspection of a certified operation. This audit will assess the inspector's ability to determine if the operation's OCal System Plan (OSP) reflects the operation's practices and the operation's compliance with OCal regulations.

Review Audit

During the review audit, Department staff will assess the compliance of the applicant's certification program and oversite of certified operations. Department staff will interview an operation's representatives, review inspection reports, and investigate implemented corrective actions based on previous noncompliances.

Certification File Review

The certification file review will consist of a review of documents related to certification and oversite of certified operations. Documents to be reviewed will include inspection reports, certification decision making reports, certificates, evaluations, updated OSPs, corrective action implementation, and label approvals.

Noncompliances

Notices of noncompliance may be issued to a certifier based upon the results of the onsite reviews. The notice of noncompliance will request that proposed corrective actions be submitted by a specified date. After the proposal is approved, OCal will verify that corrective action has been taken within a reasonable timeframe. Failure to respond to a notice of noncompliance or take timely corrective action may result in suspension or revocation of accreditation or delay or denial of annual registration.

Accreditation Renewal

Accreditation must be renewed every five years. The renewal process begins six months to a year prior to accreditation expiration so the results of the desk review and all onsite audits are completed, compiled, and evaluated prior to issuing the renewal. Detailed renewal information will be posted on the OCal website. In the meantime, more information can be found in the OCal regulations (posted on the website).