



# **Guide for Alberta's Blaster's Certification Program**

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Guide for Alberta's Blaster's Certificate Program | Jobs, Economy and Trade  
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# Glossary

Explosive	A chemical compound or mixture that by fire, friction, impact, percussion or detonation, may cause a sudden release of gases at a pressure capable of producing destructive effects to adjacent objects or of killing or injuring a person.
Director	Person appointed as a Director under section 26 of the <i>Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act</i> .
Blaster	A worker who holds a valid blaster's certificate issued under section 468.1 of the Occupational Health and Safety Code or deemed to have been issued under the Act by virtue of section 69(2) of the OHS Act.
OHS Act	OHS Act, SA 2020 cO-2.2.
Program	Alberta's Blaster's Certification Program
Blaster's Certificate	Blaster's Certificate is a licence defined under section 1(w) of the <i>OHS Act</i> .
Mine	A working, other than a drill hole made while exploring for a mineral, from which coal, precious or semi-precious minerals, sand, gravel, industrial minerals or oil sands is being extracted, and includes a quarry and a pit.
Mine site	A location at which a facility for extracting a mineral by underground, strip, pit or quarry operations exists or is to be developed, and includes (i) a mineral processing plant, storage facility or discard disposal facility that exists or is to be developed in connection with a mine, and (ii) all connected access roads.

# 1.0 Introduction and authority

This Guide outlines the parameters of Alberta's Blaster Certification Program (the Program). This Guide may be updated periodically by the Department to ensure the Program remains current.

Part 33 of the OHS Code places an obligation on the employer and blaster to ensure that a worker who uses, handles, prepares, loads, fires, burns or destroys an explosive or detonator is a blaster, or works under the direct supervision of a blaster. This Guide explains how blasting certificates (OHS certificates) are issued, and the role of the Government of Alberta within the process.

## 2.0 Scope of program

This Program applies to the certification of blasters in Alberta and any person wanting to obtain this certification. The Program outlines the certificate qualifications, application process, examination, expiry, suspension, cancellation requirements and the terms and conditions of the certificates.

### 2.1 Application Process

#### **Submit Online**

[Apply online for an OHS Certificate](#) through the secure portal.

#### **Submit through Email**

Go to [OHS website](#) and complete the application form. Submit application form and all required documents to: [JET.OHSBlasting@gov.ab.ca](mailto:JET.OHSBlasting@gov.ab.ca)

### 2.2 Application Review

#### **In province applicants**

After submitting a complete application supported by all required documents using the online portal, a system generated acknowledgement is sent to the applicant (see Appendix A). Applications submitted through other methods are acknowledged within three business days.

After receiving an application, a Director will process the application following an internal review process. A Director may contact applicants if further information or clarification is needed.

A Director will communicate the decision of the internal review to applicants within 20 business days. If applicants are approved, they will be invited to write the applicable exam(s). Upon successful completion of the exam(s) a certificate and identification card will be issued to the applicant.

If the application is denied, the applicant will receive a written response from a Director detailing the reasons for refusal including directions on when the applicant can reapply.

#### **Out of province applicants with certification in another jurisdiction**

After submitting a complete application supported by all required documents using the online portal, a system generated acknowledgement is sent to the applicant (see Appendix A). Applications submitted through other methods are acknowledged within three business days. A Director will review the application, validate the information with the authority in the issuing jurisdiction and will make a decision within 20 business days after receiving the application. A Director may contact the applicants if further information or clarification is needed.

Applicants will be required to write a legislative based exam as part of the approval process. Upon successful completion of the exam a certificate and identification card will be issued to the applicant.

If the OHS certification is denied for out of province applicants, the applicant will receive a written response from a Director detailing the reasons for refusal and their right to have the decision reviewed.

## 2.3 Required Documentation

All applicants must provide the following, along with documentation listed in appendix A.

- Copy of government issued photo ID
- Copy of one of the following:
  - an approval Letter that has been issued by the Chief Inspector of Explosives, Natural Resources Canada Natural Resources Canada (NRC).
  - a permis général issued under Quebec's An Act respecting explosives, as amended from time to time;
  - a FAST card (free and secure trade card) issued by the Canada Border Services Agency;
  - a NEXUS card issued by the Canada Border Services Agency;
  - a Firearms Possession and Acquisition Licence issued under the Firearms Act.
- A photo of your current appearance (Jpeg/png format)
  - The photo will be used for your certificate
  - Photo must contain the applicants head and shoulders and with a plain/white background.

## 2.4 Expiry of the Certificate

Typically, an OHS certificate is valid for five years from the date of issue. However, a Director may issue a certificate for a shorter period depending on the circumstances and/or if requested by the applicant.

## 2.5 Examinations

Applicants must pass an examination if applicable, in addition to the qualification requirements. The exam will contain relevant legislation questions. A minimum of 70% must be achieved in order to pass the exam.

Before attempting to complete the examination, all applicants will be required to provide a statement that the applicant has read the *Code of Conduct for Applicants Completing Occupational Health and Safety Code Certificate Examinations* (the "Code of Conduct") and will comply with the Code of Conduct (see Appendix C).

Upon completing the examination, all applicants will be required to provide a statement that the applicant has complied with the Code of Conduct

If the applicant does not successfully pass the examination, they can rewrite the exam following the elapsed timeframe as outline in the table below.

<b>Blasting Re-exam</b>	<b>Re-exam Wait Time</b>
2nd Attempt	48 hours
3rd Attempt	30 days
4th and Subsequent Attempts	90 days

## 2.7 Suspension and Cancellation

A Director, by notice in writing, may cancel an OHS certificate or suspend it for the period specified in the notice if;

- (a) the certificate holder has failed to comply with a term or condition of the certificate, or
- (b) for any other reason that, in the opinion of a Director, warrants the cancellation or suspension of the certificate.

When a Director suspends a certificate, the Director may impose any terms and conditions that the Director considers necessary. These terms and conditions must be complied with or performed before the suspension may be lifted.

A person whose OHS certificate has been suspended or cancelled must surrender the certificate immediately to an officer on request.

## 2.8 Blaster's Requirements, Terms and Conditions

1. Pursuant to your application, an Alberta blaster's certificate is issued that allows you to use, handle, prepare, load, fire, burn or destroy explosives and detonators during the type of blasting operations specified in this certificate.
2. The Director may restrict the type of blasting activities a blaster is permitted to perform.
3. You are required to carry the certificate identification card on your person at all times when engaged in blasting activities.
4. The Director issues blaster's certificates under the authority derived from Section 24 of the *OHS Act* and subsequent provisions detailed in the OHS Code. As a blaster's certificate holder, you must comply with Part 33 of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code and relevant sections of *OHS Act* and Regulation in Alberta.
5. Any other term or condition the Director deems necessary to protect the health and safety of workers or other persons at the work site, and in the vicinity of the work site.
6. The blaster consents to the disclosure of any information contained upon the blaster's certificate to their employer or a prospective employer.

# Appendix A: Qualifications for a blaster

In Alberta, blaster's certificates are issued in several categories such as avalanche control, beaver dam, seismic, oilwell perforating, surface and underground blasting etc. These certificates can be divided into two categories:

1. Category (A)
  1. Avalanche Control
  2. Beaver dam
  3. High energy joining
  4. Surface blasting
  5. Seismic blasting
  6. Oil/gas well perforating
  7. Other
2. Category (B)
  1. Surface mine blaster
  2. Underground mine blaster

In order for individuals to become a blaster in Alberta, they need to meet certain qualifications to apply for a required blaster's certificate. This appendix outlines blaster's qualifications for different categories of blaster's certificates. Limitations will be noted in the terms and conditions of the blaster's certificates.

## A1.0 Category (A) qualification requirements

A Director determines the qualification of an applicant for a certificate based on **at least one** of the following qualifications:

### 1. A training course completed from a service provider

An applicant must have completed a training course relevant to the type of blasting activity. Applicants must apply for a provincial blaster's certificate within 90 days following the successful course completion. In exceptional circumstances, a Director may extend the time period between training and applying for a blaster's certificate. The Director has the discretion to determine the suitability of the training course taken by the applicant and require the applicant to undergo additional training

### 2. Qualifications acceptable to the Director

Examples of qualifications acceptable to the Director may be proof of explosive training from:

- military and RCMP in Canada
- regulators in countries other than Canada
- combination of education, training, and experience in the field of explosives

### 3. Suitable experience

An applicant must have at least six months of experience within the previous 36 months within a specific subcategory, in using, handling, preparing, loading, firing, burning or destroying explosives or detonators under the direct supervision of a blaster. The applicant will have to provide their logbook signed by the supervisor showing the record of the blasts. Both the blasting supervisor and the employer of the applicant are required to endorse the applicant's competency. .

### 4. Out of province

An applicant must provide a copy of current and comparable blaster certificate from the other Canadian jurisdiction.



## **A2.0 Category (B) qualification requirements**

Applicants applying for a category (B) certificate **must** provide an updated resume.

A Director determines the qualification of an applicant for a certificate based on the following criteria:

### 1) For in province applicants

For a surface mine blaster

- a. have at least 3 years' experience in surface mining, as approved by the Director
- b. an applicant must have completed training under the supervision of a blaster with a surface mine designation
- c. the surface mine blaster who provided the supervision under (b) must issue a letter to verify that the applicant has received adequate instruction and training in surface mine blasting

For an underground mine blaster

- a. have at least 3 years' experience in underground mining, as approved by the Director
- b. an applicant must have completed training under the supervision of a blaster with an underground mine designation
- c. the underground mine blaster who provided the supervision under (b) must issue a letter to verify that the applicant has received adequate instruction and training in underground mine blasting

### 2) For Out of province applicants

In addition to the above in province criteria, an out of province applicant must provide a copy of their current and comparable certificate from another Canadian jurisdiction.

# Appendix B: Blaster's Identification Card

## Front of card

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## Blaster's Identification Card

**Name:** First name Last name

**Certificate #** OHS-####-####

**Category:** Type of Blasting

**Expiry Date:** 13/Apr/2028

**Director, Occupational Health and Safety:** \_\_\_\_\_

Insert Photo Here

## Back of card

1. The certificate holder can use, handle, prepare, load, fire, burns or destroy an explosive or detonator during the operations specified on this permit.
2. The certificate holder must carry this card at all times when engaged in blasting operations.
3. The certificate is valid for the specified blasting operations only.
5. This identification card is the property of the Government of Alberta and must be returned if suspended, cancelled or upon expiration.

## BLASTER'S CERTIFICATE

Blasting Certificate No.:

Blaster's Name:

Date issued:

Type of Blasting Operation:

Expiry Date: **MM/DD/YYYY**

This blaster's certificate is issued under the authority of section 24 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to \_\_\_\_\_ (the "blaster"). The blaster is authorized to use, handle, prepare, load, fire, burn or destroy explosives or detonators during the type of blasting activities and subject to the terms and conditions specified in this blaster's certificate.

The blaster must comply with Part 33 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Code* and any relevant sections of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*, and *Occupational Health and Safety Code* in Alberta.

### Terms and Conditions

1. The blaster is authorized to use, handle, prepare, load, fire or destroy explosives and detonators during the following blasting activities:

#### Non-Mining

- a. Avalanche Control
- b. Beaver dam
- c. High energy joining
- d. Surface blasting
- e. Seismic blasting
- f. Oil/gas well perforating
- g. Other (specified other blasting activity)

#### Mining

- h. Surface mine blasting
  - i. Underground mine blasting
2. The blaster must carry their blaster's certificate identification card on their person at all times when engaged in blasting activities.
  3. (insert any other term and condition).

The blaster acknowledges that the director may disclosure any information contained in this blaster's certificate to the blaster's employer or a prospective employer.

This blaster's certificate expires on \_\_\_\_\_

(insert name of issuing director)

(signature optional)

Director, Occupational Health and Safety

# Appendix C: Code of Conduct

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR APPLICANTS COMPLETING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS (the “Code of Conduct”)

Occupational Health and Safety is committed to ensuring that applicants for blaster’s certificates, underground mine foreman certificates, and underground mine manager certificates do not engage in any form of dishonesty and conduct themselves in a trustworthy manner while completing all requirements of the application process, including any examination.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to comply with this Code of Conduct.

Prior to attempting the examination, all applicants will be required to provide a statement that the applicant will comply with this Code of Conduct.

Upon completing the examination, all applicants will be required to provide a statement that the applicant has complied with this Code of Conduct.

The applicant’s statement is a statement given to an Occupational Health and Safety Officer (OHS Officer) for the purpose of determining compliance with the certification requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Code*. If an applicant were to provide false or misleading information to an OHS Officer, the applicant may be subject to administrative penalties or prosecution under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* as well as the cancellation of any issued certificate.

### 1. Definitions:

“unauthorized source” means any source of information other than that which is expressly permitted to be used by the applicant while completing an examination.

“unauthorized material” means any material other than that which is expressly permitted to be used by the applicant while completing an examination.

“applicant” means a person who has applied to obtain a blaster’s certificate, an underground mine foreman certificate, or an underground mine manager certificate.

“blaster’s certificate” means a certificate issued under s.468.1(1) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Code*.

“examination” means an examination required under clause 2.5 of the *Guide for Alberta’s Blaster’s Certification Program* or clause 2.5 of the *Guide for Alberta’s Underground Mine Foreman and Underground Mine Manager Certification Program*

“examination materials” means any question or answer to a past, present, or future examination.

“underground mine foreman certificate” means a certificate issued under section 749.4 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Code*.

“underground mine manager certificate” means a certificate issued under section 749.4 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Code*.

### 2. Inappropriate Behaviour While Completing an Examination

2.1 No applicant shall, while completing an examination, obtain or attempt to obtain information or assistance from another person or an unauthorized source.

2.2 No applicant shall use, attempt to use, or possess any unauthorized material while completing an examination or preparing to complete an examination.

2.3 No applicant shall have another person represent or attempt to represent themselves as the applicant for the purposes of completing an examination.

### **3 Misuse of Examination Materials**

3.1 No applicant shall obtain, distribute, or use examination materials other than for a purpose that is expressly authorized.

3.2 No applicant shall make a record of, or otherwise retain in written or electronic format, the examination materials contained within the applicant's examination.

### **4. Providing Assistance**

4.1 No applicant shall aid another person in committing a contravention of this Code of Conduct.

### **5. Obtaining an Advantage**

5.1 No applicant shall provide or attempt to provide a monetary or other benefit to a person for the purpose of obtaining or attempting to obtain information or a particular outcome in relation to an examination.