

A Guide to Conducting a Voluntary Internal Audit

Your business's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) address "how you operate and deliver AAHS."

The NSC industry sector standard addresses the question of "what does a business require to operate and deliver AAHS?"

Voluntary National Standard of Canada (NSC)
CAN/HRSO - 500.01 - 2023 - A.1
DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR
ANIMAL-ASSISTED HUMAN SERVICES (AAHS)
To download the NSC, please click here.

Start Here

To begin a Self-Assessment, you can download and review the NSC to get familiar with its content and context. Next, you can insert or list the business's corresponding Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) into **the downloadable worksheet**, including policies, procedures, video links, photos, and a certificate of insurance.

Depending on the size of your business, not all sections will be relevant. Write a brief explanation for any missing requirements. These sections can be revisited later if necessary. This activity is meant to assess whether your business meets the NSC requirements (technical) and where there may be a need to address gaps.

Tip: "Shall" vs "Should": In this NSC, "shall" indicates that the requirement is mandatory and is supported by normative references, whereas "should" indicates that the requirement is recommended, or a best practice statement.

4. Technical Requirements - Example

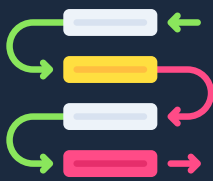


4.1.1 Mission and Vision

The Mandate shall describe the Animal-Assisted Human Services Provider (AAHSP) Mission and Vision, including, but not limited to:

- (a) who the AAHSP is;
- (b) purpose or aim of the AAHSP;
- (c) the type(s) of service(s) provided;
- (d) to whom the service(s) is provided; and
- (e) aspirations of the AAHSP.

Informative & Normative Documents



The NSC references informative and normative documents. The difference between the referenced sources is that the informative documents do not include provisions for 'shall' or 'should' statements. Still, they are referenced because they informed the development of the NSC and inform users of the NSC.

Normative documents, on the other hand, do make provision for shall or should statements within the context of the NSC's requirements (technical).



Words Matter

A subsequent infographic will break down some of the words that are used interchangeably within the industry sector, even though they are non-synonymous and often cause confusion. A few examples include terms such as standards, accreditation, certification, registration, certified, benchmarks, and best practices.

Descriptive vs Prescriptive



The NSC **does not replace service providers' Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**. To conduct a self-assessment, use your SOPs to determine whether your business meets or exceeds the NSC's **descriptive requirements**. If the SOPs do not meet the NSC requirements, note and discuss the gaps with your colleagues or members to determine the next steps, if necessary. A third-party assessment would follow a similar process; however, once all the requirements are met, third-party certification and registration would distinguish your business from uncertified and unregistered AAHS businesses, thereby enhancing its credibility.

SOPs & An NSC Summation



SOPs are a tailored business outline of **how** service providers operate and deliver AAHS. The NSC answers the question, "What is required to operate and deliver AAHS?"

The NSC aligns with Canada's National Standards System (NSS) while promoting a voluntary, third-party AAHS conformity assessment program to foster a nationwide credibility chain.

The NSC established measurable, essential, and descriptive national benchmarks (technical requirements) to improve public safety, support the well-being of Canadians, and safeguard the welfare of Human-Services Assistance Animals (HSAA).



The Canadian Foundation
for Animal Assisted Support Services

HOW TO CONTACT US: [COMMUNITY\(AT\)CF4AASS.ORG](mailto:COMMUNITY(AT)CF4AASS.ORG)

COPYRIGHT © 2025 THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR ANIMAL-ASSISTED SUPPORT SERVICES (CF4AASS). ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.