

Synergy Projects Ltd.: Celebrating 20 Years of COR™ with Alcumus eCompliance

With numerous projects spanning across Western Canada, Synergy Projects Ltd. is dedicated to delivering the very best in construction.



Building everything from office and retail buildings, senior housing, healthcare facilities, and schools, completing renovations, handling interior tenant improvements, and much more, Synergy Projects is committed to bringing dreams to life and making an impact wherever they go.

Based in Edmonton, Alberta, Synergy Projects is made up of a close-knit team with diverse experience. Not only are they masters of building various projects, but they are masters of building strong relationships with clients and team members, lasting a lifetime. With everyone treated like family, it comes as no surprise safety is a top priority and a core value.

Excelling safety expectations in all facets, we are honored to announce Synergy Projects is celebrating 20 years of COR™! We had the opportunity to speak with Synergy Projects' Safety Manager and certified Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA) COR auditor, Ian McDonnell, who shared how Alcumus eCompliance played a pivotal role in helping the organization maintain their Certificate of Recognition for so many years.

The Use of Alcumus eCompliance's COR™ Program as a Guide

With Alcumus eCompliance's built-in COR Program, Ian and his team were able to stay on top of all required fields and documents, as this element of the software was designed to help simplify the COR process. With Alcumus eCompliance as a tool to help guide the team along their journey, maintaining COR year after year was streamlined to perfection!

"Alcumus eCompliance is based on the COR program," Ian told us. "It was one of the few online systems I could find that was not OSHA-based, American-based, or was

not an add on to a construction management system as a single module. It was centered around safety and the COR program, fitting perfectly into covering all aspects we needed to maintain COR. It was great!"

The COR Program, found within the Alcumus eCompliance system, shows all the standards needed to be met to achieve and maintain compliance. Broken down into standards and individual sections, Alcumus eCompliance provides the guidelines and requirements needed for each and every element.

The software also provides you with detailed information about every standard and substandard, pulled from a governing body, to offer more clarity. These sections are constantly updated in the system, whenever there are any changes announced by the IHSA.

Instructions on how to create the necessary documents along with examples, in addition to the ability to upload the necessary links to documents directly into the system, make achieving and maintaining COR a breeze.

"If you're implementing Alcumus eCompliance, it already has the COR program laid out, so what you really need to do is look at the standard in the system and make sure you're hitting all those items," Ian told us.

"If you're hitting all those items, then you're in a position to achieve that standard and COR. You simply need to have the twelve months of records you can show the auditor. On the maintenance side of things, it's also way easier because it allows you to step back and make tangible improvements. When you can look at everything in one spot, you can see areas of improvement you need to focus on and what you can do about it."

The Epitome of Organization with a Safety Management Solution

The journey to achieve and maintain COR involves having at least a year's worth of data and multiple records to prove compliance, as Ian mentioned above. Having the ability to easily manage and access several year's worth of documents is key. With the help of Alcumus eCompliance, Ian and his team were able to digitize and centralize all data in one easily accessible location.

"If safety is difficult, it's never super efficient, especially if you have to go through boxes and boxes of paper forms and a storage room full of stuff for audits," Ian shared.

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The organization of documentation in Alcumus eCompliance was exactly the way any COR program would work. This was one of the huge advantages of going digital.

Ian McDonnell, Safety Manager

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With an extensive safety program of around 12,000 documents, Synergy Projects was having an extremely difficult time organizing and managing all this paperwork. It was so difficult that team members started to get pulled away from their responsibilities, as they were drowning in administrative tasks. When it came time for an audit, it's no surprise it was also extremely challenging for Ian and his team to pull all the documents needed for the auditor. Ian knew there had to be a better way.

"I was responsible for maintaining all the records and making sure the COR audits went off well," Ian shared. "I saw the industry trends going digital, so I put together the proposal for Alcumus eCompliance to the leadership group with the cost benefit analysis to show what we're spending telling our superintendents to scan this and file this, etc."

"I explained the documentation control, the worker involvement and how it would give more access to

safety documentation to lower levels, and the efficiencies that could be easily gained with a digital platform. I showed them how Alcumus eCompliance paid for itself if we take away all this administration."

Now, Synergy Projects has all of their documents and data stored in the Alcumus eCompliance platform, easily accessible for all team members from the front-line workforce to boardroom executives.

The cost benefit analysis, which Ian mentioned earlier, showed Alcumus eCompliance could help Synergy Projects **save over 50% administrative time**, which it certainly has. "The cost value to moving over to a digital system was there. We've grown and the ability to efficiently manage our safety program is a benefit financially and we can now adapt way quicker."

Virtual Access to External Auditors

Before implementing Alcumus eCompliance, auditors would spend a full day or two at the office looking through all the record rooms and documents. "We've been COR certified for a long time," Ian told us. "It was actually less of a challenge to go through COR with Alcumus eCompliance than ever before!"

With this cloud-based safety software solution, Ian can easily grant virtual access to external auditors, giving them a complete view into Synergy Projects' safety program digitally. "It saves so much time and explanation," Ian shared. "The documentation review is way quicker. We just send them the link to Alcumus eCompliance and 80% of it is done. Everything we need to provide them is sitting there, rather than sifting through boxes."

With the rise of the pandemic, this has become essential as Alcumus eCompliance has helped to mitigate risks, as auditors no longer need to come on-site. Touchpoints are also reduced, as everything is accessible to them through our cloud-based system.

"In the days of COVID, it's really good," Ian told us. "The documentation-only audit that we had to go through this last year was very easy because everything was right there at the fingertips of the auditor to look at."

"Before it would have been me spending at least a whole day showing them the documents. In Alcumus eCompliance, even if they have questions, it is a matter of an email and I can send them a link with the document they're looking for."

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Being able to search through the database instead of physically searching through a file folder, is an enormous advantage.

Ian McDonnell, Safety Manager

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Because Alcumus eCompliance is designed according to the COR module, it is also extremely intuitive, allowing auditors to easily find what they may be looking for. After achieving COR, as COR is a three-year cycle, internal audits must be conducted the first two years by internal members, such as Ian to make sure they are still compliant, and in the third year it's done by an external auditor.

With Alcumus eCompliance, maintaining COR is a much simpler process. "I'm intimately involved in the system, so when I'm doing an internal audit, in the system you can easily find the reports for this item they're asking about in the COR audit," Ian told us.

"It really makes it easier to find the statistics and numbers you need to maintain COR, as part of every year's audit, because it's right there in front of you. Counting one thing instead of 14 things is way easier. I can get an answer in 5 minutes where it would take me hours to go through a year's worth of consolidation reports. This ease of access to information made it very much easier."

A Means of Continuous Improvement and Growth

In addition to streamlining the COR journey, Alcumus eCompliance has also provided Ian and his team with a means of continuous improvement and growth. With the ability to look at all aspects of their safety program, within one location, it has made identifying gaps and pinpointing areas where they can improve, simple.

"On the quality control side of things, just from submitting an incident report where you can embed photos...the picture says 1,000 words," Ian shared. "To be able to see what exactly happened was a big advantage to us, as well as the immediate notice."

"Project managers are immediately notified, and you don't have to wait for a call or separate email to be done afterwards. Having notification emails was a huge benefit for us to identify what we consider a high priority item."

With access to such information in real-time, Ian and his team are able to immediately mitigate risks by assigning action items, keeping all workers safe. "We never had an action item process," says Ian. "The follow up on action items to show how we fixed the problem, the time we did it, who did it, etc. is all tracked."

With complete insight into the system, Ian is able to stay on top of all team members to ensure everyone is following through. "With the tracking of reporting requirements, I can also go into the system and see who has submitted and follow up," Ian added.

"Before I would have to notice it wasn't coming through the monthly procedure we had in place. The sign-off as well from the project managers, is now all tracked. Even the oversight by our management group has been way more efficient and they have access to all the reports they need to do their safety checks for their projects."

"The auditor as well can see where all the project managers have signed off, whereas you can't see that trail in the system with paper." With everything digitally documented, auditors can easily see the journey of how Synergy Projects continuously enhances their processes and procedures.

"It allows us more immediate tracking if they're doing reporting as per requirements. It's evident right away. Rather than collecting it and it being more of a monthly process, we've actually moved it down to a more of a weekly process, where I can see who hasn't done what," Ian shared.

With more information at their fingertips, team members at Synergy Projects are more engaged and empowered. It has also sparked more conversations about how to efficiently mitigate risks among the workforce as everyone has a snapshot into the system to easily identify areas they may have missed.

This information has been so helpful that Synergy Projects' incident rating has **gone down by 51% , year over year, and they have completed 977 inspections this year for a total of 4509 inspections in eCompliance!** "The system has allowed us to focus more time on making sure we're doing quality incident reporting and it's made incident reporting easier," Ian told us.



"We would get more incident reports when we started implementing Alcumus eCompliance than we did before, because it was easier to submit because it was digital. This was good because it allowed us to track trends. The other advantage is because it reduces administrative time, it allows the supervisors to spend more time being a supervisor and looking at what workers are doing."

"It's also allowed me to have more time to have oversight on projects because I'm not bogged down with administration. The management oversight has increased because it has allowed management to have more time to focus on other aspects of the program and improve those. It helps us get ahead of things, for sure."

The Bottom Line is...

Alcumus eCompliance has helped simplify Synergy Projects' workflow and has made maintaining COR much easier. "Without this kind of system, I don't think we'd be able to manage as well as we do," Ian

told us. "It allows me to improve on the quality of what we're doing rather than keeping my head above water. We're way more efficient on the safety side, and we have proof that we're being more efficient and proactive."

With complete transparency into their safety program, Synergy Projects has been able to exceed safety expectations year after year, allowing them to celebrate 20 years of maintaining COR!

As true safety champions, we are proud to call this organization an Alcumus eCompliance customer and leaders in EHS within the construction industry.

Learn how to achieve safety and COR success today – [watch our 5-minute demo](#) and speak to one of our safety experts.