



BULLETIN # 03-2021

March 05, 2021

Ontario 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification

4R Certification is a voluntary program designed that allows agri-retailers in Ontario to align their business practices with the sustainability principles of 4R Nutrient Stewardship, as verified by 37 auditable standards. In co-operation with the 4R Ontario Steering Committee, Fertilizer Canada launched the 4R Certification program in Ontario in 2018 and has successfully completed over 39 pre-audits with agri-retail facilities. To date, 23 of these facilities have achieved 4R certification status by completing all of the audit requirements, as verified by a third-party audit.

To ensure consistent interpretation, this technical bulletin intends to provide clarification on the following recent updates in version 2.0 of the 4R Certification manual:

1. The start of compliance cycle 2 as of January 1, 2021;
2. Introduction of the Hybrid method for compliance;
3. Introduction of recommendation only Nutrient Service Providers (i.e. Independent Crop Consultants); and
4. Revision to Compliancy Cycle 2 Percentages R6 & R7

The Start of Compliance Cycle 2

2021 marks the start of the compliance cycle 2 in the 4R Standards Manual. The move into cycle 2 represents an increase in compliancy percentages for the following standards:

- Standard R2 changes from 50% - 100%
- Standard R6 changes from 25% - 75%
- Standard R7 changes from 25% - 75%
- Standard R9 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard A1 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard A4 changes from 75% - 100%
- Standard A8 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard A9 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard D3 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard D5 changes from 50% - 75%



- Standard D6 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard D7 changes from 50% - 75% (need a CCA on site)
- Standard D8 changes from 50% - 75%
- Standard D9 changes from 50% - 75%

Introduction of the Hybrid method for Compliance

The Hybrid method for compliance aims to balance successful uptake of the program by Nutrient Service Providers who are new to the program with ongoing, incremental improvement of the program standards. The Hybrid Model offers Nutrient Service Providers that are new to the 4R Certification program the opportunity to enter the program at the first compliance cycle but requires a re-audit the following year at the current compliance cycle (Cycle 2 in 2021/2022 and Cycle 3 in 2023/2024). If Nutrient Service Providers select to be audited based on the current cycle with the traditional method, they will be required to re-audit according to the standard two-year cycle audit requirements. (See Figure 1).

Please note, the Hybrid Method for compliance is only available for sites who have not been through a full-audit in the 4R certification program.

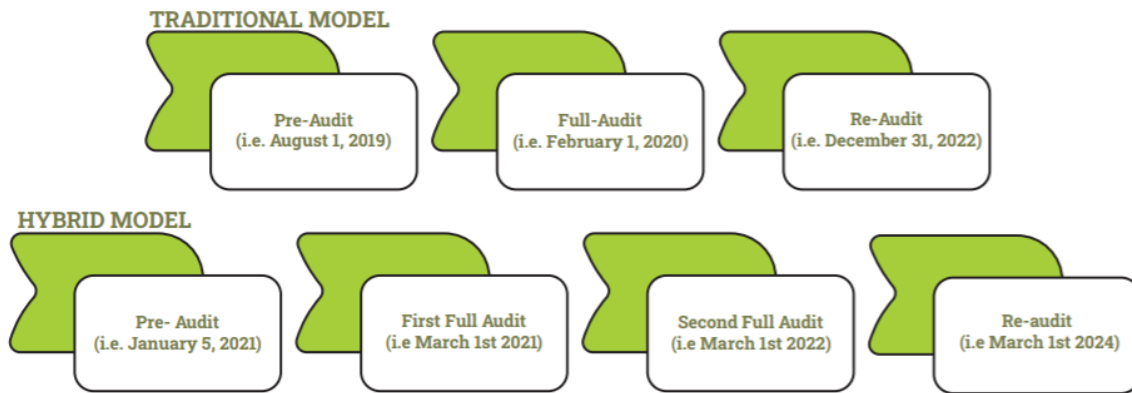


Figure 1 Traditional Method of Compliance vs Hybrid Method of Compliance

Introduction of Recommendation Only Nutrient Service Providers

Version 2.0 of the 4R Certification manual introduces Recommendation Only Nutrient Service Providers (i.e. independent crop consultants). Three standards (A1, A6, & A9) have been identified as not applicable to Recommendation Only Nutrient Service Providers, however the other 34 standards remain applicable as it relates to training, nutrient recommendations and documentation.

In addition, the application standards have been re-worded to note that the Recommendation Only Nutrient Service Providers are required to recommend these application practices.



Revision of Standards T5 & T6

Following updates to the 4R Certification standards in the Ohio, our version 2.0 of the Ontario 4R Certification manual has combined standards T5 and T6.

Previously, standard T5 required Nutrient Service providers to provide their grower customers with 4R Nutrient Stewardship information and materials annually. Standard T6 required the Nutrient Service provider to sponsor and host training on the 4R's of Nutrient Stewardship.

The new standard T5 now combines the requirements of the previous T5 and T6 standards. Nutrient Service providers are required to convey information on the 4R's to their grower customers on an annual basis in one of the following methods;

- Email-blast
- Letters
- Brochures
- Providing local training sessions on 4R Nutrient Stewardship
- Meeting agendas with 4R Nutrient Stewardship
- Sponsoring sessions on 4R nutrient stewardship

Revision to Compliancy Cycle 2 Percentages R6 & R7

In the latest edition of the 4R Certification Manual, R6 & R7 are listed as 75% for compliance in the second cycle (updated from the range of 50-75%). This is based on the nature of the standards being a yes or no response from growers and aligns with other standards that relate to setback distances (Standards D4 and D6).

- R6 requires that nutrient recommendations and/or application appropriately address minimum setbacks from all known sensitive areas, such as tile inlets, well heads, gullies, and water bodies specified in applicable national, provincial, or local laws. Evidence will include that minimum setback distance is followed on grower plans and/or application maps according to local, federal, and provincial regulations identified in D4.
- R7 requires for all nutrient recommendations and/or application, the inclusion of a minimum setback distance (e.g., 35-100 ft.) near known sensitive areas, such as tile inlets, well heads, gullies, and water bodies is documented and discussed with the grower customer. Evidence will include a grower sign-off indicating that the Nutrient Service Provider has asked the grower to identify any known sensitive features and has discussed the minimum setback distance. This aligns with the grower sign-off sheet in D6.



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ONTARIO 4R CERTIFICATION

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Should you have any questions on these updates, please do not hesitate to contact the AWSA Project Manager, Anthony Laycock via email at manager@awsa.ca or 877-236-2972. You may alternatively contact Fertilizer Canada using the coordinates below.

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