

# PCO Moves Forward with New and Improved Certification Database

## New client certification and inspector portals will increase efficiencies and improve customer service

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### OVERVIEW

**P**CO is thrilled to announce the official Go Live launch (as of March 31) of the PCO Certification and Inspector Portal powered by Intact Platform (formerly known as Ecert). We are pleased to introduce to you the new and improved PCO client and inspector portals over the next several months. This will include additional written instructions as well as training videos and webinars. By now, clients using the portal should have received an email notifying them of how to navigate to their portal with login information. If you have not received such an email and previously used PCO's client portal, or wish to switch from receiving your PCO paperwork via postal mail to interacting with the new PCO Certification Portal, please contact your Program Assistant for further assistance.

As you might remember, PCO has been engaged in the process of switching to Intact Platform to house our certification database for the past year. Intact Platform is a well-established, complete certification system, designed specifically for organic certification and configured to comply with the National Organic Program (NOP) systems and data collection requirements. These changes will allow us to be more adaptable and timely in our communication to you.

PCO is looking forward to the benefits the Intact Platform will provide to internal and external stakeholders such as:

- Increased functionality (e.g. access to more information) and improved user friendliness of PCO Certification and Inspector Portals
- Enhanced monitoring of performance measures which will translate into quicker turnaround times between parts of the cycle, especially between inspection and certification report
- Modernization of our business intelligence which will allow us to respond to industry changes and communicate those changes to you
- Increased efficiency of and adaptability to new certification programs, which will help PCO more efficiently adjust to client certification needs
- Easier access to educational resources such as our guidance documents as well as inspection related information

### NEW AND IMPROVED PCO CERTIFICATION PORTAL

Through our Core Values, we recognize the interdependent relationships between all our stakeholders. The new client portal has been designed with our core values and mission in mind. If your preferred communication is electronic, through the PCO Certification Portal you'll be able to navigate comprehensively through your certification documents and later, be able to easily submit paperwork. The first time you'll likely need to interact with this improved portal will be when we send you notification that your Initial Review Report is available for viewing. However, we encourage you to login on and navigate around to check out the new design and features!

#### *What will be different:*

The most welcomed change is to the feature-rich online portal. The PCO Certification Portal is more organized, allowing you to more easily navigate through your certification documents on your own providing for an overall better user experience. Continued development through the end of this year will allow you to submit requests to PCO for various changes on your operation.

Through the PCO Certification Portal you'll be able to check on the status of your inspection and assigned inspector as well as access the name of your assigned Certification Specialist and Program Assistant. Additionally, your Certification Report and other official documents (e.g. Inspection Report, Noncompliances, Certificates) will be easier to read and will continue to be available on the PCO Certification Portal. Lastly, with the new portal, you'll gain easier access to educational resources and membership benefits that our website has to offer.

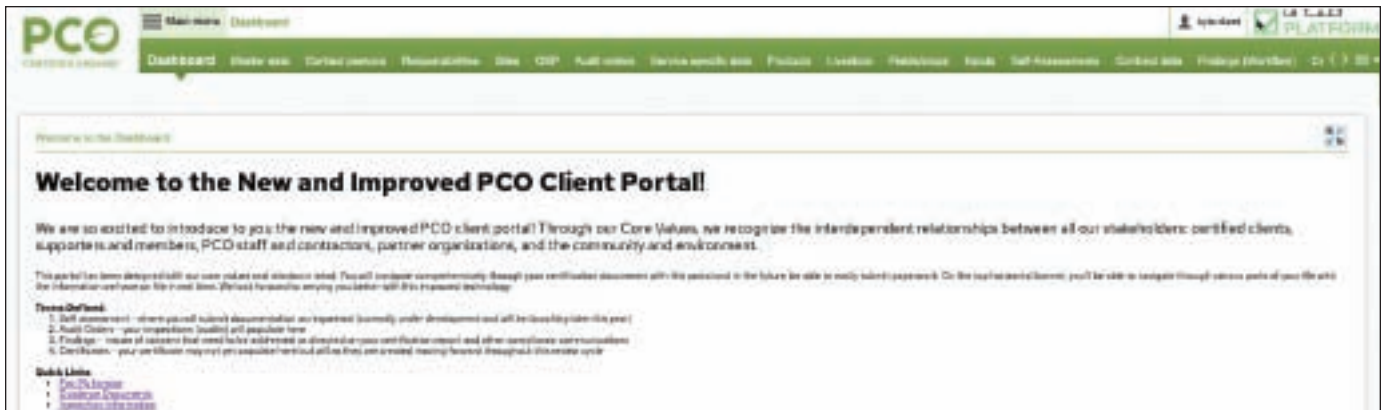
#### *What will remain the same:*

PCO commits to making this change in database as seamless as possible for clients. While there will be some significant changes, there will also be areas that won't be changing.

For example, clients will not need to submit new Organic System Plans (OSPs) during this transition and will continue to be able to access your operation's OSP and supplemental documents (e.g. labels, materials used, etc). Affiliate manager admins will still be able to view their entities under one login (now called Consultant Access) and postal clients will continue to receive their items through the mail (as their preferred communication method).

### NEW AND IMPROVED INSPECTOR PORTAL

The PCO Certification Portal is not the only exciting update



PCO's new and improved certification portal includes an enhanced landing page with multiple tabs that allows clients to view all current certification information and documents at any time. Clients can navigate to the audit orders tab to access documents live time.

included in PCO's transition to the Intact Platform. The PCO Inspector Portal will also see significant revisions to enable inspectors easier access to client files and facilitate all aspects of the inspection process from scheduling to conducting the onsite inspection to billing in a more efficient manner. Whether it's streamlined document transfer or improved ease of on-site OSP updates, the ultimate goal is to make overall improvements to your inspection experience.

#### **What will or might be different:**

Due to several variables (e.g. broadband access, operations preference for technology use on their operation), not all of the changes will be utilized by all inspectors nor experienced by all operations during their inspection. However, one thing is certain, inspectors will be using the PCO Inspector Portal to communicate their inspection report findings and your OSP updates to PCO. There's even a mobile app to allow for the use of smaller devices (e.g. cell phone or tablet), which will allow inspectors to rely less heavily on laptop computers in some cases. As a result, this could facilitate OSP updates to be made while walking through the field. Additionally, through the app, the inspector will have the option to complete the inspection checklist offline and then sync the checklist once they are able to connect to WiFi again, addressing the challenge of incomplete cell service throughout land and facilities where this might be a problem.

The Inspection Report will look somewhat different when the client receives it, although it will function the same way as

the previous report. For each item on the inspection report, you will be able to see any comments the inspector has provided as well as the summary of any issues of concern, just like in previous years. Unlike in previous years, all of your Inspection Reports and the Exit Interview will be contained within a single document, rather than individual documents.

Inspection files should be much more organized for the inspector since PCO is now able to categorize electronic documents by file type. This will allow the inspector to sort and find specific documents more quickly, especially in cases where the file contains many documents, such as labels and Organic Product Profiles. This will make inspections more efficient, saving time and money through the improved organizational and accurate format of your operation's information.

The new PCO Inspector Portal is designed with key changes that will streamline the transfer of documents and information. While you will not see this functionality first-hand, the new system has marked improvements that will produce results that you will see, including decreased inspector administrative time and inspectors with handier access to your documents.

#### **What will remain the same:**

With all the change, it is also good to ground ourselves in what will be staying the same. PCO is still working with most of the 2020 inspectors (although there will be a few new faces this year).

Also, the format will largely remain the same where the

inspector asks you questions, asks you to present records for audit, tours your land, facility, and production areas, and summarizes any issues of concern for compliance with the regulations.

As in previous years, inspectors will be using a guided checklist. There have been some slight modifications to increase efficiency in going through the required information for your inspection; more clearly outlining the expectations and prerequisites for OSP changes. The system is designed to more efficiently evaluate compliance of the operation, while still providing the inspector the opportunity to explain the necessary details of their observations.

## CONCLUSION

If 2020 taught us anything it's that change can be hard. We fully acknowledge that, and worked diligently to configure the new system in such a way that will result in more efficient processes, smoother communication between clients and inspectors, faster turnaround times, and an overall better user experience for our stakeholders. Change can be daunting but rest assured, this transition to the Intact Platform will set PCO up to be both more sustainable and flexible to the dynamics of the organic industry. We're looking forward to hearing your feedback so that we can continue to improve your experience in using the PCO Certification and Inspector Portals.

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