Contractor/vendor prequalification is becoming more and more the norm. ISNetworld is an online contractor safety prequalification program and just one among a crop of other programs like it, including Avetta, PEC Safety, Browz, Veriforce, ComplyWorks, First Verify and others.

Contractor prequalification programs give companies a way to limit the liability risks that onsite contractors can bring.   If you want to work for clients who use these programs, you must pay the cost to be a member and then take the time and effort to enter your company information into the system.

The number of clients for whom we have been asked to complete prequalification paperwork or join these types of systems has exploded in the last couple of years.  Some of our clients used to have teams of people tracking this information from contractors (and some didn’t track this stuff at all.). These programs allow them to turn that responsibility over to someone else, and it puts a lot of the tracking responsibilities back onto the contractors themselves.  Sometimes this is seen as a way to narrow the field of potential contractors to just the serious ones who have good policies and performance.

Although there are lots of programs out there, we’re going to focus on ISNetworld because they are one of the leaders in this industry and they are one of the ones who ask for the most information. At first glance, ISNetworld setup can be a daunting task. To help get you prepared, we present the Top 10 items you’ll need to gather for ISNetworld compliance (and just about any other safety prequalification program).

**1.  General Company Information**

You will need to know basic information about your company such as date established, structure, addresses and contacts, special codes and numbers ([NAICS](https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/), Tax ID, [DUNS](https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform), etc.), number of employees, financial and project references and more.

**2.  Safety Policies and Procedures**

You will be asked a number of questions about your safety policies. How is your safety program set up, how is it built and who’s responsible? What’s the management structure and is company leadership involved? Are hourly employees involved and do you have full-time safety personnel? What training do supervisors get? Do you do audits, who does them and how often?

Also included are questions about safety meetings, training, documentation, observations, stop work policies, hazard reporting, policies for new hires, incident investigation and communication.

**3.  Written Safety Programs**

If you’re following [OSHA](https://www.osha.gov/) compliance, you should already have written safety programs for the hazards your employees can be exposed to. Depending on the services you say you provide, ISNetworld and your client will generate a list of the individual written safety programs that you need. There will be specific elements that you'll be required to incorporate into your written programs, so it’s likely you’ll need to update your programs. Be very mindful what your revised program commits your company to. If it’s written in your program that your company will do something, you need to do it. If not, you could expose yourself to fines from OSHA for not following your own plan.

ISNetworld will ask you every 3 years to revalidate these programs to ensure they are still current.

**4.  Training Programs**

For many of the written programs, you’ll be asked to upload corresponding training sign-ins and information from those classes, so you may need to conduct additional training on a variety of topics. Be prepared to answer questions related to what kind of training you provide to new hires and routine employees, how often and how they are documented.

**5.  Regulatory Data**

You will need to track OSHA injury and illness data on a quarterly basis. This information is required to be input both quarterly and annually. You’ll also need 3 years of historical data. In ISNetworld you are graded on your 3-year average safety numbers and how they compare to industry standards. Thus, if you have a bad year, your grades may suffer for 3 years.

If you have commercial vehicles, you may need to enter [DOT](https://www.transportation.gov/) numbers and annual stats for number of drivers, miles driven, number of units, owner operators and violations. You’ll also need to enter in information about your company vehicle/driver programs and policies.

**6.  Insurance**

Individual insurance certificates will need to be uploaded for each client, and each will have specific requirements.  Be mindful of what the insurance requirements are for each client and know ahead of time what policies you have and what that covers.  Sometimes clients will require specialized policies or varying levels of coverage for certain items that can end up costing thousands of dollars if you agree to that.  However, sometimes these things can be negotiated down, depending on what you're going to do onsite.  It just depends on the client and the situation.

Check with your insurance company to see if they’re a member of ISNetworld. If so, you can assign them to your account and they can upload certificates and deal with the nuances and negotiations for you. You will also need to enter 3 years of experience modification rate data and upload those documents as well.

**7.  Employee and Contractor Data**

Some clients will require you to track the number of hours that you and/or your subcontractors spent on the site each month.  These reports are required at the beginning of the month and are often required per site location.  Among the data you may need to report (depending on client requirements) will be hours spent onsite, number of employees onsite, number of miles driven, number of incidents (accidents, fires, spills), subcontractor hours, subcontractor numbers, subcontractor travel data, etc.  Some companies need to keep track of this information for PSM purposes and some like to keep track of contactor activities onsite.

**8.   Human Resources-Type Information**

You'll be asked to input your drug and alcohol policies and procedures.  Some owner clients will require you to have individual employees tested for drugs and alcohol through one of their approved vendors who shares the data directly with the program so that they can see if employees are in a green "OK" status or a red status.  They may also require background checks for each employee who will come onsite as well.   You may also need to provide employee personal information separately to your client to comply with Department of Homeland Security checks as well.  Pandemic preparedness programs are required from many clients, so what are your procedures and policies with that? Thus, you may need to pull in some of your HR department to help you accomplish some of these requirements and get some answers.

**9.  Other Procedures - Sustainability and Cyber Security**

Within the past year we've seen questions pop up in ISNetworld and throughout multiple programs about our corporate sustainability and social responsibility programs.  One program (not ISNetworld) required us to write a separate written policy statement against human trafficking and a written policy on our stance on child and forced labor.  ISNetworld has also started getting into cyber security policies. There is an extensive questionnaire regarding computer systems and cyber security measures.  Several owner clients required us to develop a written cyber security program.  So besides HR personnel, you may need to bring in your IT people and anyone responsible for sustainability programs.

**10.  Individual Training**

More and more clients are requiring individuals to do the facility-specific safety orientation training ahead of time before ever stepping onsite.  Thus, if you have a specific project that you're getting ready for, you may need to know exactly who is going to be involved in the project so that you can assign this training to them.  This would include subcontractor employees too.  Some clients will let you do the training all at once in a group, but more and more are requiring individuals to be given separate logins so that they can complete the training themselves.  So you may need to eventually gather email addresses for individuals who may not have a company email address and budget for time for those employees to take that training.

**A Plan for Management and Completion**

This isn’t a requirement, but certainly a best practice. You will need to identify a person(s) on your team who’s going to be responsible for managing sites such as ISNetworld. There can be a number of time-sensitive items which need to be managed. Not maintaining them will make your grades drop, hindering your ability to get further work with them, or even issue invoices.

The initial setup may require the assistance of a number of people in your company, or the help of an outside firm. You may need a combination of compliance personnel and administrative staff to handle the day-to-day management. Please note that if you do involve administrative staff, please keep in mind that policy questions and program creation are best completed by someone with a compliance background. You need to be very careful on how you answer the questions and what you commit yourself to. It could make all the difference between an “A” and an “F”.

**Other Considerations**

ISNetworld automatically uploads any OSHA citations for your clients to see, and these will likely affect your grade. You may also be required to have your own subcontractor management program, that is, a procedure for vetting your own subs.

We’ve found that ISNetworld is one of the most detailed prequalification sites. The silver lining is if you can get through ISNetworld, you have a good head start on some of the others.  However, every single site will ask for something new that one of the others didn’t, so don’t get too frustrated.  For example, some sites want you to upload your entire safety manual, some require specific procedures such as JSAs, and some will require much more if your employees perform specific tasks that require additional “operator qualifications” for each.

**Resources**

Make sure you keep your information stored in one central place so that it’s easy to access when you need it because it’s likely there will be information you’ll need to input a number of times.

iSi helps companies get setup in ISNetworld by providing policy and procedure guidance, written programs and training. We also manage ISNetworld day-to-day compliance for companies.

Our sister company [SafetyPlans.com](https://safetyplans.com) has a number of ISNetworld-related program templates that will help you get a good start on developing a new plan if needed.

What can we do to help make the process smoother for you? Contact us today!