UPDATE
IATF 16949
CERTIFICATION
Rules 6

The IATF has published its rules for the recognition and maintenance of IATF accreditation in the new 6th edition. While these primarily target certifiers, the content also affects and introduces new requirements for our customers. Below is an overview of the key changes.

Initial Certifications - Stage 1 Audit

The IATF rules stipulate that the Stage 1 audit for initial certifications is divided into two parts. Initially, the applicability of IATF 16949, the certification structure, and the planned scope are reviewed. This is followed by an on-site audit using the «Gemba» method to assess readiness for certification.

The certification body is required to decide regarding readiness for the Stage 2 audit or a repeat of the Stage 1 audit within 15 calendar days after the closing meeting. A repeat of the Stage 1 audit may occur no earlier than 20 calendar days after the closing meeting and no later than 6 months thereafter. It is important that the repeat assessment is conducted solely by the same auditor. At least one hour must be dedicated to reviewing open points from the previous Stage 1 audit.

Initial Certifications - Stage 2 Audit

A comprehensive system audit must be conducted, assessing all requirements of IATF 16949 regarding their effective implementation. The Stage 2 audit may occur no earlier than 20 days after the closing meeting of the Stage 1 audit and a positive readiness assessment by the certification body, and must take place no later than 90 days thereafter.

Audit Cycle

The last day of a recertification audit must be completed no later than 3 years (-3 months / + 0 days) after the last day of the previous certification, recertification, or transfer audit. For surveillance audits, the permissible time window increases from -3 months / +1 month to - / +3 months. If deadlines are not met, certification will be revoked within 7 calendar days after exceeding the maximum allowable time window.

Possible Reductions in Audit Duration

Corporate scheme production sites may reduce the on-site audit time per location by a maximum of 15%. Previously, reductions of up to 40% per site were permissible depending on the scope of the corporate scheme. For the upgrade to IATF certification, a maximum reduction of 30% is allowed for the Stage 2 audit, compared to the previous allowance of 50%.

Extended Manufacturing Sites (EMS)

These may now be located a maximum of 16 kilometers (10 miles) and a maximum of 1 hour's travel time from the production site. If this condition is not met, former EMS locations must be treated as a separate production site, necessitating an initial certification process for these locations.

Relocation of Production and/or Support Activities

In the event of relocating production and/or support activities to another site, an initial audit must be conducted, including the supporting locations.

Audit Preparation/Deadlines

Dates for surveillance, recertification, and transfer audits must be coordinated with and confirmed by the client at least 90 calendar days before the audit due date. Should a change to the confirmed audit date be necessary, the certification body must document the reasons for this change in the audit documentation.

Audit Planning

The certification body must allocate at least half a (0.5) day for the preparation and planning of the audit, entering this time separately into the IATF database. This is not considered audit time. The information necessary for audit preparation must be submitted by the client to the certification body at least 30 days before the first audit day. If submitted later, the certification body may postpone the audit. Failure to meet scheduled audit dates could result in the loss of certification.

The requirements for providing audit information have been expanded.

If the client, in exceptional cases, does not submit management review records due to confidentiality concerns at least 30 calendar days before the audit start date, the audit plan must include an additional time allocation of at least two (2) hours for the on-site review of management review records before the opening meeting begins.

If there are confidentiality concerns on the part of the client in exceptional cases, management review records must be submitted at least 30 calendar days before the audit start date. Otherwise, the certification body should expect an additional time requirement of at least two hours for the on-site review of management review records.

Verification of changes regarding audit planning information and the review of current reports and/or scorecards from clients will occur during the opening meeting with senior management. This eliminates the previously required additional hour before the audit begins.

Information and changes regarding customer performance data, as well as internal performance data and the review of current customer reports and customer verifications, will be verified during the opening meeting. Thus, the previously required additional hour before the audit begins is removed.

The certification body and the client are obliged to plan the audit in a way that ensures that automotive production processes take place as required during the scheduled audit duration. If this requirement cannot be met, the certification body is entitled to postpone the audit until these requirements can be fulfilled. A postponement of the audit may result in the loss of certification.

Deviation Management

The certification body must request the client to submit evidence regarding major deviations within 15 calendar days after the closing meeting.
The deadline is therefore shortened by 5 days, from the previous 20 days. Additionally, within this time-frame, the creation and submission of a plan for systematic corrective actions must also occur.
The 60-day deadline remains unchanged by the new regulations. If corrective actions are inadequate and cannot be effectively implemented, the certificate must be revoked.

The requirements for providing evidence for deviation management have been expanded.

Determining Minimum Duration for Verifying Actions for Non-conformities

For each major deviation, between one and three hours must be allocated and realized for verification during the special audit; for each minor deviation, between half an hour and one hour must be allocated and realized for verification at the next regular or special audit.

Remote Support Locations

The review and documentation of the evaluation of audit plans, reports, deviation reports, and their status is required for all remote support locations (RSL) that support the audited site. This also applies to remote support sites audited by other certification bodies. IATF 16949 certificates may only indicate remote support sites where the effectiveness of the support functions has been verified at the site.

Use of Remote Audit Method

IATF 16949 audits must generally be conducted on-site. In exceptional cases, the remote audit method may be applied to involve remote employees during an on-site audit. Additionally, the remote audit method may be used to conduct a surveillance audit within the audit cycle at standalone remote support locations if no handling of products or materials occurs at those locations. The second surveillance audit must be conducted as an on-site audit.

Another requirement for the application of the remote audit method is that the remote audit technology used must be suitable for conducting an effective and efficient audit. The certification body is responsible for the compliant application of the criteria for remote auditing.

Our experts are happy to answer your questions about IATF rules and certification. Get in touch today!

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