OneCert® International
Private Limited

POLICY FOR CONDUCTING AUDIT DURING SERIOUS EVENTS

Extraordinary event or circumstance/ Serious Events: A circumstance beyond the control of the organization commonly referred to as "Force Majeure" or "act of God". Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, pandemic, flooding, earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters. These situation or events temporarily prevents OneCert International from carrying a planned audit to take place caused which also includes situations unannounced audit is not possible (e.g. security reasons).

OneCert International Private Limited will assess the risks of continuing certification outlining the steps it will take in the event a certified organization is affected by a serious event and review planned audits when a serious event (this includes situations where due to safety, security and/or visa issues in the country, an audit cannot be performed or certified organization has been affected by some war, biochemical/biological/ natural disasters.

Method of Evaluation:

1. Identification-

OneCert International Private Limited will determine whether the integrity of the certification is intact or if a suspension is required. Client evaluation will be done before the risk assessment.

2. Risk Assessment

The aim to conduct Risk Assessment is to assess the site actions in response to COVID-19 / serious events and to ensure that the certified organization has developed/adjusted its procedures and operations to ensure continued compliance to the Scheme and the supply of safe products.

Methodology:

It will be done telephonically/ Electronic media/ video conferencing with the certified organization representative who will be competent.

It is done to know the how the certified organization is dealing with the serious events. The outcome of the risk assessment and planned actions will be recorded in Risk Assessment Checklist. Deviations from the audit program and their justification for changes will be recorded. OneCert International Private Limited will establish in consultation with certified organizations a reasonable planned course of action.

The information will be collected (as mentioned above through telephone/ Electronic media/ video Conference)

On the basis of information collected, OneCert will:

1. Assess the risks of continuing certification
2. Analyses of the effect of extraordinary event on certified client.
3. Decision making on the basis of outcome
4. Decision communication to the client organization

3. **Feasibility Assessment-** It will be done to determine, in conjunction with the certified organization, whether a full remote audit is a viable option and to determine if the full audit objectives can be achieved through the use of Information and Communication Technology **(ICT)**.

   Planning for Remote Audit: The feasibility of the audit should be determined to provide confidence that the audit objectives can be achieved.

   The determination of feasibility should take into consideration factors such as the availability of the following:

   a. Sufficient and appropriate information for planning and conducting the audit;

   b. Adequate cooperation from the auditee;

   c. Adequate time and resources for conducting the audit

NOTE: Resources include access to adequate and appropriate information and communication technology

ICT- ICT is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT can be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely

The use ICT to optimize audit effectiveness and efficiency, and to support and maintain the integrity of the audit process

Remote Audit will be done with the help of Information and Communication Technology.

Scheduling the remote Audit:

1. Certified client to be informed at least 1 week prior to the audit.
2. Time zone acknowledgement and management to coordinate reasonable and mutually agreeable convening times.
3. A trial meeting using the same media platforms agreed upon will be conducted to ensure the scheduled assessment will perform as planned.

4. Proper security measures will be taken, when applicable, to protect confidential information.

APPLICABILITY

The ICT audit approach may be applied in the case of the regular, annual FSSC 22000 audits (surveillance and recertification audits) as part of the routine certification process.

It can also be applied to Stage 1 audits as described below and Head Office audits where the corporate functions are controlled separately.

In the year where an unannounced audit is due, the ICT audit approach may be used, whilst still applying the requirements of Unannounced audit as mentioned in section 5.4 of FSSC Manual. The prerequisite would be that the onsite part of the audit will be conducted first, followed directly by the remote audit with a maximum period of 48 hours between the two audit components.

InCase of Extra Ordinary Events- The full remote audit option is only applicable in the following cases when linked to a serious event:
1) Where the annual, announced FSSC 22000 surveillance or recertification audits are impacted as a result of a serious event and cannot take place on-site.
2) Transition audits
3) Where follow-up audits to close out nonconformities cannot take place – this will be dependent on the nature of the nonconformity, the suitability of the ICT and OneCert will in all instances be able to justify the effectiveness of the methods used. Critical nonconformities require an on-site follow-up audit in all instances.
4) To conduct a special audit based on the outcome of the serious

INITIAL AUDITS

For FSMS

OneCert can carry out Initial certification audit (Stage-1 & 2) through Remote Assessment (in part or full) considering the risk factors and based on its risk evaluation process.

OneCert will use this and OP-20 documented procedure for conduct of remote stage-1 & 2 audits (part/complete). In case of complete remote stage-2 audit is conducted, the OneCert will perform an additional onsite visit to client site to review the critical manufacturing operations within 6 months of the remote audit, once the current emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational.

OneCert will issue the certificate only after complete evaluation of all the applicable requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 (9.3.1.2 Stage 1 and 9.3.1.3 Stage 2) through a complete and effective audit of the client's management system, followed by a successful review and decision-making activities.

For FSSC

The full Stage 1 audit may be conducted off-site (ISO/TS22003 clause 9.2.3.1.3) with the use of ICT. The objectives of the Stage 1 audit as per ISO17021-1 (9.3.1.2.2) must meet and to this end, ICT (i.e. live video) will be included to also observe the work environment and facilities. The Stage 1 audit report will reference that the audit was completed remotely, which ICT tools were used and the objectives achieved. The Stage 2 audit will be conducted as a full onsite audit within 6 months of the Stage 1 or the Stage 1 will be repeated. It is not permitted to use the ICT audit approach for the Stage 2 audit.

Note-

1. **Maximum timeline** between Remote and On-Site Audit = **30 Calendar Days**
2. For **Serious Events**, the timeline can be extended to **90 calendar days**, which will be based on risk assessment and OneCert internal concession process.

SURVEILLANCE AUDITS

For FSMS

If OneCert is unable to complete surveillance audits because of the state of the organization or travel restrictions, OneCert will give flexibility in audit dates. While managing required surveillance audits, OneCert will follow their own processes, which may include suspension, and as per respective accreditation standards like ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17020 etc. Surveillance activities will be completed as early as possible once the current emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational, but will not normally exceed three months from the due date or as announced by NABCB considering the specific extraordinary event or circumstance.

In case it is not possible to complete the surveillance activities within the timelines as mentioned above, a further extension of another 3 months will be given in case where the remote assessment (in part or full) of client cannot be carried out in the initial extension of 3 months, thus allowing a period of maximum 6 months.

For FSSC

On the basis of conditions that if the due audit cannot be performed onsite, then OneCert will conclude as below:

1. **In Case of Extra-Ordinary Events-** Risk Assessment to be done to maintain the Certificate/ Suspend the client/ postpone the surveillance maximum by 6 months. Within the calendar year. The document of Risk Assessment will be uploaded upon the portal as a Special Audit.
    a. Note- The result of risk assessment will lead to the 6 months of extension/ Suspension

Note a: Annual surveillance audits may be conducted using the ICT audit approach and both the remote and the onsite audit will be completed within the calendar year. Where the ICT audit approach is applied to the first surveillance audit following an initial certification, the process will be planned to ensure that the onsite component of the audit takes place before or not later than 12 months after the date of certification decision for the initial audit. Where the timelines as referenced above are exceeded, the full surveillance audit will be conducted onsite and in line with the audit schedule or the certificate will be suspended.

Note b-

1. **Maximum timeline** between Remote and On-Site Audit = **30 Calendar Days**
2. For **Serious Events**, the timeline can be extended to **90 calendar days**, which will be based on risk assessment and OneCert internal concession process.
   Exceeding of the above-mentioned timeline may lead to suspension

RE-CERTIFICATION AUDITS

The Re-certification audit may be conducted using the ICT audit approach. The remote audit combined with the onsite audit constitutes a complete re-certification audit and both processes will to be completed prior to the expiry of the existing certificate. The requirements in ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 – 9.6.3.2 apply.

For FSMS

A validity extension of certificate up to 6 months will be done on the basis of documented risk assessment.

If the documented risk assessment indicates that the certified management system is effective, then 6 months extension will be provided to the certified organization. But if OneCert International Private Limited is unable to gain the confidence over the client than immediate suspension will be given.

NOTE- If it is not possible to conclude the recertification audits even within this extended six months period (e.g. - prevailing travel restrictions), OneCert will further extend the certificate validity by another six months, preferably in intervals of 3 months, i.e. an extension of 12 months in total.

However, if this time-frame, from the certification date exceeds 12 months, OneCert will complete the recertification audit as possible using remote means.

In all those cases where the processes cannot be remotely assessed in an effective way to the satisfaction of OneCert, the certification scope will be partially reduced or the certificate will be completely withdrawn, and a new initial audit will be required. In any case, a decision will be made taking also into consideration the updated risk associated with the operational control capability of the organization in the extraordinary conditions and the type of certification scheme. In this case, the expiration of the renewed certification will be based on the original recertification cycle.

For FSSC-

The re-certification audit may be conducted using the ICT audit approach. The remote audit combined with the onsite audit constitutes a complete re-certification audit and both processes will be completed prior to the expiry of the existing certificate. The requirements in ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 – 9.6.3.2 apply.

In case of Serious events- If Certificate expires, then 6-month extension/ Suspension of the certificate will be provided as per the result of Risk Assessment. If Certificate is extended, the Risk Assessment will be uploaded as a special audit, Certification Decision and expiry date will uploaded upon the FSSC portal within 28 days after the decision making. The full on-site audit will be conducted within the extended 6 months and Certificate date will be aligned with the current certification Cycle.

Note a. - The result of risk assessment will lead to the 6 months of extension/ Suspension

Note b-

1. **Maximum timeline** between Remote and On-Site Audit = **30 Calendar Days**
2. For **Serious Events**, the timeline can be extended to **90 calendar days**, which will be based on risk assessment and OneCert internal concession process.