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QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS

1. Introduction

Audit is a particularly precious tool both at the stage of introduction and improvement of management system as well. Especially essential is system of organization's internal audits that makes obligatory requirement of management system. This is a necessary component used also in another systems of quality shaping, but in any case in such depiction as defined in standards ISO 10011-1, 10011-2, 10011-3. However in case of carrying out environmental audits requirements of standards ISO 14010-14012 must be met. But to fully take advantage of possibilities given by carrying out an audit, theoretical basis of audit's methodology as well as requirements of standards ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 in this scope must be known.

Process of carrying out audits, both in quality management system and in environment management system, as well as in occupational health and safety management system is the same. This was the reason why Technical Committee of International Organization of Standardization ISO made a decision to draw up one version of guidelines to carry out audits of quality management system and environment management system, namely standard 19011. Standard 19011 provides guidelines in scope of carrying out internal and external audits of quality/environment management system, as well as in the field of management of audits programs.

Users of this standard are auditors, organizations introducing quality management systems and environment management system, organizations involved in certification or training of auditors, certification/registration of management systems, accreditation or standardization in area of compatibility assessment.

2. Requirements of standard ISO 19011

Intention of guidelines included in standard 19011 is their flexibility and applying by wide range of possible users. As shown in many points of the text, applying of guidelines can be different depending on size, character and complexity of organization, as well as on purposes and range of audits that will be carried out.

Although standards ISO 19011 provide only guidelines, users can exploit them to draw up own requirements connected with audit.

If quality/environment management systems are introduced together, decision if audits of quality/

environment management systems are also carried out together or separated belong to user.

Although standard ISO 19011 is used to audit quality/environment management systems, users can consider conforming or developing these guidelines in order to apply to other kind of audits including audits of another quality systems. Furthermore each person or company interested in monitoring of compatibility with requirements such as specification of product or legal rules, can recognize guidelines included in standard ISO 19011.

3. Purposes of quality and environmental audits

Quality and environmental audits should be carried out periodically in order to:

- state if the system is consistent with planned activities connected with environmental management,
- notice if the system is introduced and established properly,
- provide the leadership of a company information about environmental management system what is the result of an audit.

Audits can be carried out by personnel of an organization and/or people outside an organization. These people must be objective, impartial and adequate trained. Frequency of audits should depend on activity's character (its environmental aspects and its possible impact on environment). Results of previous audits should also be taken into consideration during specifying audits frequency.

4. Planning of audits

Requirements of standard ISO 19011 oblige Registration Authority to draw up audits program as well as audits procedures on basis of importance for quality and environment of analyzed activities and results of previous audits.

Extent of procedures and program should include:

- activities and areas analyzed during an audit,
- frequency of carrying out an audit,
- responsibilities connected with management and carrying out an audit ,
- way of giving information about conclusions following an audit,
- competences of people carrying out an audit,
- way of carrying out an audit,

During an audit the auditing team should verify system solutions taking into consideration requirements of standards and other premises, but also take notice of efficiency of undertaken actions. Each noticed incompatibility should be precise defined and described.

During planning of an audit requirements should be established. They can be for example:

- management priorities,
- commercial intentions,
- standard ISO 9001 and customers' requirements,
- standard ISO 14001 and other environmental standards,
- substantiated supplier system,
- legal and contractual requirements,
- realization of quality/environmental purposes and tasks,
- monitoring,
- needs of other interested parts,

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- agreement with a customer,
- possible risk for a company.

5. Guidelines concerning auditors

Audits are carried out by team of auditors. From among auditors participating in an audit it is necessary to designate one leading auditor, even if audit is carried out by a single person. He/she is fully responsible for carrying out an audit. Auditing team often include:

- experts in area of quality or environment protection,
- auditors in the middle of training,
- observers.

Auditors should be objective. In procedure tasks and responsibilities of auditors, leading auditor, customer and auditing company should be clear indicated.

The leading auditor is accountable for all phases of an audit. He/she should have knowledge and experience in leading audits and should be entitled to make final decisions concerning all auditing activities.

To responsibilities and tasks of an auditor belong first of all:

- to define requirements and range of an audit,
- to participate in choosing auditing team,
- to prepare audit's plan, working documentation and instructions for auditors.
- inspection of quality system' documentation,
- to represent auditing team towards leadership of auditing company,
- to inform about and remove obstacles met during an audit,
- to prepare and present report on audit.

6. Stages of audit

6.1. Initiating an audit

Initiative phase include:

- designate leading auditor of auditing team,
- defining targets, range and criteria of an audit,
- characterizing audits' practicability,
- choice of auditing team,
- specifying contact with auditing company.

6.2. Inspection of documentation

This phase should base on formal review of quality/environment management system documentation (book/procedures) made by leading auditor. This documentation's inspection before an audit allows leading auditor to:

- initial evaluation of documents' and present management system's compatibility with suitable assessment criteria,
- not carrying out audit's process if result of review will be negative and all the incompatibilities won't be cleared in a satisfying way.

6.3. Preparing of auditing activities running by an auditing company

This phase includes:

- preparing audit's plan,

- allocating tasks to auditing team,
- preparing working documents.

Audit's plan is prepared by leading auditor. It should be approved by a customer and announced to auditing team and auditing company.

Audit's plan should include:

- target and range of audit,
- identification of people direct responsible for areas connected with audit's targets and range,
- assessment criteria - standard ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and management book of auditing company,
- identification of auditing team - number of auditors should depend on such factors as: size of organization, number of employees, number of auditing localizations, range of an audit, time needed to carry it out,
- language in that audit will be carried out,
- date and place of carrying out an audit,
- identification of organizational units included in audit,
- expected time to start and to last significant activities during an audit,
- schedule of meetings with leadership of auditing company,
- requirements concerning confidentiality,
- distributor of report on audit and expected date of sending it.

6.4. Running of auditing activities by an auditing company

This phase includes:

- running of initial meeting
- communicating during an audit,
- roles and responsibilities of observers and leaders,
- collecting and verifying of information,
- describing decisions made during an audit,
- preparing conclusions from an audit,
- organizing meetings with auditing company.

Each audit should start with an initial meeting. This meeting's target is to introduce members of auditing team to leadership of auditing company, because until this moment only leading auditor had contact with auditing company.

Already from beginning of audit should be clear defined who will carry out this audit.

During realization of auditing activities running of system should be confirmed. To methods of collecting proofs belong:

- interviews with employees,
- inspection of documents,
- observation of activities and conditions in areas that audit concerns.

Auditors shouldn't ignore made observations that can lead to incompatibilities only because they are not placed on a checklist.

All conclusions from an audit should be written down. Auditors should analyze collected conclusions in order to decide which of them should be submitted as incompatibilities.

All defined incompatibilities must be confirmed and approved by leadership of auditing company.

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After finishing an audit, but before writing a report it is necessary to organize a **meeting of auditing** team with leadership of auditing company and with people responsible for **activity areas connected** with audit's scope.

The final meeting's goal is to present conclusions from an audit to leadership in such a way that they could understand clearly audit's results.

From final meeting records should be made and kept.

6.5. Preparing, approving and distributing of report on audit

Report should be prepared under surveillance of leading auditor that is responsible for its accuracy, but individual parts of report can also be prepared by team members.

Report on audit is a formal transmission of decisions made during an audit. It has to reflect truly both atmosphere and content of an audit.

Report has to be provided with date and leading auditor's signature as proof of checking and approving its content.

It should include following components:

- range and purposes of audit,
- date of audit,
- identification of auditing company,
- details on audit's plan,
- identification of team members and representatives of auditing company who were talked to during an audit,
- description of documents making basis for carrying out an audit,
- observed incompatibilities,
- evaluation and summary made by team of auditors concerning level of quality management system's compatibility in auditing company with suitable standard or other documents making basic criteria for evaluation,
- recommendation in relation to audit's results (availability of system to achieve appointed quality goals),
- distributor of report on audit.

6.6. Finishing an audit

Audit is considered as finished then, when report on the audit is passed on a customer. From auditing person point of view equally important is to plan and realize after-audit activities.

6.7. Carrying out activities after an audit

Conclusions following an audit can point at need to carry out some improving, preventing and correcting actions after an audit. These activities are not considered as part of an audit and are often carried by an audited organization in agreed time.