

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to define the process for the suspension and withdrawal of an existing management systems certification.

2.0 SCOPE

The scope of this procedure applies to existing registrations that are deemed necessary of suspension and withdrawal for failing to meet expectations.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

See Procedure P-001 Definitions and Procedures

4.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 Audit3 Quality Systems Manual
- 4.2 ISO 17021

5.0 PROCEDURE AND RESPONSIBILITY**5.1 Certification Status**

- 5.1.1 There are three standings in which a registration can exist including Active, Suspension, and Withdrawal. Suspension is an interim period where evidence exists to indicate the registration should be withdrawn however the client is given the opportunity to take corrective action to rectify the situation.

5.2 Indications


- 5.2.1 There are certain situations that can lead to a certification being suspended or withdrawn. These are as follows:
 - 5.2.1.1 Noncompliance with the applicable management standard.
 - 5.2.1.2 Failure to pay invoices or other financial obligations in a timely manner.
 - 5.2.1.3 Continual misuse of the Audit3 or accreditation service marks.
 - 5.2.1.4 Failure to effectively respond to noncompliances.
 - 5.2.1.5 Repeat noncompliances indicating a lack of commitment to system maintenance.
 - 5.2.1.6 Voluntary request of client.
 - 5.2.1.7 Failure by the client to allow the conduct the first surveillance audit within 12 months of the Stage 2 Initial Assessment.

5.3 Process

- 5.3.1 Typical indications for suspension will arise from the performance of an assessment of a client facility. If the Lead Auditor feels that sufficient evidence exists to warrant consideration of suspension, this will be indicated on the audit report recommendation and immediately brought to the attention of the President. If the request is voluntary, please proceed to step 5.3.9.
- 5.3.2 The client is informed by the Lead Assessor that they have 15 days from the close of the audit to respond to the noncompliance to the President by either providing a written

corrective action plan to resolve the issue or to appeal the decision for suspension consideration.

- 5.3.3 The report is immediately forwarded to the President. If the President was a participant in the audit, the report should be forwarded to the Vice President or Managing Partner Committee.
- 5.3.4 The President or Managing Partner Committee, depending on previous step will contact the client to ensure their understanding of the issue and to reinforce the 15 day deadline.
- 5.3.5 Once the response has been received from the client, the Managing Partner will review the audit report providing evidence of the suspension recommendation and the client response. If the issue has been resolved or found not to warrant suspension by the Managing Partner, the certificate will remain in active status. The issue may be reflected in the frequency and sampling of future continuous surveillances.
- 5.3.6 If the issue is found to warrant suspension according to the criteria in 5.2.1 or if the client fails to respond in the allotted 15 day time period, the certification is automatically suspended and the client is notified of this in writing.
- 5.3.7 The suspension will remain in place for up to three months, during which the client is expected to take steps to resolve the issue. A special assessment may be scheduled within this three month time period to evaluate the issue in question. During suspension, the client is requested not to use the certification mark, refer to certification or indicate through publication or advertisement that they are registered. Previous reports will be used for indications of how the marks are used. The President will make specific requests and ask for objective evidence accordingly based on the on the specific uses of the mark by the client. Failure to follow these requests can result in immediate withdrawal of the certificate.
- 5.3.8 If sufficient evidence is found during the special assessment to indicate that the issue has been effectively addressed, the suspension is removed and the client is informed of this in writing. Normal surveillance schedules will continue after this point however, if the client was on a yearly reassessment schedule, the frequency may be increased to every six months. The issue causing the suspension will be reviewed with scrutiny in future continuous assessments regardless of the planning.
- 5.3.9 If sufficient evidence is not provided during the assessment to indicate that the issue has been effectively addressed, the certificate is withdrawn. The client is requested to discontinue display of the certificate and ensure that the Audit3 / accreditation marks are removed from all points of display including advertising. The client is requested to inform its customers that certification by Audit3 is no longer in place. This verification may include on site verification or a review of marketing literature, websites, etc.
- 5.3.10 If a certificate is withdrawn, the certificate can be reinstated however prior to any assessment activity, the client must provide evidence that the issue causing withdrawal has been effectively addressed. Once withdrawn, a full reassessment of the client facilities is required for reinstatement of the certificate after objective evidence is provided regarding the issue causing withdrawal.

 OPERATING PROCEDURE	SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL			
	No:	P-013	Revision Date:	08.27.17
	Issue Date:	4/10/02	Revision Level:	7
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6.0 RECORDS

7.0 CHANGE SUMMARY

REV	Revision Description	Date
0	Original Issue	04.29.02
1	Removed reference to director position.	08.07.06
2	Replaced references to IT3 with <i>Audit3</i>. Aligned new titles with existing responsibilities.	09.19.08
3	Added verbiage to section 5.3.7 on ceasing usage of mark during suspension and verification.	10.01.12
4	Annual Review. Clarified Titles. Added verbiage relating to failure to complete of first surveillance audit on time.	07.18.13
5	Revised section 5.3.9 to address checking for logo use.	07.22.13
6	Annual Review.	08.31.14
7	Annual Review. Changed Logo.	08.27.17