

1. PURPOSE

This procedure describes the process for suspension, withdrawal, restoring and changes on certifications.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to certification services provided according to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001

NOTE: Whenever a certification service is provided according to standards maintained under the accreditation of TUV NORD CERT GmbH, TUV USA will refer to their procedures.

3. REFERENCES

- ISO 17021-1: Requirements for Bodies Providing Audit and Certification of Management Systems.
- A00VA02 TUV NORD CERT Management System Certification
- CERT-310-AA-015: TUV NORD CERT Procedure for Suspension, Withdrawal, Restoring, Renewing, Refusing and Cancellation on Certificates
- IAF MD 11: IAF Mandatory Document for the Application of ISO/IEC 17-21 for Audits of Integrated Management Systems

4. SUSPENSION PROCESS

TUV USA is required to maintain an active certificate based on the demonstration that the certified organization maintains a quality management system that meets the requirements of a given standard (see ISO 17021-1, 9.6.1).

4.1. Suspension based on the audit result

TUV USA verifies the maintenance of an organization’s QMS by performing regular audits (e.g. surveillances, recertification, etc.)

The suspension process might be initiated based on a recommendation of the audit team, after an on-site assessment due to:

- Failure to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system
- Significant number or nature of major nonconformities discovered during audits

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- Improper use of the certificate or logos
- Required corrective actions not implemented
- Unacceptable changes to the quality system have occurred
- Certification system rules changes not implemented by the client
- The client ceases to do business with the product or service for an extended period

The auditor shall record the recommendation of suspension in the audit report with a justification (e.g. due to high the number of major nonconformities). Upon submission of the audit documents to Workflow, the auditor shall also communicate the recommendation via e-mail to the concerned Project/Client Manager.

If the organization has its management system certified to more than one standard (e.g. integrated QMS), the Project/Client Manager shall require the auditor to investigate the impact of the certification being suspended or withdrawn on the certification to other management system standard(s)/specification(s).

4.2. Request for Suspension

The Project/Client Manager is responsible to submit the request for suspension through the Workflow “Manage Suspension Withdrawal” module, along with the information relevant to the suspension, and all supporting documents, emails, record of communication, etc. The Project/Client Manager, once relevant information and attachments have been entered, will select an approved Technical Reviewer to send the request to for review and approval.

If approved by the Technical Reviewer, the request will be forwarded to the Certification Manager. If rejected, it will return to the requesting Project/Client Manager, specifying the reason for rejection and/or request for additional information. The Technical Reviewer, may at their discretion, contact relevant parties for additional information as needed.

4.3. Decision for Suspending the Certificate

The Technical Reviewer responsible for deciding on suspending the certificate shall be different from those who carried out the audits.

The Technical Reviewer will review the information provided and decide on whether the certificate shall be suspended or not.

The Technical Reviewer may decide to contact the auditor and the client to obtain additional information, if necessary. The Project/Client Manager will facilitate this communication.

The decision shall be documented within the Workflow “Manage Suspension Withdrawal” module.

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4.4. Communicating the Suspension

The Certification Manager is responsible for generating a letter using form P008F001, outlining the decision of TUV USA to suspend the client’s certification. The letter shall contain:

- The reason for suspension
- The expected actions in order to remove the certification from suspension
- A statement that during the suspension the certificate is temporarily invalid
- A request for removal of any reference to the certificate (including graphics) from the organization’s website until the suspension is resolved
- A statement that If TUV USA, Inc. does not receive objective evidence of the completed actions within **six (6) months** from the date of suspension, the certificate will be withdrawn immediately
- Instructions on how the organization can appeal to the decision of suspension

The Certification Manager sends the Suspension Letter to the client via e-mail with copy to the concerned Project/Client Manager.

4.5. Update of Databases

The Certification Manager is responsible for updating the status of the certificate in Workflow.

For certifications provided under TNC accreditation as Critical Location, the status of the certificate shall be updated via International Interface.

As Non-Critical Location, TUV USA will inform the Q-Control Department of TUV NORD CERT.

4.6. Other reasons for suspension

The suspension process might also be initiated by office personnel (e.g. Project/Client Manager, Finance) when:

- The client fails to meet financial obligations to TUV USA;
- At the request of the client due to business conditions;
- Substantiated complaints or feedback from end use customers;
- The certified client does not allow surveillances or recertification audits to be conducted at required frequencies.

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NOTE: On December of every year, the TUV USA Quality Manager will generate a report out of Workflow that lists all the audits that were due in the year and check whether they were completed or not. This list shall be compared with the list of active certificates to determine if audits were conducted for all these certificates. When it is identified that a client did not have an audit conducted within the calendar year, TUV USA Quality Manager will check the reason for not having the audit conducted. TUV USA will suspend the certificate on those cases where the customer did not allow surveillances or recertification audits to be conducted. If the audit was not conducted due to problems generated at TUV USA (e.g. auditors not available, auditors cancelling the audit, etc.), TUV USA will not suspend the certificate and will keep record of the justification.

The Project/Client Manager is responsible for tracking the suspension time to ensure it does not exceed 6 months. The Project/Client Manager will remind the customer of the 6 months deadline and if the required actions are not taken within the required timeframe, the certificate shall be withdrawn.

- The surveillance 1 audit after initial certification was not performed within 12 months from the stage 2 certification decision
- When the client communicates the intention of not having the audit performed

NOTE: When the certified client communicates that they do not intend to proceed with an audit, TUV USA must assume that the client will no longer maintaining their QMS. In these cases, the Project/Client Manager will:

1. Communicate formally in an e-mail to the client that audits are required in order to maintain their certificate.
2. The client is also notified that they have **5 (five) calendar days** to provide TUV USA with the decision on whether they wish to proceed with their next audit or not.
3. If the client decides they are not proceeding with the audit, the Project/Client Manager will suspend immediately through the process described on this procedure
4. In case of transfer of certificate from TUV USA to another CB, the client will be notified (in writing) that in order to keep the certificate valid, a date of completion of the transfer has to be provided to TUV USA. The certificate is withdrawn after this date.

4.7. Restoring Validity/ Removing Suspension

Once the customer completes the actions required to remove the suspension from the certificate the Project/Client Manager will request the removal of suspension using the Workflow “Request Suspension to be Lifted” module.

The Request is submitted to an approved Technical Reviewer. The Project/Client Manager

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will submit evidence of completion of the actions (e.g. Audit Report with the recommendation of the Lead Auditor, evidence of closure of Nonconformities, confirmation of payment of invoices, etc.).

Upon decision of the Technical Reviewer of removal of suspension, the Certification Manager will send a letter communicating the decision to the client with copy to the concerned Project/Client Manager.

The status of the certificate in all databases shall be updated accordingly.

5. Withdrawal Process

5.1. Withdrawal after Suspension

When the customer is not able to present evidence of completion of the required actions after **6 months** of suspension, TUV USA will withdraw the certificate.

The Project/Client Manager will request the withdrawal through the Workflow “Request for Change of Certification Status” module and assign it to a Technical Reviewer.

The Technical Reviewer will record the decision in the Workflow “Manage Suspension Withdrawal” module.

The Certification Manager creates and sends the letter communicating the withdrawal to the certified client via e-mail, with copy to the Project/Client Manager.

The Withdrawal letter shall contain:

- The reason for withdrawal
- A statement that certificate is cancelled
- A request for removal of any reference to the certificate (including graphics) from the organization’s website permanently
- Instructions on how the organization can appeal to the decision of withdrawal

The Certification Manager updates the related databases as described on 4.5.

Depending on the reason, TUV USA might withdraw the certification of a client without going through the suspension process first.

6. Changes on the Certification

Changes in the certification other than suspension and withdrawal shall be requested using the form P008F003 Request for Changes on Certification. In all cases described in this section, the completed form shall be sent to a Technical Reviewer for Certification Decision. The approved P008F003 is the record of the certification decision. Once the change is approved, the form is sent to the concerned Certification Manager who will update the certificate.

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6.1. Change of Company Name and/or Address

TUV USA shall request the completion of the form P008F003 and evidence of name change (e.g. updated articles of incorporation, company’s registration).

6.2. Addition/ Reduction of Sites and changes to the Scope of Certification

In the middle of the cycle, some circumstances may require changes in the scope of certification:

- The certified client communicates their intention of closing a site that is part of the scope of certification
- The certified client communicates their intention of adding one or more sites that will perform activities within the scope of certification
- The certified customer communicates their intention of removing processes and/or activities and/or products described in the scope of certification
- The certified customer communicates their intention of adding processes and/or activities and/or products described in the scope of certification

The Project/Client Manager shall send the P008F003 completed by the customer to the Technical reviewer, who evaluates the request and determines the necessary actions before the changes are performed (e.g., updates on the IAF/EA codes, risk level, composition of the audit team, special audit etc.), if the request is approved.

6.2.1. Changes to the Certification in response to a Suspension

This process has two steps:

1 – Project/Client Manager sends the P008F003 requesting the change to the scope to a Technical Reviewer. If the request is approved, it is sent to the respective Certification Manager who shall be updated the certificate.

2 - The Project/Client Manager will request the suspension to be lifted in Workflow based on the change of the scope. A Technical Reviewer evaluates if the change in the scope is sufficient to lift suspension.

6.2.2. Change on Certification as the result of an on-site audit

If the change of the scope is the outcome of an onsite audit, the Lead Auditor will submit a certificate application with the audit documentation.

The Technical Reviewer assigned to the project will decide on the change of the scope.

7. Appealing the Suspension, Withdrawal and Scope Reduction

When the client does not agree with the decision of TUV USA of suspending, withdrawing or reducing the scope of their certificate, an appeal can be submitted to TUV USA. The client is required to provide evidence that they meet the requirements related to the suspension, withdrawal or scope reduction. The appeal is managed according to the procedure GOP 016.

8. Verification of client’s website

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Once the certificates are suspended or withdrawn, the Client Manager is responsible for verifying that the company has made the required changes on their website. The verification shall be recorded in Workflow under the “Suspension/ Withdrawal” Menu. The Operations Manager tracks the completion of the required changes to customer’s websites with the operations team during the Project Status Meeting. The Operations Manager will escalate the action to the Quality and Accreditation Manager when the client doesn’t perform the required changes within 30 days after the suspension/ withdrawal of the certificate.

9. Records

- Form P008F001 Suspension, Withdrawal Letter
- Form P008F002 Letter for Removal of Suspension
- Form P008F003 Request for Change of Certificate Status
- Certificate Application
- Audit Reports
- Customer’s certificate

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Revision History

Rev.	Date	Description of Change	Approved By / Date	Communication / Training
1	See historic files	See historic files	See historic files	
2	3/3/2014	Complete revision to include requirements AQMS certificates and OASIS	S. Gall / 3/3/2014	
3	03/16/2016	The format of the procedure was made consistent with the GOP procedures. No changes were performed in the content.	R. De Souza 03/16/2016	
4	05/01/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Included reference to TNC Procedure CERT-310-AA-015 ▪ Included note on section 4.1 to describe the actions to be taken when a client decides to not proceed with an audit. ▪ Created section 4.7 and 4.8. to address OASIS and TNC requirements respectively ▪ Clarified Records to be maintained 	R. De Souza	Communicated via e-mail to office personnel
5	06/05/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4.1 added instructions for initial and technical decisions for suspension of AS certificates ▪ 4.1 Description of the required actions when a company is closing a site ▪ 4.2 Clarified client responsibility to remove references from website or other documentation to a suspended certificate 	R. De Souza	Communicated via e-mail to office personnel and released in Workflow
6	01/10/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 4.2.1 created to address audits not conducted within the required frequency ▪ Section 4.4.1 created to address the IAQG OPMT resolution #129 	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow
7	1/27/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The structure of the procedure was update ▪ Section 8 of the procedure contains specific 	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow and Training to concerned

		<p>requirements that apply to the AQMS standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forms P008F001, P008F002 and P008F003 were introduced into the process ▪ It was made clear in all cases how TUV USA performs the certification decision on suspension, withdrawal and reduction of scope 		personnel
8	3/5/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added section (8.1) for suspension of certificate due to extraordinary events. Renumbered succeeding sections. 	S. Gall	Released in Workflow
9	06/20/2021	New section 8 added	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow/ Training of Client Managers
10	01/04/2022	Section 8 updated to describe method for following up the update on customer's websites after suspension/ withdrawal	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow/ Communicated to Client Managers
11	04/11/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 3 – add reference to IAF MD11. ▪ Section 4.1-add Auditor responsibility to verify impact of suspension from audit recommendation. ▪ Section 8-add check of client website post suspension. Add 14d req. to update OASIS. ▪ Section 9.1-add provision for suspension as a result of extraordinary event. 	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow/ Communicated to Client Managers
12	05/06/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rev. History-Correct missing revision history statements for Rev. 11. ▪ Multiple Sections-replace ref. to P008F003 with applicable module in Workflow. Amend ref. to "Project Manager" and "Client Manager" to "Project/Client Manager" ▪ Section 4.2-update process 	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow/ Communicated to Client Managers

		<p>flow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 4.3 & 4.4-revision to verbiage, no change to intent. ▪ Section 4.5-add “For Aerospace Certificates – clarification only. ▪ Section 8-Add 14d req. to update OASIS. ▪ Section 9.1-add “natural disaster” and “civil unrest” to reasons for suspension. Add ref. to “industry function”. Clarify that industry directed requirements may be applicable vs that which is in this procedure. Added req. for an abbreviated Stage 1 Audit Report for reinstatements. Added that reinstatement, inc. Certificate Decision must occur within the 12 month reinstatement period. 		
13	06/27/2022	Section 6 was updated to describe the process for changes in the certification.	R. De Souza	Released in Workflow/ Communicated to Client Managers
14	02/23/2024	Removed all references to AQMS. Requirements have been incorporated into P001.	D. Minamino 02/23/2024	Released in Workflow/ Communicated to Client Managers