



1. Application

A company that wishes to have their management system audited by TUV USA in order to be certified according a specific standard, has to provide TUV USA with detailed information about its activities to define the scope they aim to have certified. TUV USA collects this information on questionnaires, applications forms and request for quote forms as appropriate. The company can get in contact with TUV USA via phone, e-mail or by completing the “Request for Quote” form published on the company website (www.tuv-usa.com). TUV USA staff will contact the client and provide the company with the Request for Quote form or appropriate questionnaire in order to collect the necessary information. The responsible person at TUV USA will provide support to the customer completing the questionnaire and answering all question in regards to the certification process. After completion, the company returns the questionnaire to TUV USA.

2. Application Review

A competent person at TUV USA reviews the completed questionnaire in order to determine the exact scope, ensure available competence and to define the required audit duration. Phone and video calls may be necessary in order to collect sufficient details of information. At the end of the review process TUV USA will either accept or decline the application for certification and initiate the necessary next steps and informs the client about the result of the review.

3. Offer

Upon acceptance of the application, TUV USA provides the company with an Offer that contains the terms and conditions, description and the cost of the service(s). If the company agrees with the conditions, it signs the Offer and/or the related contracts/ agreements. After acceptance of the offer, TUV USA will make the necessary arrangement for the audit.

4. Project Manager

By signing the offer/acceptance, the company converts to client. TUV USA is sending the welcome package to the client and the TUV USA Project Manager will be assigned and contact the client. The Project Manager is the client’s main contact at TUV USA and is responsible for monitoring all the activities within the client’s certification process.

5. Auditor Assignment

The Project Manager assigns a qualified auditor or audit team to perform the audit. The audit team qualification is adequate to the type of activity performed by the client company.

6. Scheduling the Audit

The assigned Lead Auditor will schedule the audit in agreement with the client and may collect additional necessary information in order to create the Audit Plan. The Lead Auditor sends the Audit Plan to the client’s representative prior to the audit for confirmation and acceptance.

7. Stage 1 Assessment

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In principle, an initial (QMS) Certification Audit comprises Stage 1 and a Stage 2 audit. In Case a standard does not require different stages TUV USA will outline this in the initial offer and discuss this with the company/client.

The objectives of the stage 1 are:

- a) Review the client's management system documented information;
- b) Evaluate the client's site-specific conditions and to undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for stage 2;
- c) Review the client's status and understanding regarding requirements of the standard, in particular with respect to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives and operation of the management system;
- d) Obtain necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, including:
 - the client's site(s);
 - processes and equipment used;
 - levels of controls established (particularly in case of multisite clients);
 - applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;
- e) Review the allocation of resources for stage 2 and agree the details of stage 2 with the client;
- f) Provide a focus for planning stage 2 by gaining a sufficient understanding of the client's management system and site operations in the context of the management system standard or other normative document;
- g) Evaluate if the internal audits and management reviews are being planned and performed, and that the level of implementation of the management system substantiates that the client is ready for stage 2.

8. Stage 2 Audit

The purpose of stage 2 is to evaluate the implementation, including effectiveness, of the client's management system. The stage 2 shall take place at the site(s) of the client. It shall include the auditing of at least the following:

- a) Information and evidence about conformity to all requirements of the applicable management system standard or other normative documents;
- b) Performance monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing against key performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable management system standard or other normative document);
- c) The client's management system ability and its performance regarding meeting of applicable statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements;
- d) Operational control of the client's processes;
- e) Internal auditing and management review;
- f) Management responsibility for the client's policies.

9. Nonconformities

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A Nonconformity is a Non-fulfillment of a requirement and can be graded as minor or major. In the event that there are nonconformities found during an Initial, Surveillance or Recertification audit, the organization shall perform prompt investigation of the issue(s) and provide:

- Effective root cause analysis
- Corrective action measures with the intent to correct the issue(s) without further occurrences.

Timeframes for corrective action responses vary between International Standards. Nonconformance Reports or Audit Reports provide specific due dates for responses. In any case to auditor will discuss non-conformities and areas for improvement with the client during the audit and the closing meeting.

10. Audit Report

After the conclusion of the audit, the Lead Auditor is responsible for generating an Audit Report, which is provided to the company. The Audit Report contains, among other information, the evidences and collected during the audit, findings and the recommendation of the audit team.

11. Granting/ Refusing Certification (Certification Decision)

The Lead Auditor will submit the audit documentation to the responsible Project Manager/Technical Reviewer/Veto Person through the workflow system. After conducting the review TUV USA will make a certification decision and inform the client about the result and if applicable about the next steps.

12. Certification Document

Following a positive certification decision TUV USA issues a certificate containing the information required by the corresponding standard and the related certification scheme and will send it to the client. The certificate will show the client's address and sites covered by the certification, the certified scope as well as the validity/expiry of the certificate.

13. Maintaining Certification.

Surveillance Audits

The surveillance audits are performed to determine if the client's certified management system continues to fulfil requirements between recertification audits. The frequency of the audit may increase depending on the capability of the certified client to comply with the requirements. They are not necessarily full system audits.

Recertification Audits (Renewal of Certification)

The purpose of a recertification audit is to confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of the management system as a whole, and its continued relevance and applicability for the scope of certification.

After completion of every type of audit, the audit documentation is submitted to review in order to determine if the certification can be maintained.

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Recertification audits are schedule well in advance of the expiration of the client's certification. If the recertification audit is delayed due to customer issues (such as failure to schedule an audit or excessive rejections of corrective action), there could be a lapse in the certificate.

14. Requesting Information

TUV USA provides upon request information such as:

- a) Geographical areas in which it operates
- b) The status of a given certification
- c) The name, related normative document, scope and geographical location (city and country) for a specific certified client.

The interested parties can request this information via e-mail at request-us@tuv-nord.com or via phone at +1 (603) 870 8023.

The contact information is also available at the main page of TUV USA website (www.tuv-usa.com).

NOTE: In exceptional cases, access to certain information can be limited on the request of the client (e.g. for security reasons).

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