



POLICY FOR AUDITING & CERTIFICATION TO ISO 14001

In addition to the General Policy which applies to all Standards, this policy describes interpretations of the requirements for auditing and certification of environmental management systems to ISO 14001 made by TQCSI's Certification Approval Panel. It complements TQCSI Work Instruction 39 (ISO 14001) which should also be referred to by auditors when auditing clients' environmental management systems.

A **minor nonconformance** is to be raised where:

- a discrepancy which has the potential to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the environmental management system has not been addressed since being raised at a previous audit
- a serious discrepancy or a number of like discrepancies indicate there is a breakdown in part of the environmental management system or there is potential for pollution
- the monitoring of critical environmental impacts does not provide sufficient confidence in the integrity of the environmental management system
- the objectives of the environmental management system are not established and monitored
- there is an environmental hazard that is not controlled and could cause environmental harm
- there is a significant breach of legislation or a regulatory requirement.

A **major nonconformance** is to be raised where:

- an initial review of potential environmental risks has not been conducted
- the agreed action plan to address a minor nonconformance has not been implemented
- a serious discrepancy or a number of like discrepancies indicate there is a total breakdown in the environmental management system or there is direct evidence of pollution
- there is a very significant breach of legislation or a regulatory requirement.

Timeframe for major nonconformances

When a major nonconformance is raised, the respective Audit Team Leader or General Manager is to consider the risk when deciding on the time frame for the client to satisfactorily address the nonconformance. The time frame is not to be greater than three months (unless initial certification is being sought) but is to be much shorter if there is a risk to public safety. As a guide:

- major NCR related to document control, management review, training etc - 3 months
- major NCR related to meeting environmental objectives - 2 months
- major NCR posing a threat of pollution - 1 month
- major NCR posing an immediate or serious threat of pollution – 1 week.

General:

- An initial risk assessment of potential environmental aspects and impacts (often referred to as an Initial Environmental Review) must be undertaken. Once, the potential environmental aspects and impacts have been registered, the initial review becomes a historical document.
- All environmental risks and hazards, their controls and risk assessment should be summarised on a register (often referred to as an Environmental Risk Register). The register must be regularly reviewed.
- Environmental objectives must be identified, documented and reviewed in a plan.

Approved: *original signed*

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