

ISO 14001 4.5.4 AUDIT



Lesson Learning Goals

At the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- State the main purpose of environmental audits
- Describe the key 'ingredients' of an EMS audit
- Distinguish between audit criteria, scope, and objectives
- Summarize the roles of auditors, client, auditee, and top management in an audit
- List at least five items that should be covered in an EMS audit procedure
- Specify at least three areas of focus for a compliance audit

Purpose of EMS Audits

To ensure the organization is continually improving its EMS and environmental performance

EMS Audit: ISO 14001 Definition

A **systematic** and **documented verification** process of **objectively** obtaining and **evaluating** audit **evidence** to determine whether an organization's EMS conforms with the EMS audit **criteria** set by the organization (i.e., ISO 14001), and communicating the results of this process to management

Key Words in Definition

- **Systematic:** organized, methodical, planned
- **Documented:** recorded in writing
- **Verification:** information is confirmed, cross-checked, validated
- **Objective:** independent, unbiased, no conflict of interest
- **Evaluating:** assessing
- **Evidence:** verified observations, verified verbal and written information

Audit Criteria and Scope

AUDIT CRITERIA

- Assess an EMS against ISO 14001 specifications

AUDIT SCOPE

- Defines which elements of ISO 14001, which parts of the organization, and how far into the past the audit will cover

Audit Objectives

OBJECTIVES

- ➔ Assess:
 - » whether the EMS has been implemented and maintained effectively
 - » whether the EMS meets industry norms, and the principles of due diligence
- ➔ Identify opportunities for improving the EMS

Audits: The Big Test

- ➔ Environmental audits of an EMS are usually conducted once or twice a year
- ➔ Types of audits:
 - » Internal audits by personnel from the facility, other company sites, or contractors
 - » External audits by independent certified registration body:
 - » Registration (3-year intervals)
 - » Surveillance (every 6 months or 1 year)

Who is Involved in an Audit?

- **Client:** the 'sponsor', who requests and usually pays for the audit
- **Auditee:** the organization or facility being audited (often also the client)
- **Audit team:** qualified individuals, directed by a lead auditor, who conduct the audit
- **Facility management:** responsible for receiving and initiating action on audit results
- **Facility supervisors and employees:** responsible for co-operating in the audit and providing information requested by auditors

ISO 14001 EMS Audit says:

The organization shall establish and maintain (a) program(s) and procedures for periodic environmental management system audits to be carried out in order to:

ISO 14001 EMS Audit (Cont'd)

- (a) determine whether or not the EMS
 - (i) conforms to planned arrangements for environmental management, including the requirements of this International Standard; and
 - (ii) has been properly implemented and maintained; and
- (b) provide information on the results of audits to management

This Means

- ➔ The organization must schedule regular internal audits of its EMS to assess whether it:
 - » routinely meets all the specifications of ISO 14001
 - » is kept up to date (maintained) properly
- ➔ Top management must be made fully aware of the audit findings

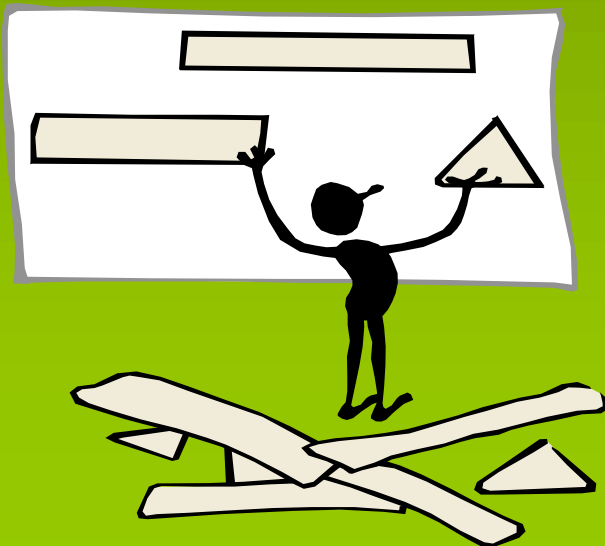
ISO 14001 EMS Audit one more thing:

The organization's audit programme, including any schedule, shall be based on the environmental importance of the activity concerned, and the results of previous audits. In order to be comprehensive, the audit procedures shall cover the audit scope, frequency, and methodologies, as well as the responsibilities and requirements for conducting audits and reporting results.

Translated, This Means

- Audits must be scheduled at specified intervals
 - » The schedule must be flexible to ensure highest priority issues are audited first

and.....



More Interpretation of ISO 14001 4.5.4

- ➔ Audit procedures must cover:
 - » scope, frequency (i.e., schedule), methods
 - » roles and responsibilities of audit team members, facility managers, and employees
 - » qualification and experience requirements for audit team members
 - » who is responsible for reporting audit findings to management, when, and how

More about Audit Procedures

- ➔ Audit procedures should also include:
 - » design, development and use of audit protocols and checklists
 - » audit report format, review schedule, and distribution
 - » roles and responsibilities for development and implementation of follow-up plans for corrective and preventive actions

ISO Requirements for Audits and Auditors

- Audits and auditors should meet as closely as possible requirements of:
 - ISO 14010** Guidelines for Environmental Auditing - General Principles
 - ISO 14011** Audit Procedures - Auditing of Environmental Management Systems
 - ISO 14012** Qualification Criteria for Environmental Auditors

Compliance Audits

- ➔ In addition to regular EMS audits, an organization must also conduct periodic audits of compliance with:
 - » national, provincial/regional, and local laws, regulations, and permits
 - » requirements of due diligence
 - » company policies, programmes, and procedures
 - » good environmental management practices for their industry

Concluding Thoughts

Important points to remember are:

- Audits are periodic checks on the 'health' of a facility's EMS or compliance status, and a catalyst for continual improvement of the EMS
- Audits of ISO 14001 EMS take place at intervals between two months and one year
- Audit participants include the client/sponsor, auditee, audit team, management, and employees
- Audit procedures must define roles, responsibilities, scope, schedule, auditor selection criteria, and reporting requirements