

FSSC 22000 Position in relation to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The current epidemic of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) may impact the CBs ability to complete the scheduled audits, thus potentially impacting the FSSC 22000 certification status of organizations.

Following discussions internally and with other Stakeholders, FSSC22000 has decided to grant an exception in the case of the Coronavirus where this is preventing CBs from travelling to organizations in affected areas/countries. In all cases, the CB shall have documented procedures and keep records of the activities mentioned below as required under FSSC 22000 Scheme version 5, section 5.10 of Part 3 Requirements for the Certification Process.

The Foundation FSSC 22000 requires its licensed CBs to undertake the following actions:

- a) Follow IAF ID3:2011 *Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations*, available at https://www.iaf.nu/upFiles/IAFID32011_Management_of_Extraordinary_Events_or_Circumstances.pdf
The risk assessment shall as a minimum include the criteria as listed in section 3 of IAF ID3: 2011. The outcome of the risk assessment could lead to the suspension of the certificate and if so, the Portal shall be updated accordingly.
- b) Surveillance audits: risk assess the situation of the certified organization and take appropriate action. This could also lead to a postponement of the surveillance audit by a maximum of 6 months within the calendar year. The exception will also apply to the first surveillance audit following an initial certification.
- c) Re-certification audits: in case the certificate will expire, a validity extension of up to 6 months is allowed following a documented risk assessment and a successful 'remote' audit following IAF MD4:2018 *The use of information and communication technology (ICT) for auditing/assessment purposes*, available at <https://www.iaf.nu/upFiles/IAF%20MD4%20Issue%202%2003072018.pdf>
- d) The 'remote' audit conducted by the CB shall at least include the following:
 - Review of the key changes since the last audit e.g. HACCP plans, product recalls and significant complaint levels.
 - Status with regard to objectives and key process performance, management review and internal audits;
 - Document review of processing records including but not limited to the monitoring and corrective actions linked to OPRPs and CCPs;
 - Review of PRP records i.e. hygiene, pest control and maintenance records;
 - A traceability test to ensure continued compliance with the Scheme rules;
 - Emergency preparedness and response including the impact of the Corona virus on the supply chain of the organization and the potential impact on resources

The duration of this audit shall be appropriate to the complexities of the site and sufficient to adequately cover these aspects. Where the 'remote' audit identifies significant issues (i.e. major or critical non-conformities) or risk to the integrity of the scheme or the certification, then the validity of the certificate shall not be extended. Any identified minor nonconformities will require verification of the correction and the corrective action, prior to extending the validity of the certificate. In all cases the CB is responsible for the decision to extend the certificate validity and is required to keep records to support the certification decision.

- e) The remote audit can never be used to replace the re-certification audit and cannot be used to reduce the duration of the re-certification audit in any way. The full re-certification audit needs to take place within the 6 month validity extension window, with sufficient time to ensure that the extended certificate does not expire and continuous certification is maintained.
- f) Where the validity of the certificate is extended, the 'remote' audit report and the risk assessment shall be uploaded in the Portal as a 'special audit' and the subsequent certificate decision resulting in an extended certificate expiry date, shall be entered in the Portal at the latest 28 days after the decision has been taken.