Description of the certification procedure
QS (Qualität und Sicherheit)

Table of contents

If you should require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be please to help you.

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Rules and performance descriptions regarding certification according to QS – Qualität und Sicherheit

The rules and the performance descriptions regarding certification according to the QS standard (meat, animal feed and fruit and vegetables) constitute an integral part of the offer. They supplement the general conditions of certification (allgemeine Bedingungen zur Zertifizierung)

The requirements of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH under www.q-s.de are applicable.

Rules of the TÜV NORD CERT certification procedure according to QS

The customer undertakes to adhere to the rules which are applicable to him regarding the respective valid certification requirements of the QS system based on the level of proof of the provisions of the QS standard. In particular, these are as follows:

- The certification body may only carry out QS certification if the client has concluded the system contract with QS.
- The audit can only ever include one operating/production site
- The certification body is entitled to pass on information to QS which affects the certification procedure according to the provisions of the QS standard.
- The customer commits to enter all relevant master data into the QS database, keep them up to date and informs the certification body in a timely matter about changes of the methods and procedures.
- If it becomes clear to the client that a claim or a charge could be brought before the court with regard to the safety or legality of a product, he will inform the certification body immediately. From its side, the certification body will take appropriate steps in order to assess the situation and its effect on the certification and will take suitable measures.
- The customer will inform the certification body in writing in the case of a product recall (Mailbox: tncert-food-recall@tuev-nord.de), and will provide details of what has occurred.
- From its side, the certification body will take appropriate steps in order to assess the situation and its effect on the certification and will take suitable measures.
- Refusal or break-off of an audit by the company is evaluated with a general K.O.
- Audit results are documented in an audit report and entered into the QS database by the certification body.
- If there is a change in the ownership, structure or personnel of the responsible management of the customer which allows the conclusion that the customer may no longer satisfy requirements, the certification body has to decide whether or not the conduct of a new follow up audit is necessary for the purpose of preserving certification.
- The customer supports announced or unannounced controls in the company at any time by QS approved certification bodies, a QS employee or a third person commissioned by QS.

1 CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The client commissioned the certification body to perform independence inspections. The certification body periodically conducts audits (so called regular audits) at the clients.

During a regular audit it is verified whether a company satisfies the technical, organisational and contentual requirements necessary for participating in the QS scheme. Company-specific processes will be checked and opportunities for improvement will be identified. Audits are conducted using a stage-specific checklist.

1.1 Audit Preparation

The client has to register the company data in the QS database.

Before the audit, an audit plan is drafted by the auditor, which contains all the QS requirements to be audited, the affected processes and the organisation units of the client, as well as a schedule for the audit. This plan is sent to the client two weeks before the audit

The lead auditor agrees the plan with the employee of the client responsible for the audit and informs the other auditors in the team, if any.

1.2 Certification audit – regular audit

The onsite audit includes

- Inspection of appropriate documentation and its control
- Recording and assessing the implementation of the requirements of the scheme manual in operational practice
- Recognition of errors and nonconformities
- Documentation of evaluations, nonconformities and agreements on corrective actions.

At the beginning of the audit, an introductory discussion is held. Following this, individual employees are questioned at their workstations and other relevant documents, records, orders, guidelines etc. are viewed.

The task of the organisation during the audit is to demonstrate the practical application of its documented procedures. Following the end of the audit, the client is informed of the result in a closing meeting. The auditor can provide an estimate of the result of the audit, but cannot state the final result itself. A copy of the completed QS checklist is handed over to the client in the closing meeting. This checklist includes the nonconformities that have been identified. C and D nonconformities are documented in the separate nonconformity report.

A repeated D evaluation in a follow-up audit can be evaluated with K.O..

The client sends the action plan to the auditor, along with the corrective actions and suitable proofs. The audit verifies the corrective actions based on the proofs provided or by means of a follow-up audit, i.e. a new inspection on site, and notes this in the nonconformity report. The scope of the follow-up audit is decided by the lead auditor. However, only the requirements of the standard for which a nonconformity or nonconformities were identified are subject to re-audit. The follow-up audit is based on the time required and fees are charged in accordance with the list of fees.

If there is a K.O. (knock-out) assessment, a complete new audit is necessary. If the audit is broken off, this is documented in the report. The certification body must inform QS GmbH immediately.

1.3 Award of Certificate

A certificate or confirmation can only be issued, when an eligibility of delivery for the QS scheme consists. Locations that are included on the basis of a scheme agreement in the QS scheme obtain only after the signature of the contract the eligibility of delivery for the QS scheme.

The certificate validity begins with the date of the decision on certification. In the case of an initial audit, the end of the certificate's validity is calculated from the audit date plus the time interval in accordance with the respective QS status. In the case of a follow-up audit, the new period of validity of the certificate is calculated on the basis of the end of the previous certificate plus the time interval in accordance with the respective QS status.

The audit is passed, if the maximum permitted percentage of C and/or D evaluations presented in the table below is not exceeded and there are no K.O. evaluations.

The audit is failed, if the maximum permitted percentage of C and/or D evaluations to achieve Status III according to below table is exceeded, a requirement received a K.O. evaluation, a repeated D evaluation or a general K.O. were given.

A K.O. evaluation occurs when a D is assigned to a requirement identified as a K.O. criterion.

Percentage C-evaluations	Percentage D- evaluations	Percentage C- und D-evaluations	QS-Status	Audit interval
maximum 5 %	0 %	(not relevant)	Status I	2 years
maximum 10 %	maximum 3 %	maximum 10 %	Status II	1 year
maximum 20 %	maximum 10 %	maximum 20 %	Status III	6 month

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2 RECERTIFICATION AUDIT

The date when the recertification audit is due is precise to the day and depends on the delivery date which is mentioned in the QS-database. It is not possible to postpone the date

Before the recertification audit, the data of the organisation are updated in order to take changes which have a significant influence on the area of activity or the way of working of the client into consideration.

All the requirements of the QS standard are audited in the recertification audit, along with the corrective actions from the previous audit. The audit procedure is the same as for a certification audit.

3 UNANNOUNCED AUDITS

Unannounced audits are conducted on all stages. The unannounced audits can be conducted as

- unannounced regular audits or as
- unannounced spot audits between two scheduled regular audits.

The scheme participants determine in the database for each location how the unannounced audits are to be conducted.

There is no choice of audit options at the stages slaughtering/ cutting, processing. The regular audits are to be carried out announced, all sites will receive an unannounced spot audit.

The chance from the audit option “announced regular audit and unannounced spot audit” to “unannounced regular audit “ is only possible three month before the regular certification expires.

Audits in combination with other schemes are still possible, if the inspection of all parts of the audit is unannounced. If the conducting of an unannounced audit is not permitted within the other scheme, the option “spotaudit” has to be selected as unannounced audit.

3.1 Unannounced regular audits

Unannounced regular audits must be conducted prior to the expiry of certification. All criteria of the stage-specific checklist must be fully checked.

All regular audits on the Food Retail stage / stage meat wholesale in the QS scheme are conducted without notification in advance.

It is also required to carry out an unannounced spot audit after a regular audit in the event of a termination of the contract or closure of a company/business premises.

3.2. Unannounced spot audits

Unannounced spot audits are conducted additionally between scheduled, announced regular audits. The space of time between a spot and a regular audit must be at least two months (before and after).

Spot audits only have an influence on the QS status of the company in the event of K.O. evaluations.

Even in the event of termination or closure of an location/site, an unannounced spot audit must still be carried out after a system audit before the site will close or terminates the contract.

3.3. Presence of a person authorized to provide information

It is possible to notify the company in advance on individual stages in order to ensure that a person capable of providing information is present during the audit:

- Feed sector: max. 24 hours (1 working day)
- Slaughtering/ deboning: max. 24 hours (1 working day); from the 01-07-2021: without notification
- Processing: maximum 24 hours (1 working day); from the 01-07-2021: without notification
- Meat wholesale: maximum 24 hours (1 working day)
- Wholesale fruit, vegetables, potatoes: maximum 24 hours (1 working day)
- Food retail: no advance notification

3.4. Procedure in the event that the client refuses an unannounced audit

If the client refuses to have an unannounced audit conducted, the certification body has to decide wether the refusal is justified. In the event of an unjustified refusal, the certification body must enter the audit in the QS database with general K.O.

The possible consequences of a refusal could be the possible lost of egibility of delivery, sanctions procedure, conducting of a complete regular audit etc.

4 MEASURES UNDER THE SCHEME INTEGRITY SYSTEM

In order to check the functionality of quality assurance measures, QS organizes systematic and interlocked control measures.

4.1. Random sample audits

In the period between the periodically conducted regular audits, compliance with QS requirements as checked by means of random sample audits.

QS usually engages those certification bodies currently commissioned with conducting regular audits by the client to carry out a random sample audit.

Random sample audits shall be unannounced. In order to ensure the presence of a person being able and authorised to provide necessary information, notice may be given no longer than 24 hours before the scheduled audit date. Random sample audits are restricted to several selected requirements, which are the focus of the audit. Unless they contain K.O. evaluations, random sample audits do not have an effect on the frequency of regular audits or the QS status. If K.O. evaluations occur, a complete regular audit is to be conducted

4.2. Audit of special purpose

In suspicious cases or in the event of imminent danger, QS immediately commissions audits of special purpose at the client.

These audits are usually performed unannounced. Unless they contain K.O. evaluations, random sample audits do not have an effect on the frequency of regular audits or the QS status. If K.O. evaluations occur, a complete regular audit is to be conducted.

4.3. Parallel audits

Parallel audits serve to verify the result of a previous regular audit. They are performed by QS within a maximum of 4 weeks after the regular audit.

Parallel audits shall be unannounced. In order to ensure the presence of a person being able and authorised to provide necessary information, notice may be given no longer than 24 hours before the scheduled audit date.

Parallel audits are restricted to several selected requirements, which are the focus of the audit. Unless they contain K.O. evaluations, parallel audits do not have an effect on the frequency of regular audits or the QS status. If K.O. evaluations occur, a complete regular audit is to be conducted.

5 CHANGE OF CERTIFICATION BODY

In the event of a change of the certification body by the client, certification can be transferred. To this end, the outgoing certification body is obliged to pass on all existing documents required for transfer of certification directly to another QS approved certification body to be nominated by the client.

If there are K.O. evaluations which have not been corrected at the time of the change of certification body, a new regular audit needs to be conducted at any rate.

The change of the certification body is not allowed, if the extension on certificate validity has been conducted.

6 MANAGEMENT OF NON-CONFORMITIES

The audited business must propose corrective actions to the auditor for C and D evaluations.

The determination of corrective actions comprises the following steps:

- Determination of causes
- Rectification of causes
- Suitable measures to prevent a recurrence of the problems (preventive measures)
- Documentation of the implemented measures

The evaluations, related remarks and proposed corrective actions, including deadlines for their

implementation and responsibilities, must be documented in the corrective actions report. If the

corrective actions report is not prepared during the audit, it must be submitted to the certification body by the audited company and finally agreed with the auditor no later than 14 days after the audit.

Implementation of corrective actions must be checked by the certification body. The correct and timely verification of corrective actions must be entered in the QS Database by certification body. Certification bodies must be able to provide proof of the verification to QS upon request.

Corrective actions implemented after the audit dot not alter the audit result.

Re-audit after K.O. evaluations during a regular audit

In the event of K.O. evaluations a repeated audit should be conducted in form of a complete regular audit on-site.

Re-audit after K.O. evaluations during a random sample, special, parallel or spot audits

In the event of K.O. evaluations during random sample, special, parallel or spot audits, the repeated audit must always be conducted in form of a complete regular audit.

7 WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATES

Certificates must be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Severe violations against the scheme manual
- Exclusion of the client
- Cancellation of the scheme agreement by the client or by QS
- Notice of termination of the client to QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH
- Change of the certification body by client
- Change of standards or premature recertification

8 LOGISTICS SERVICE PROVIDER FRUIT, VEGETABLES, POTATOES/ TRANSPORT. STORAGE AND TRANSSHIPMENT

The following schemes are recognized by QS for the guidelines Storage of Meat and Meat Products and Logistics Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes:

Recognized Schemes	**Guideline**
QS IFS Logistics IFS Wholesale/ Cash & Carry IFS Food	Storage of Meat and Meat Products And/or Logistics Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes
BRC Storage & Distribution BRC Food Safety	Storage of Meat and Meat Products
QS Road Transport (feed sector) (78) GMP+ Transport	Logistics Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes (exclusively for the transport of unpacked, loose potatoes and onions in bulk or as goods in large crates)

In order to participate in the QS system, a declaration of participation must be signed in accordance with the specifications of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH.

The validity of the respective certificate is entered in the QS database. In the event of a withdrawal of a certificate, the registration will be cancelled.

The certification body charges a system fee for the participation of the client according to the current QS scale of fees and pays this fee to QS.

QS will be informed immediately if the client's participation in the QS system is terminated.

The certification body charges the system fee for the participation of the client to QS according to the current QS scale of fees and transfers the fee to QS.