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Internal Audit Guidance

ISO 14001:2026 & ISO 45001:2018

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Internal Audit Guidance

ISO 14001:2026 & 45001:2018

Contents

Contents *1*

1 Introduction to Internal Auditing *3*

1.1 Purpose of Internal Auditing **3**

1.2 Principles of Internal Auditing **3**

1.3 Selecting Internal Auditors **4**

1.4 What are 'Audit Criteria'? **4**

1.5 Types of Internal Audit **5**

1.5.1 Gap Analysis 5

1.5.2 System Audits 5

1.5.3 Process Audits 5

1.6 Using the Internal Audit Checklists **6**

1.6.1 Internal Audit Checklist 6

1.6.2 Audit Scoring Criteria 7

1.6.3 Audit Result Charts 8

1.6.4 Process Audit Template 9

1.6.5 Supplier Evaluation 10

1.6.6 Supplier Audit Checklist 10

1.7 Internal Audit Programme **10**

1.7.1 Implementing the Audit Programme 10

1.7.2 Focus on Risk-based Auditing 12

1.8 Internal Audit Methodology **12**

1.8.1 General Approach 12

1.8.2 Specific Approaches 13

1.8.2.1 Organizational Leadership 13

1.8.2.2 Performance & Effectiveness 13

1.8.2.3 Process Management 14

1.8.2.4 Continual Improvement 14

1.8.3 Preparation 15

1.8.3.1 Document Review 15

1.8.3.2 Process Criteria, Metrics & Objectives 15

1.8.3.3 Previous Audit Findings 15

1.8.3.4 Complaints & Incidents 15

1.8.3.5 Inputs & Outputs 15

1.8.3.6 Relevant ISO standards 16

1.8.3.7 Metrics & Performance 16

1.8.3.8 Competencies of Personnel 16

1.8.3.9 Linkages & Interactions 16

1.8.4 Conducting Internal Audits 17

1.8.5 Review the Findings 17

1.8.6 Prepare the Report 17

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1 Introduction to Internal Auditing

1.1 Purpose of Internal Auditing

Internal auditing aims to assess the effectiveness of your organization's EHS management system and your organization's overall performance. Internal audits demonstrate compliance with your 'planned arrangements,' e.g., the EHS management system, processes, and documentation are implemented and maintained.

As an auditor, you'll need to gauge how well the management system and its processes function by gathering objective evidence of conformance and performance, or lack thereof. The auditee will often be a process owner; they are the experts of that process and can provide invaluable insight into the mechanics of the process. Begin allocating more time for internal audits:

1. Allocate more time to prepare for the audit;
2. After initial implementation, shift to more process-based assessments;
3. Follow new audit trails and linkages through the processes;
4. Interview Top management in more depth.

Your organization will likely conduct internal audits for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Ensuring compliance with the requirements of internal, international, and industry standards and regulations and other requirements;
2. To determine the effectiveness of the implemented system in meeting specified objectives (environmental, safety, financial, etc.);
3. To explore opportunities for improvement;
4. To meet statutory and regulatory requirements;
5. To provide feedback to Top management.

In addition to this guidance document, the package contains the following documents, which include essential reports, checklists, trackers, and programmes:

Phase	Document Title	Format	How/when to Use
Planning	Internal Audit Programme	.xlsx	Planning and communicating short and long-range internal audit activities
	Gap Analysis Checklist	.docx	Conducting an initial gap analysis in preparation for full implementation
Doing	Internal Audit Checklist	.xlsx	Conducting compliance to requirements (system) audits to ensure comprehensive coverage
	Process Audit Template	.xlsx	Conducting, noting, and reporting in-depth analysis of individual processes and their linkages
	Supplier Audit Checklist	.xlsx	Capturing compliance information from Suppliers as a basis for selection
Checking	Corrective Action Tracker	.xlsx	Tracking nonconformities that relate to corrective actions and monitoring timely close-out
Acting	Corrective Action Report	.docx	Documenting, problem-solving, and reporting nonconformities and their corrective actions
	Internal Audit Report	.docx	Summarising and reporting internal audit findings to Top management
			Capture opinions, opportunities for improvement, and lessons learned from auditees

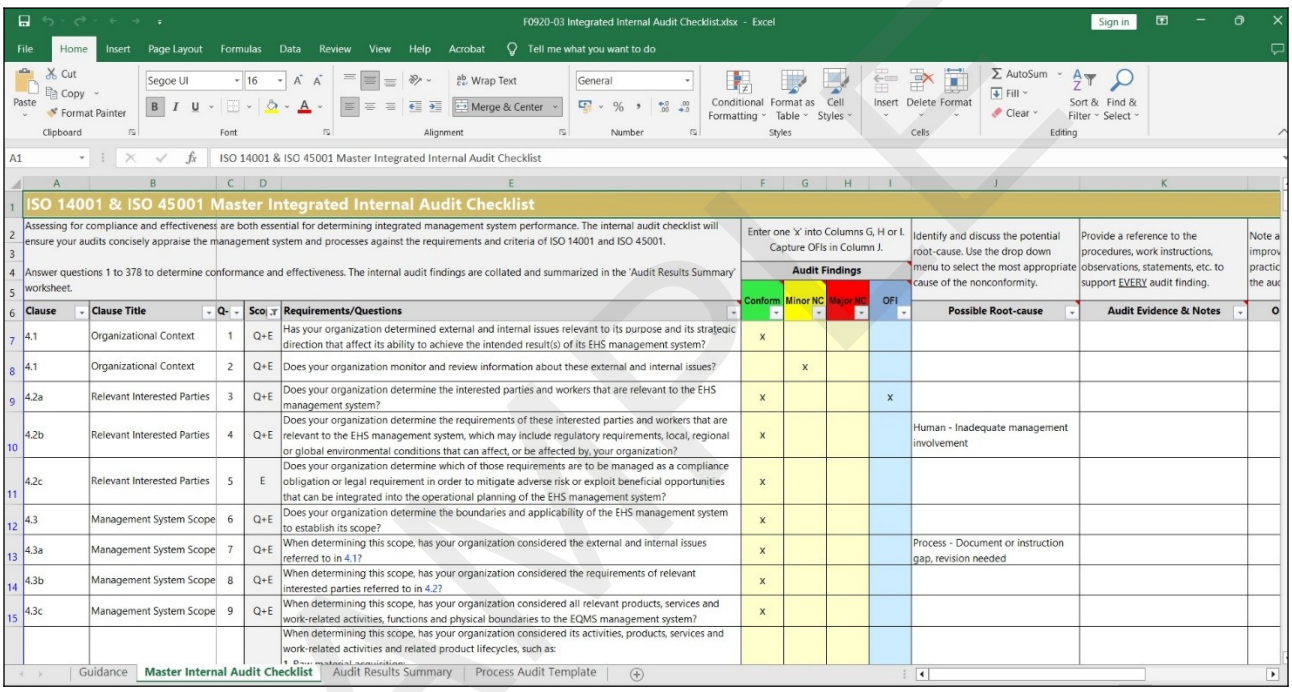
1.2 Principles of Internal Auditing

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The *Internal Audit Checklist.xlsx* will help you determine the extent to which your organization's EHS management system conforms to the requirements by determining whether those requirements have been effectively implemented and maintained. The templates will help you to assess the status of your existing management system and identify process weaknesses to allow a targeted approach to prioritizing corrective action to drive improvement.

The internal audit checklist comprises tables of the certifiable ('shall') requirements, from Section 4.0 to Section 10.0 of ISO 14001 and ISO 45001; each requirement is phrased as a question. This audit checklist may be used for element-based audits and for process audits when filtered. If you wish to create separate process audit checklists, select the relevant clauses and copy and paste the audit questions into a new audit checklist.



We have provided you with a master *Internal Audit Checklist.xlsx* that integrates the requirements of ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 and presents them as questions. We suggest you make copies of the Internal Audit Checklist.xlsx and create one workbook for each process you identified earlier using the *Process Matrix & Application.xlsx*. You can filter or delete the internal audit checklist questions to show those that apply to each process.

Auditors should not necessarily expect to find a documented internal audit procedure in place. However, they must be able to access documented information confirming the implementation of an audit programme by the organization. Documented information must also be available to evidence the results of audits.

1.6.2 Audit Scoring Criteria

A risk-based internal audit approach allows the internal audit to concentrate on reviewing the major risks to the organization. The audit's role is to provide assurance that key risks to the organization's objectives are being well controlled.

The audit findings' traffic lights' are intended to visually communicate the risk posed by the audit findings of any system or processes being audited. The rating system is stratified from 'compliant' to 'major nonconformance' to convey a concise and consistent method for scoring each audit finding.

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