Internal Audit Guidance

ISO 14001:2015

Contents

1 Introduction to Internal Auditing 2

1.1 Purpose of Internal Auditing 2

1.2 Principles of Internal Auditing 3

1.3 Selecting Internal Auditors 3

1.4 What are 'Audit Criteria'? 3

1.5 Types of Internal Audit 4

1.5.1 Gap Analysis 4

1.5.2 System Audits 4

1.5.3 Process Audits 4

1.6 Using the Internal Audit Checklists 5

1.6.1 Internal Audit Checklist 5

1.6.2 Audit Scoring Criteria 6

1.6.3 Audit Result Charts 7

1.6.4 Process Audit Template 9

1.6.5 Supplier Evaluation 9

1.6.6 Supplier Audit Checklist 9

1.7 Internal Audit Programme 9

1.7.1 Implementing the Audit Programme 9

1.7.2 Focus on Risk-based Auditing 11

1.8 Internal Audit Methodology 12

1.8.1 General Approach 12

1.8.2 Specific Approaches 12

1.8.2.1 Organizational Leadership 12

1.8.2.2 Performance & Effectiveness 13

1.8.2.3 Continual Improvement 13

1.8.3 Preparation 13

1.8.3.1 Document Review 14

1.8.3.2 Process Criteria, Metrics & Objectives 14

1.8.3.3 Previous Audit Findings 14

1.8.3.4 Customer Complaints 14

1.8.3.5 Inputs & Outputs 14

1.8.3.6 Relevant ISO standards 14

1.8.3.7 Metrics & Performance 15

1.8.3.8 Competencies of Personnel 15

1.8.3.9 Linkages & Interactions 15

1.8.4 Conducting Internal Audits 15

1.8.5 Review the Findings 16

1.8.6 Prepare the Report 16

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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 finding 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.

Finding	Definition/Impact	Action/Mitigation
Conforms	Audit findings indicate conformity (3.6.11). See ISO 9000:2015. Conforms [+100]. Criteria: All performance indicators, metrics, objectives, audit results, etc. show stability and consistently achieve targets. The process is fully documented and implemented and demonstrates compliance as well as effectiveness.	Continue to monitor trends and indicators.
Minor NC	Audit findings indicate a nonconformity (3.6.9). See ISO 9000:2015. Minor [-25]. Criteria: Poor performance, adverse trends, expected results not achieved. Current practices conform but are not documented. Deviation from practice is unlikely to result in the failure of the EQMS or process or will not result in the delivery of nonconforming products.	Investigate root cause(s) and implement corrective action by the next reporting period or next scheduled audit.
Major NC	Audit findings indicate a nonconformity (3.6.9). See ISO 9000:2015. Major [-75]. Criteria: Practices are nonconforming, and likely to cause compliance issues. Likely to have a significant adverse effect on customer satisfaction, product quality, delivery, or profitability. Process not implemented or documented.	Implement immediate containment action, investigate root cause(s), and apply corrective action. Re-audit in 4 weeks to verify the correction.
OFI	Opportunities for improvement (3.3.1) See ISO 9000:2015 or recording good practices. (3.10) Note 2 ISO 19011:2018. Minor problems exist, with weakness, bottlenecks, or potential deficiency, which if not improved, may lead to nonconformity in the future. Negative or positive situations noted by the auditor but which do not relate to a requirement in the standard.	Review and implement actions to improve the process(s). Monitor trends/indicators to determine if improvement was achieved.

1.6.3 Audit Result Charts

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.

1. Audit checklist metrics dashboard graphically displays status attributes;
2. Quickly identify and target system weaknesses;
3. Real-time charts display audit result data - ideal for reports or presentations.

The dashboard provides fast and reliable access to system and process metrics, precluding the need to know where all performance data is stored or for having to locate the metrics champion for current data. It also reduces the likelihood that data is lost when metrics owners change or leave the company and reduces the learning curve for new metrics owners.

1. Clearly illuminates under-performing metrics for prompt management attention;
2. Provides a unique management ally during internal and external audits;

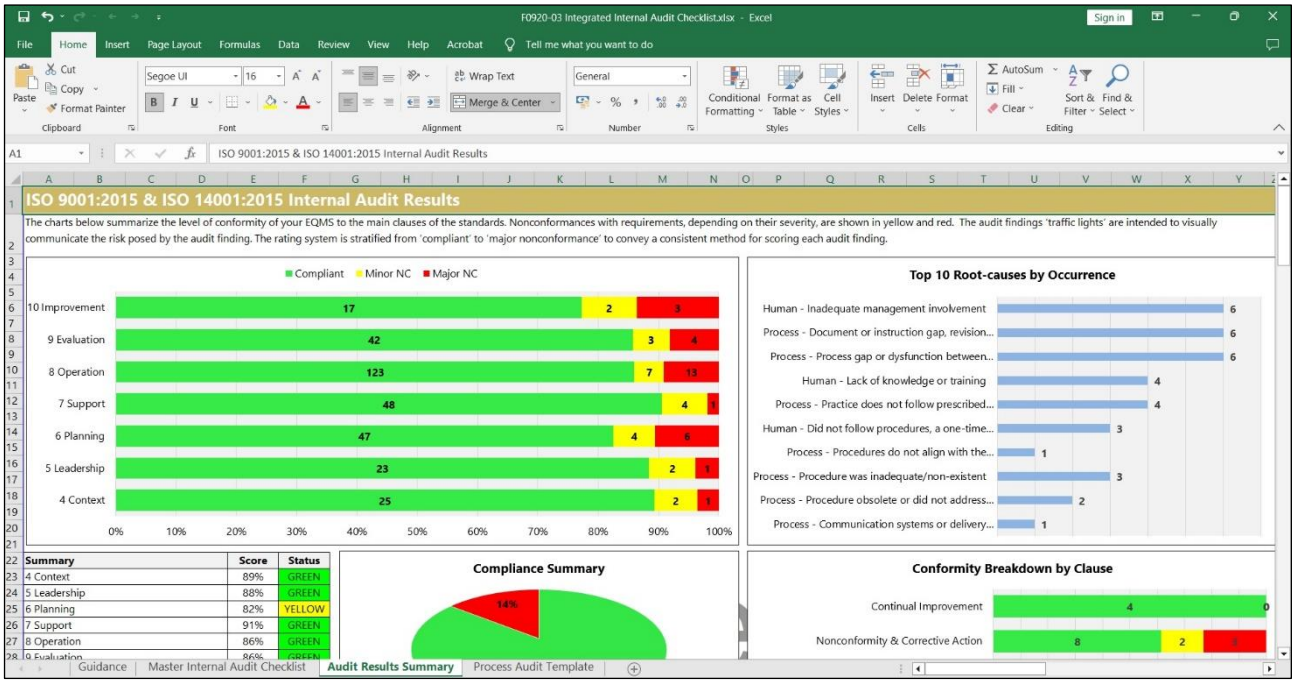
Improves meeting efficiency by segregating metrics.

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The charts summarize the level of conformity of your environmental management system to the main clauses of the standards. Nonconformances with requirements, depending on their severity, are shown in yellow and red.

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

Results	Recommendations
>86%	Processes are documented and effective. Continue to monitor trends and indicators for change, encourage improvement.
60-84%	Processes have several nonconformances. Implement corrective action by the next reporting period or the next scheduled audit.
<59%	Processes have multiple nonconformances. Immediate corrective action, investigate root cause(s). Re-audit/verify in 4 weeks.
OFI	Review and implement actions to improve the process(s). Monitor trends and indicators to determine if improvement was achieved.



Charts display the percentage of various audit nonconformances throughout the individual requirements of ISO 14001 and the number of audit nonconformances and opportunities for improvement throughout the headings of the standards.

Amend the top-ten root-causes chart after the audit is completed by reordering the Top Ten list, highlighting all relevant cells in Column AB and AD, and go to Home > Sort & Filter > Custom Sort > Sort by 'Count' > Order 'Smallest to Largest'.

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audit strategy that considers the 'status and importance' of each process comprising the environmental management system. This is one of the most disregarded aspects of ISO 14001.

If your current internal audit programme been developed on an annual calendar that merely forecasts which aspects of your environmental management system are going to be audited, you should stop! Begin programming your internal audits by basing the audit frequency upon current process performance data, customer feedback, etc., to ensure that you focus on the risks and issues that are, or should be, on Top management's radar.

Using the *Internal Audit Programme.xlsx,* ensure that the 'process names' identified in the *Process Matrix & Application.xlsx* template are copied into the internal audit programme. The EMS Manager should devise the 10-year internal audit programme tab in conjunction with Top management. When designing the audit programme, you should ensure that customer feedback, organizational changes, and risks and opportunities are brought into consideration.

10-Year Internal Audit Programme

1. The standards have no requirement to audit all processes every year. Based on risk, **critical processes** should be audited every year. Forecast audits with an 'X' in the cells.

2. Begin programming your internal audits using the next worksheet.

3. Using the Process Audit Checklist, audit just the clauses that are relevant to each process at the frequency shown below.

Process Name	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Management System & Processes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Planning		X		X		X		X		X	
Sales & Marketing	X		X		X		X		X		X
Operational Planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business Review		X		X		X		X		X	
Improvement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Order/Quote Fulfillment		X		X		X		X		X	
Design & Development	X		X		X		X		X		X
Production/Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Procurement & Supply	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Inspection & Calibration (QC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Storage, Packing & Shipping	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facilities & Maintenance		X		X		X		X		X	
Corrective Action	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Internal Audit & Compliance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Customer Service	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Process Matrix | Long-range Audit Programme | Short-range Audit Programme

Page 1

You should consider process status in terms of maturity and stability; a more established, proven process will be audited less frequently than a newly implemented or recently modified. Conversely, processes that are not performing to the planned arrangements should be audited more frequently.

You should consider process importance as the degree of direct impact that process performance has on customer satisfaction; i.e., could the process provide the customer with a defective product?

Support processes should be given a lower ranking than manufacturing/service provision processes. In addition, the results of previous audits should be considered too. Processes that have been audited recently that have shown effectiveness and improvement should be audited less frequently.

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