

Certification Rights and Duties

Scope

These rights and duties apply to all AWM management systems certifications.

References

ISO 17021-1:2015
ANSI/MSE 50028-2:2019

Procedure

Audit Process

A complete certification audit cycle follows the stages of:

1. Certification Agreement: Each certification client will receive a Certification Agreement that serves as the legally enforceable agreement for the provision of certification activities. This document must be completed and returned to AWM. The Certification Agreement must be signed by both the client's representative for the management system(s) being audited and a member of the client's organization responsible for processing account/invoice payments. Signature of the certification agreement shall also acknowledge receipt of and agreement to the rights and duties contained in this document.
2. Initial certification audit
 - a. Stage 1: The stage 1 audit serves as a formal documented readiness review. The stage 1 audit also provides a focus for planning the stage 2 audit. The stage 1 audit may be conducted off-site, on-site, or a combination of both.
 - b. Stage 2: The purpose of the stage 2 audit is to evaluate the implementation, including effectiveness, of the client's management system. The stage 2 audit is conducted at the site(s) of the client.
3. Surveillance audits: The purpose of surveillance audits is to allow AWM to maintain confidence that the certified management system continues to fulfill requirements between recertification audits. Surveillance audits are conducted at the site(s) of the client. AWM offers surveillance options of semi-annual and annual. In all cases the first surveillance audit must be conducted within 12 months of the last day of the initial certification audit.
4. Recertification audit: A re-certification audit must be conducted in order to evaluate the continued fulfillment of all of the requirements of the relevant management system standard (and other normative documents). Recertification is required within three years of the date of the current certification date. The recertification audit must be conducted with sufficient time to complete the audit process prior to expiration. Recertification audits are not required to follow the stage 1 / stage 2 format, although this may be necessary if there have been significant changes to the client. If it is determined that a stage 1 is not required a client may proceed directly to the on-site audit.

Process for granting and maintaining certification

The decision for granting and maintaining certification is made based upon a review of the audit team's final report by an AWM employee qualified as a lead auditor in the management system(s) being audited (peer reviewer).

Process for suspending certification

The decision for suspending certification is made on a case-by-case basis by the peer reviewer. Factors that may lead to a suspension of certification include:

- the client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system (defined by AWM as at least one major nonconformity);
- the certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies;
- the certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension;
- non-payment or late payment of invoices.

Additional factors that may lead to a suspension include incidents such as a serious accident, or a serious breach of regulation necessitating the involvement of the competent regulatory authority, where it can be demonstrated that the system seriously failed to meet the certification requirements

A decision on suspension would be communicated in writing to the client.

In cases of a failure in the management system, a suspension will be lifted upon closure of all major nonconformities. In most cases this will require an on-site audit to confirm the effectiveness of corrective actions taken by the client. The decision to lift suspension shall be recorded in an audit report covering these activities.

In cases of non-payment or late payment suspension will be lifted upon receipt of payment.

While suspended, the client must refrain from further promotion/communication of certification. AWM makes the suspended status of a client's certification publicly accessible via the AWM website and may take any other measures deemed appropriate.

Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in suspension within 6 months will result in a withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification.

Upon notice of withdrawal of certification, the client is responsible for discontinuing its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference to a certified status. AWM makes the withdrawn status of a client's certification publicly accessible via the AWM website and may take any other measures deemed appropriate.

Normative requirements for certification

The normative documents for certification shall be identified on each audit plan.

Information about fees for application, initial certification, and continuing certification

AWM provides cost estimates and proposals on a case-by-case basis. A final invoice will be provided detailing specific levels-of-effort and associated charges. Should the client wish to dispute an invoice, this must be done within fifteen (15) days of receipt.

A payment discount of 2% of the total invoiced amount is available if payment is received within seven (7) days from the date of receipt.

Late fees of 1.5% of total invoiced amount may be applied per month for payments received 15 days past the due date. As stated in the section for "Process for suspending certification" AWM may also suspend certification for past due invoices. For recertifications, payment received after the certificate expiration date may result in a lapse of certification.

Client responsibilities

AWM requires all clients to:

1. conform with certification requirements;
2. make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the audit, including provisions for examining documentation, access to all processes and areas, records and personnel for the purposes of initial certification, surveillance, recertification and resolution of complaints;
3. make provisions, where applicable, to accommodate the presence of observers.

Notice of changes by a certified client

Certified clients are required to inform AWM, without delay, of matters that may affect the capability of the management system to continue to fulfill the requirements of the standard used for certification. These include, for example, changes relating to:

- a) the legal, commercial, organizational status, or ownership;
- b) organization and management (e.g. key managerial, decision-making or technical staff);
- c) contact address and sites;
- d) scope of operations under the certified management system; and
- e) major changes to the management system and processes.

AWM also requires the client to inform AWM, without delay, of the occurrence of a serious incident or breach of regulation necessitating the involvement of a regulatory authority.

Appeals and complaints

As part of each opening meeting, clients shall be informed of the complete appeals and complaints process.

Should a client or outside party have concerns regarding any unsatisfactory condition encountered during an audit, the team leader should immediately be made aware of the specifics. The team leader has the responsibility to make every effort to resolve the issue without compromising the integrity and objectives of the audit process.

If the team leader is unable to resolve the situation to the complete satisfaction of the client or should an appeal or complaint be received after the completion of the audit, the Chairman is responsible for initiating a formal review. If the Chairman was involved in the audit for which the appeal or complaint has been received, the President is responsible for fulfilling the responsibilities of the Chairman.

The Chairman is responsible for receiving and beginning documentation on an Appeal or Complaint Form. The Chairman will validate the information provided by the appellant or complainant and investigate the situation, which may include discussions with the audit team. The Chairman will evaluate the available information and decide on what actions are to be taken in response to the appeal or complaint, considering the results of previous similar occurrences. The Chairman is responsible for ensuring that any appropriate corrections and corrective actions are taken, including, if deemed necessary, performing a new audit.

The appeal or complaint form is used to document each stage of the process, including information about the appellant or complainant, the circumstances of the appeal or complaint and the resolution, including any actions undertaken.

The Chairman is responsible for giving formal notice to the appellant or complainant of the end of the appeal or complaint handling process.

AWM top management, together with the Chairman, President, the certified client, and the complainant is responsible for determining whether and, if so to what extent, the subject of the complaint and its resolution is made public.

AWM top management is also responsible for ensuring submission, investigation, and decision on appeals does not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant or complainant.

Use of the AWM certification mark

A certified organization may use the Advanced Waste Management Systems, Incorporated (AWM) certification mark only in conjunction with its own mark on its certificates, stationery and literature associated with its verified activities, subject to the conditions below.

The AWM certification mark may only be reproduced:

- in black, green, or in the predominant color of the letterhead or printing;
- on a clearly contrasting background;
- in a size which makes all the features of the mark clearly distinguishable.

The AWM certification mark may not be used by a certified organization on any document unless the document relates in whole or in part to the activities of the organization that were audited by AWM. This does not prevent a certified organization from including the certification mark on its pre printed letterhead.

AWM's mark or reference to AWM may not be applied to laboratory test, calibration, or inspection reports or certificates.

The AWM mark or reference to AWM may not be placed on products or product packaging in a way that may be interpreted as denoting product certification. The AWM mark may not be used on a product or product packaging or in any other way as to suggest that AWM has approved or endorsed any product, process or service of a certified organization, or in any other misleading manner. If a statement is made that the client has a certified management system, any such statement must include reference to:

- identification (e.g. brand or name) of the certified client;
- the type of management system (e.g. environment) and the applicable standard;
- AWM as the certification body.

If necessary, other requirements with regard to the use of marks will be developed in consultation with individual organizations. Such requirements will be made part of the verification agreement, and the certified organization will immediately be subject to such requirements.

Misuse of the certification mark will lead to corrective action including publication of the misuse and, if necessary, legal action.

Use of the ANAB accreditation symbol

A.2.1. Terminology

- a. Activity: An ANAB-accredited management systems certification (e.g., ISO 9001), validation, or verification (e.g., GHG verification).
- b. Conformity assessment body (CAB): Management systems certification body (CB) or validation/verification body (VVB).
- c. Entity: Organization or intended user that has been granted ANAB-accredited certification or issued a validation or verification opinion or statement.

A.2.2. Entities with ANAB-accredited activities may choose to use the ANAB Accreditation Symbol and in doing so agree to follow this Annex.

A.2.3. Entities with ANAB-accredited activities shall use the ANAB Accreditation Symbol only in conjunction with the accredited CAB's mark on the entity's stationery and literature and in its marketing, subject to the conditions in this annex and the CAB's conditions for use of its mark.

A.2.3.1. VVBs shall conform to ISO 14065 Annex B.

A.2.4. Entities shall use only approved accreditation symbols provided by their ANAB-accredited CAB.

A.2.5. The ANAB Accreditation Symbol shall be reproduced on a background that will not impede readability:

- In black or blue (PMS 286 or equivalent) and red (PMS 485 or equivalent) on a white or light-colored background, or white on a dark-colored background;
- In a size that makes all features of the symbol clearly distinguishable; and
- Without distortion of its dimensions.

A.2.6. The entity may not place the ANAB Accreditation Symbol in isolation from the CAB's mark, and the size of the ANAB symbol must not exceed the size of the CAB's mark.

A.2.7. The ANAB Accreditation Symbol shall not be used on a product or packaging or in such a way as to suggest that the CAB and/or ANAB have certified or approved any product, process, statement, claim, or service of an entity, or in any other misleading manner.

A.2.8. Upon withdrawal of the ANAB-accredited activity or the CAB's ANAB accreditation, the entity shall immediately discontinue use of the ANAB Accreditation Symbol, ANAB's name, and claims of accredited certification in any medium, including letterhead, electronic media, etc., and return or destroy any ANAB-accredited documents (e.g., certificates) referring to ANAB accreditation as required by the CAB or ANAB.

A.2.8.1. If the entity continues to use the ANAB Accreditation Symbol or reference to ANAB, ANAB will issue a cease-and-desist order and, if the order is not met, may publish a notice on its website indicating that the entity is making a false claim of ANAB-accredited activity, and ANAB may take legal action.

References to certification

AWM requires that the client:

- a) conforms to the requirements of AWM when referring to its certification status in communication media such as the internet, brochures or advertising, or other documents;
- b) does not make or permit any misleading statement regarding its certification;
- c) does not use or permit the use of a certification document or any part thereof in a misleading manner;
- d) upon suspension or withdrawal of its certification, discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains a reference to certification, as directed by AWM;
- e) amends all advertising matter when the scope of certification has been reduced;
- f) does not allow reference to its management system certification to be used in such a way as to imply that AWM certifies a product (including service) or process;
- g) does not imply that the certification applies to activities that are outside the scope of certification, and;
- h) does not use its certification in such a manner that would bring AWM and/or the certification system into disrepute and lose public trust.

Short-notice audits

In general, AWM does not allow audits to be conducted on short notice (defined as less than 2 weeks). Special circumstances may require short-notice, however. For routine certification, surveillance, and re-certification audits circumstances may include (but are not limited to) severe weather, personnel changes, production schedule, and serious incidents related to occupational health and safety. In all such cases, AWM procedures for conducting audit shall still be followed.

Confidentiality Policy

Each certified client's name, standards certified to, and scope of certification is communicated via the AWM website. This is the only information placed in the public domain.

AWM shall treat all information and data observed during the course of an audit as confidential. This information and data shall not be shared with a third-party without consent from the client. Accrediting bodies (such as ANAB and ANSI) and the SEP Administrator are not considered third parties and are entitled to the information specified within ISO 17021, ANSI/MSE 50028, and the SEP Certification Protocol.

-- End of procedure --

Revision History

- Jun 24, 2014 > Added revision history, Added confidentiality policy.
- Feb 18, 2016 > Updated format; Added final paragraph to “References to certification”; Added first paragraph to “Confidentiality policy”.
- Jun 20, 2017 > Added SEP Administrator to Confidentiality Policy.
- Jul 10, 2017 > Updated “Use of the AWM Certification Mark” section.
- May 3, 2018 > Updated Short-Notice Audits section for ISO 45001.
- Sep 13, 2018 > Removed references to the President.
- Jan 28, 2019 > Updated job titles.
- Jul 30, 2019 > Added section for “Notice of changes by a certified client”.
- Aug 20, 2019 > Added ANSI/MSE 50028-2:2019 reference.
- Jul 9, 2022 > Added section for ANAB accreditation mark.