

Effective Auditing and Inspection Skills

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The following updates have been made to the 6th edition of this publication.

Page No	Update comments
10	<p>Page 10 has been updated with the following text:</p> <p>Driven to an extent by the Covid pandemic there has been increasing use of a 'remote and/or blended audit' although not all standards may permit this. A remote audit/inspection is conducted by the auditor/inspector who is entirely off-site. A blended audit usually comprises an off-site - remote assessment followed by an on-site inspection/audit. Prior to undertaking a remote/blended audit or inspection a risk assessment may be necessary which will consider; the historical performance of the site including any risks identified from complaints and recalls; availability of documentation and records in electronic form and willingness of the site to share these remotely; the capability of any certification or other body to conduct a remote audit; access to an IT system that both the certification body and auditee will be able to use; the capability of the site's staff to utilise and provide any necessary technologies required for the remote audit e.g. on-site video or drones.</p> <p>A remote audit should follow the same structure as a normal audit, needs a clear plan which should be agreed with the auditee and include a list of all the documentation to be examined. It should cover everything that an onsite audit would but use technology (information and communication technology - ICT), which should be tested in advance, to assist the audit process. It should be the same duration as a normal audit and the auditee, just as for a traditional audit, should be prepared with all the relevant documentation, personnel and to provide the auditor with the ability to view all relevant food safety documentation, practices and locations. To participate in remote audits the auditor must still possess the same core skills and competencies including; what to observe, questions to ask and information to record coupled with possibly a greater sense of curiosity combined with the necessary technological skills. The auditee must also possess appropriate equipment e.g. video and upload all necessary documentation for examination in a confidential manner. The auditee should also attempt to minimise distractions during the remote audit e.g. undue noise. Research undertaken in the UK has indicated the value of the use of remote inspections/audits as part of the normal environmental health inspection programme.</p>

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