



**Procedure for
Suspension, Withdrawal, Restoring, Renewing, Refusing And
Cancellation of Certificate**

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1. Purpose

Documented procedure describes suspension, withdrawal, restoring, renewing, refusing and cancellation of a certificate, change of scope of a certificate and termination of contracts. Termination of contracts includes also full termination of client cooperation.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to the SQC Certification issued certificates. In particular, this procedure applies to all management systems certificates and is intended for all employees who are involved in the suspension, withdrawal, restoring, renewing, refusing, termination and change of scope of a certificate. This includes not only national but also international certificates, which are issued and handled by SQC Certification.

3. Definition

Complete terminations: Includes all certificates in all standards a customer holds and is equivalent to a dissolved business relationship with the customer.

Partial terminations: Affects individual standards or certificates in the portfolio of a client; happens especially with combined management systems certifications. This means that although a certification has been terminated, other services are still being delivered and thus a business relationship with the customer continues. Also, formal terminations, which arise for example in the modification of an existing product with a new certificate generation, are counting on this.

4. Responsibility


Decisions, which are defined under 2 (Scope) are made by the Head of Certification Body/QM. For the pursuit of individual activities specially trained employees are appointed. These names are listed for each jurisdiction in the document "designated employee". Typical reasons are:

- Negative recommendations of the auditor as part of the audit result
- Missing deadlines (NC-Management, Surveillance audit etc.)
- Insolvency or non-payment of liabilities
- Change of scope
- Non-compliance with certification regulations
- Termination
- Liquidation of client

In all cases, the requirements of the general certification regulation for management systems apply. After the decision to suspend, withdraw, restore, renew, refuse, change the scope or terminate this information is forwarded to the designated employee. This employee is responsible for taking necessary actions i.e. preparation of cover letters, dissemination of necessary letters, as well as consultations (if necessary) and compliance with deadlines. Maintenance of data base is within the responsibility of certification department. The activation of a suspended certificate is also carried out as directed by a designated employee.

Process Description

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5. Process Description

5.1. General Approaches

The conditions for the use of the certification logo and the certificates are set out in the Certification Procedure and are with the ordering part of the contract.

Typically, the certification will suspend or withdraw a certification in case of

- the certified management system – including the requirement concerning the efficiency of the management system – does not meet the certification requirements permanently or significantly, e.g. change of scope
- the certified customer not allowing the conduct of a surveillance or re-certification audit within the given time frame
- the certified customers not allowing the performance of the surveillance or recertification audits in the defined frequency
- Insolvency of the certificate holder or non-payment of liabilities
- Voluntary request by the customer for a suspension/cancellation
- Deadlines are not met (e.g.: non conformity management, veto review of the certification file, surveillance audits).

All provisions of the respective conditions for certification of management systems apply.

The certificate is to be suspended if the surveillance audit has not been conducted based on the audit relevant date. The certificate is to be suspended if additional deadlines such as veto review are not met. Due to the complexity of standard-specific requirements there will be no single time line. Standard-specific requirements deviating from the general instructions are defined in the standard specific instructions.

Up to 6 months after the audit relevant date an audit can be carried out with additional manday to lift the suspension; this is subject to a decision by the certification body. 6 months after the audit relevant date the certificate shall be withdrawn.

The certification body shall restore the suspended certification if the issue that has resulted in the suspension has been resolved. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension in a time established by the certification body shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of certification. Once a certificate has been withdrawn it may only be regained through an initial audit.


Exceptions, which also possibly exist by specific requirements, may override this general rule. An individual decision of the Certification Body remains possible. A renewing means a recertification and the new issue of the certificate.

A refusing relates to the non-issuance of the certificate. The refusing of the certificate is possible, when the company doesn't meet the requirements of the relevant standard or it is not able to be certified and non-payment of liabilities.

5.2. Details

A suspension or withdrawal may be noted by various parties. In particular the Auditing Manager or Sales team which can be recognized means of pending lists, audits conducted and the associated reports. Suspensions and withdrawals requested by customers may also be communicated in any other way by the customers, this includes also terminations.

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If a consultation with the customer is required, for example in case of questions, this is also performed before transmission to the designated staff for further processing by the account manager.

Communication with the customer in advance of termination or withdrawal of a certificate is stored.

The suspension, withdrawal or cancellation of the certificate is forwarded to the designated employee/QM. This must be done promptly in order to promote rapid processing.

If there are any questions on the part of the designated employee/QM, these must be clarified first. The Sales representative is obliged to treat these prioritized questions. Once all questions have been clarified, a cover letter to the customer by the designated employee is sent. This must include both the reason for the suspension or withdrawal of the certificate are available, as well as a detailed justification for suspension / withdrawal. In case of cancellation, it has to be confirmed with the customer as well as describe to the customer its duties. This mainly concerns the obligation not to use the certificate as of a date to be specified, as well as the return of the original certificate.

The termination letter or letter to the suspension of the certificate is signed by the Head of certification body or QM.

In the case of time limits, which presuppose action by the customer or by the Sales representative, the designated staffs are committed to proactively address these again by resubmission. Examples are documentation requirements or the return of a certificate, or transfer of follow-up actions to the account manager.

In the next step, all persons involved in the process are informed by the designated employee and forwarded follow-up tasks.

The information of suspension or termination must be entered in the database by the designated employee.

The reinstatement letter is signed by the Head of certification body or QM and confirmed by the client.

5.3. Relevant Documents

Pre-Suspension letter

Suspension letter

Pre-Cancellation letter

Cancellation letter

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