National Security Inspectorate

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To: **All Approved Companies and Applicants for Approval**

Dear Colleague

CORRECTIVE ACTION RESPONSES

As you will be aware, when we carry out our certification audits, our established practice is to produce an improvement need or an improvement observation report if we identify any significant nonconformity and request your proposed corrective action response within 21 days. On receipt of your corrective action response, we consider if it is satisfactory and then on the next, or follow-up, visit determine the actual effectiveness of the corrective actions implemented.

The requirement to investigate nonconformities to determine the cause(s) and take actions to avoid their reoccurrence has been a feature of all relevant management systems standards (BS EN ISO 9001, BS EN ISO 14001, etc) and our product certification schemes for some time, but a review of recent responses from approved and applicant companies indicate that, in a number of cases, these relevant requirements do not appear to be fully understood or adhered to.

We apologise to the majority of companies who do understand the relevant requirements but for those where this may not be clear, we are issuing the following guidance.

Our established proforma for recording nonconformity (our improvement need/improvement observation report) is now available on-line in the Company Log-in area via the Home page of our web-site, and has a box for your proposed corrective action. When completing this box, please bear in mind that we may have only listed some examples to support the nonconformity and that you will need to investigate to confirm whether the examples quoted are isolated cases or a systematic failure. Your investigation into the nonconformity should also be sufficient to determine the root cause of the nonconformity and give assurance that your proposed corrective and preventive actions are sufficient to avoid. or at least minimise, any likelihood of reoccurrence of the nonconformity. Please endeavour to give a sufficiently detailed response within your corrective action, so that it is clear the root cause of the nonconformity was identified and the appropriate corrective and preventive action implemented.

Corrective action responses that do not demonstrate appropriate investigation, root cause analysis and suitable action to prevent reoccurrence will not be accepted and the company will be invited to re-consider their response. Also when (usually on the next visit) the effectiveness of the corrective actions is fully reviewed, the improvement need or improvement observation will not be closed if suitable corrective and preventive action has not been taken. In such cases an improvement observation may be elevated to an improvement need or an existing improvement need be reinstated with a shorter period referenced for the required improvement period.

If there is any aspect of the above that you wish to discuss further please raise the matter with your assigned inspector or contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely

Mike Cresswell
Compliance and Improvement Manager

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