



## **Remote Audit Guidance for NSI EMS and Health & Safety approved companies**

As an alternative to more traditional on site auditor visits, where circumstances permit NSI will offer a “remote audit” option. It is not suitable for all audits; however, it is now supported by reliable communications tools making it, in most cases, a straightforward and effective process.

Under certain circumstances, approved companies may be offered a “remote audit” in place of a physical “on-site” audit. To be eligible for remote audits companies must:

- have held NSI approval for the scheme being audited for a minimum of two years;
- have the technical capability to participate in an effective remote audit;
- have the relevant persons available to participate in the remote audit;
- be able to share data and information in a format that facilitates an effective and efficient audit;
- not have had any significant changes within the company that may affect the required audit duration, audit programme or scope of approval since the last audit; and
- have demonstrated a consistent track record of satisfactory performance of their quality management system and adherence to all applicable requirements of their scope of approval.

Please note that audits involving site inspections are not suitable for remote audit and will require an on-site audit within the audit programme designed for each approved company.

This guidance explains the preparation you need to do before the audit, methods of remote communication that can be considered, the format of the audit itself, and the evidence NSI will expect to see during the audit.

### **1 Preparation**

In order to complete the audit in an effective and efficient way, it would be helpful if you could obtain and prepare some key documents prior to the start of the audit (see Appendix A).

If necessary, you can email documents and data to the NSI auditor a few days in advance of the audit. This will give the auditor time to review the documents. When deciding on the format of evidence to be emailed, sending several smaller files in PDF or Microsoft Word, etc. is preferable. Alternatively, you may want to place relevant documentation in a specific remote audit folder the auditor can access and navigate during the audit.

Zip files are held up as a potential security risk by our email handling systems and links to third party file transfer sites (e.g. Wetransfer.com) are also not permitted through our system.

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If you redact any confidential information from customer records (e.g. names, addresses, telephone numbers and confidential commercial details) for GDPR purposes, there must be a unique customer identifier available (e.g. site/contract number) in order to maintain the validity of the audit trail.

## 2 Remote communication

There are a number of communication platforms that can be used to conduct the audit. NSI's default platform is "Microsoft Teams". It does not require you to have Microsoft Teams installed on your device, merely to have internet access, and a device with a microphone and speakers. If using a device without speakers or microphone, a mobile phone can be used in conjunction with screen sharing.

If you wish to use a platform other than "Microsoft Teams", such as "Skype for Business", please contact your auditor to arrange.

If Microsoft Teams is used, your auditor will send you a meeting invitation through Microsoft Outlook which will appear in your inbox as an email. Upon opening the email, you have the option to Accept, Reject or Decline the meeting request. Accepting this should add the audit appointment in to your calendar complete with a link to access an online meeting.

To access the meeting at the agreed time, single click the "Join Microsoft Teams Meeting" hyperlink. You will be directed to the cloud based Teams application that will facilitate your access. It will enable you to share your desktop and enable voice communication with the auditor

**Note:** Please test your microphone and speaker set up in advance of the audit.

The remote audit process is heavily reliant upon good levels of connectivity. If, for whatever reason, this is poor, or you have difficulty sharing your desktop control for the auditor to navigate your system, or if adding documents and media proves time consuming, then required documentation should be emailed to the auditor in advance of the meeting.

You may experience issues with connectivity that may delay the displaying of information on your or the auditor's desktop. Stopping and restarting the displaying of a desktop can often resolve these issues.

In extreme circumstances, it may require leaving and re-joining the meeting. Similarly, the opening and viewing of attachments may freeze or take an excessive time. Downloading these rather than opening may assist progress of the audit.

If the technical difficulties frustrate the audit process, the auditor may utilise email and telephone to continue the audit. However, if the audit is frustrated too much, the auditor may determine the audit should be rescheduled.

Your auditor will contact you in advance of the audit to test connectivity and capability and confirm the remote audit can take place.

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## 3 Audit

### 3.1 Opening meeting

The auditor will conduct the opening meeting. This will confirm the intended aspects to be covered and will ensure you are able to:

- share your desktop within the meeting so evidence can be displayed and reviewed;
- add documents and media to the meeting for the auditor to review;
- grant control of your desktop to the auditor so they may navigate your PC; and
- confirm email addresses should samples be required to be sent for examination.

### 3.2 Audit evidence

Evidence can be provided at the time of audit or in advance. Should evidence be provided in advance, the auditor will be able to review this without requiring your full time attendance.

The auditor will agree relevant timings with you for periodic updates, to review findings and for any additional information to be requested.

### 3.3 Closing meeting

Once the audit has been completed, the auditor will conduct a closing meeting to brief you on the audit findings and take you through any Improvement Reports that have been raised. These will be available through the NSI website as usual and will require a response within 21 days of the audit.

The auditor will grant you control of their laptop at which point you should sign for the audit using your mouse. If you are unable to sign the audit report in this way then an email will be sent detailing the audit findings within which you and you should reply with your acceptance of the audit findings.

## 4 Audit topics

Appendix A details some sample audit topics and some of the typical audit evidence the auditor will need to review during the audit. It is appreciated that, due to the current situation, it may not be possible for some of the information to be available.

The list does not include the full range of scopes for the Environmental Management, Health and Safety Schemes - your auditor will discuss any additional scope requirements in advance of the remote audit.

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## Appendix A

Topic	Evidence
Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Management System documentation including the scope, policy and objectives.</li> <li>Organisation chart / job descriptions / defined responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Risk & Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company assessment of risks and opportunities, and the processes and actions to address the risks and opportunities.</li> </ul>
Legal Requirements and other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal register and any other requirements the organisation follows (Including for EMS, compliance obligations).</li> <li>Evaluation of compliance.</li> <li>Aspects and Impacts Register (for EMS only).</li> <li>Objectives and targets.</li> </ul>
Management Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of management review to the requirements of the relevant standards.</li> </ul>
Internal Audit of the management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current internal audit schedule.</li> <li>A sample of internal audit reports together with their investigations, root cause analysis and corrective actions (including sites where applicable).</li> </ul>
Communication & Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sample of documentation related to interested parties. Including suppliers, subcontractors, worker participation and communication as appropriate (toolbox talks / worker groups / committees / meetings etc.).</li> </ul>
Competency and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sample of current records of employee competencies and training.</li> </ul>
Customer Satisfaction and complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records of the measurement of customer satisfaction.</li> <li>Records of any customer complaints together with records of their investigation, corrective action and resolution.</li> </ul>
Monitoring and measuring resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records of calibration or verification for equipment used by the company (i.e. sound pressure meters).</li> </ul>
Procurement, sub-contractors and labour providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved suppliers list and criteria.</li> <li>List of all sub-contractors used.</li> </ul>

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Topic	Evidence
Use of logos and certification marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of the use of NSI, UKAS and, where applicable, ACS logos on company documentation and web/media sites.</li> </ul>
Emergency Preparedness and Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes for responding and reporting of accidents and incidents.</li> <li>Documentation of any accidents and incidents and the investigation.</li> <li>Evidence of continual improvement.</li> <li>Evidence of testing and maintenance of emergency equipment processes (Fire drill / plan, spill kit exercise).</li> <li>Control and use of PPE.</li> </ul>
Operation Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Assessments and Method Statements.</li> <li>Lease agreement / Contract (Building responsibilities), where applicable.</li> <li>Building &amp; maintenance records / registers / plans. (generators, boilers, etc.),</li> </ul>
Operation (Activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk assessments.</li> <li>Method statements or assignment instructions.</li> <li>Related project documentation (surveys, contracts, reviews, meetings).</li> <li>COSHH sheets.</li> <li>Records of equipment and vehicle management, maintenance and checks.</li> </ul>
Environmental Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation related to handling and disposal of waste.</li> </ul>
Health and Safety Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant insurance documents.</li> </ul>

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