



A summary of the below information will be publicly available to explain the audit process including certification decisions and also includes ForeFront handling complaints and appeals. All personnel including external resource will be aware of these processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

ForeFront provides certification services for ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System and ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System and ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.

2. SCOPE

A company (or partnership, government department, local authority or other appropriate body), whose management system for part or all its operation (its scope) has been assessed by ForeFront as being compliant with the requirements of the relevant standard, may be granted registration.

ForeFront maintains and makes publicly accessible on request, valid certifications. The continuance of registration for such scope is dependent upon the outcome of periodic surveillance, recertification audits of the company's management system by ForeFront to assure that all the requirements of the current edition of the relevant standard continue to be met by the company.

3. IMPARTIALITY POLICY

The top management of Forefront Certification will commit to the safeguard and protection of impartiality and conflicts of interest within our management system certification activities. We will not allow commercial, financial or other pressures compromise impartiality.

Our business conduct is periodically reviewed by members that are respected within the community to conduct independent impartiality assessments of our operational activities. This is completed annually to include aspects of open book review of our internal audits, code of conduct processes, including audit report reviews. All such professionals used sign our confidentiality agreements.

It is essential that our activities remain impartial to ensure integrity of our certification body activities. A conflict of interest and impartiality register is retained incorporating potential and perceived impartiality risks.

Threats to impartiality can be based on ownership, management, personnel, shared resources, finances, contracts, marketing and payment of sales commission or referral of new clients. We will endeavour to maintain impartiality and conflicts of interest in all cases.

Forefront directors will protect from self-interest, self-review, familiarity (or trust) and intimidation. The directors of the business will maintain total integrity and impartiality at all costs.

In the event of conflicts of interest or impartiality, the directors of the business will update the conflicts of interest/impartiality register. Under no circumstances will there be any connection to other organisations whereby the same person is part of the upfront planning assessment or report reviews.

4. APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

ForeFront will require a completed application form, completed in full containing a description of the activities, products and services (scope). This document will outline the scope of the system to be certified and the relevant standards to be assessed.



The Company will apply to ForeFront with a proposed scope of registration including all addresses where the activities within scope are carried out. It is the responsibility of the company to ensure the scope covers their requirements.

5. AUDIT PROCESS FOR INITIAL REGISTRATION

There are two stages for the initial certification involving a two-stage audit. Should the client request a consecutive stage one and stage two audit, the client must be informed of the risk and communication must be given that findings following a stage one could result in the rescheduling of stage two.

STAGE 1:

The key objective for this assessment:

- Review the client's management system documented information.
- The auditor will evaluate the site-specific conditions and will involve discussions with the organisations personnel to determine the readiness for a stage 2 audit.
- The auditor will review status and identify key performance measures in place, documented processes and review operations of the management system.
- Information will be obtained regarding the scope of the management system including sites, processes and equipment used, controls in place and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements including any multi-site controls as applicable.
- The auditor will ensure planning for a stage 2 visit can be taken forward by understanding the organisations management system, site operations etc.
- The auditor will evaluate if internal audits and management reviews are planned and in place and the management system is ready for a stage 2 audit.

The lead auditor will conclude and ensure stage 1 requirements are in place and will recommend proceeding to stage 2 in an audit report. The auditor may raise opportunities for improvement during the audit, however these findings will not be a concern for recommendation. Where there are areas of concern, identified the auditor cannot conclude a recommendation for stage 2. In such cases a further revisit for a stage 1 would be required.

The stage 2 visit cannot exceed six months. Should this happen, a stage 1 will need to be repeated.

If any significant changes which would impact the management system occur, the certification body shall consider the need to repeat all or part of stage 1. The client shall be informed that the results of stage 1 may lead to postponement or cancellation of stage 2.

STAGE 2:

The objective of stage 2 is to evaluate the implementation and the effectiveness of the management system and will involve the auditing of at least the following:

Evidence will be gathered to demonstrate conformity of the management system or other applicable standards part of the scope. Audit evidence will be gathered by for example, interviews of processes and activities, review of documentation and records etc.

- The monitoring and measuring of performance objectives and targets.
- The organisations ability to meet statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements.
- Operational planning and control of processes
- Internal auditing and management review



- Management commitment to the organisations policies

The lead auditor will analyse information and the audit evidence gathered during the stage 1 and 2 visits to review the audit findings and agree on the audit conclusion.

Audit findings are categorised as follows:

Opportunity for improvement (OFI): Insufficient objective evidence is available to justify a full nonconformity, a weakness/inefficiency in the management system may lead to a nonconformity in the future. ForeFront are unable to provide you solutions.

A minor nonconformity: A single lapse which may include a minor emission, but in itself will not lead to a failure in achieving intended output.

A major nonconformity: A breakdown or total failure to fulfil one or more requirements within the management system has been identified and to control the effectiveness of the intended processes. A major non-conformity must be raised in the event of any failure to meet statutory and regulatory requirements.

The minor nonconformity findings during the audit will require correction and corrective action and a plan presented to ForeFront, the Lead auditor will provide a timeframe of 30 days to forward the plan.

The auditor will issue the client with the nonconformity closeout form the client will complete once root cause has been established and a proposed corrective action recorded.

In cases of major nonconformities being identified, certification cannot be granted until the corrective and correction is verified. The action timeline would be 50 days.

Where major nonconformities are not satisfactorily closed and we are unable to verify within 6 months after the last day of a stage 2, another stage 2 visit will be required prior to recommending certification.

6. AUDIT PROCESS FOR CONTINUED REGISTRATION /CERTIFICATION TRANSFER

Surveillance Audits:

The certification is granted for 3 years requiring a yearly surveillance audit in year 1 and 2. The audit activities are conducted to ensure the management system is delivering the intended outcomes and continues to fulfil requirements between recertification.

Each surveillance audit will include:

- Internal audits and management review
- Actions taken on non-conformities identified during previous audits.
- Management of complaints
- Effectiveness of the management system in achieving the set objectives.
- Changes within the organisation and continual improvement
- Use of logos and any other reference to certification.

Certification Transfer:



ForeFront applications for certification transfers will involve obtaining valid certificate of registration(s) and previous audit reports to commence the process. Successful completion of transfers will maintain the same validity dates as previous registration. Audits will continue within the existing cycle.

7. AUDIT PROCESS FOR RECERTIFICATION PRIOR TO CERTIFICATE EXPIRY

A recertification audit will be conducted prior to the expiry of the certification. The recertification shall include an audit that addresses the following:

- The effectiveness of the management system in its entirety in the light of internal and external changes and its continued relevance and applicability to the scope of certification.
- Demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to enhance overall performance.
- The effectiveness of the management system with regard to achieving the certified client's objectives and the intended results of the respective management system (s).

The recertification audit will also assess:

- Leadership commitment.
- Engagement to support the management system.
- Scope review of the products and services.
- Confirmation that all actions required by ForeFront remain effectively demonstrated.
- The time limit for any identified major nonconformities will be 50 days for correction and corrective actions.
- ForeFront will require the findings to be verified prior to the expiry of the certificate.
- If ForeFront is unable to verify the corrections and corrective actions for major nonconformities prior to a certificate expiry date, recertification cannot be recommended, and validity of a certification cannot be extended.

Changes:

Recertification audits may need a stage 1 where there have been significant changes to the management system, the organisation, or the context in which the management system operates e.g., changes in statutory and regulatory.

Audit Findings:

In cases of major non-conformities being identified (50 days' time frame), recertification cannot be granted until the corrective action is verified. prior to the expiration of certification.

It is important for ForeFront to have reviewed, accepted and verified the correction and corrective actions either by a further site visit as necessary or offsite where we can ensure verification activities will be possible.

If we have not completed the recertification audit or were unable to verify the implementation of corrections and corrective actions for any major nonconformities prior to the expiry date of the certification, then recertification cannot be recommended, and the validity of the certification cannot be extended. In such cases you will be informed, and the consequences will be explained.

Certification expires:



Following expiration of certification, ForeFront can restore certification within 6 months provided that the outstanding recertification activities are completed, otherwise at least a stage 2 shall be conducted. The effective date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date shall be based on prior certification cycle.

Granting recertification:

A successful recertification audit completed prior to the expiry date of the existing certification; the expiry date of the new certification can be based on the expiry date of the existing certification. The issue date on a new certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision.

8. CERTIFICATION DECISION PROCESS

The decision on granting or refusing certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, suspending or restoring certification, withdrawing certification or renewing certification will be other personnel and will involve competent appointed personnel and do not include those involved in the auditing.

The technical review will be completed by ForeFront capturing as a minimum, a full review of the audit report, identified nonconformities (minor or major), review corrective action plans, major non-conformance correction and corrective actions taken as applicable.

A review is conducted on the information provided in the initial application for initial certifications, a review of the audit objectives being achieved.

The technical review will include a recommendation on whether or not certification is granted for initial/continued/transfer/recertification including comments on any conditions as applicable.

Where major nonconformities are not satisfactorily closed during the initial certification and ForeFront are unable to verify within 6 months after the last day of a stage 2, another stage 2 visit will be required prior to recommending certification.

The technical review for recertification audits will also consider the overall results of the system over the period of certification and complaints received.

Actions prior to making a decision:

A technical review will be conducted to assess the information provided by the auditor(s) is sufficient based on the scope for certification.

A review of major nonconformities will be reviewed, accepted and verified including the correction and corrective actions submitted.

A review of minor nonconformities and acceptance of the clients plan for correction and corrective action.

Refusing Certificate of Registration

During the technical review where certification decisions cannot be recommended due to insufficient closure of issues, ForeFront will be unable to grant certification and notification will be provided in writing.

Suspending, restoring, or withdrawing of certification.



Where certifications have expired, certificates can be restored within 6 months as long as outstanding activities are completed. If time lapses over the 6 months a stage 2 audit would need to be conducted. The effective date on the certificate will be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date will be based on the prior 3-year certification cycle.

9. SUSPENDING CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION(S)

Certifications will be suspended in the following cases:

- Where the client is not meeting requirements and consistently lacking in meeting requirements for the effectiveness of the management system.
- The client does not meet the frequency requirements for surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted.
- Failure by client to allow Forefront access to their site(s) for assessment purposes.
- Upon the request from the client.
- Misuse of relevant certification marks.
- Contravention of the conditions under which certification was granted.
- Non-payment of fees.

ForeFront will restore the certification upon resolving reason(s) for suspension. A timeframe will be provided to resolve matters (this will not exceed 6 months). Should matters not resolve in the timeframe provided will result in withdrawal or a reduction in the scope of certification.

10. EXPANDING OR REDUCING THE SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

Extended scopes may be relevant where other specific standards are required to be considered and are built into the scope. ForeFront will review the requirements and decide on audit activities to be conducted and may be conducted in conjunction with surveillance audits.

Where we are notified in scope extension for already granted certifications ForeFront will review the requirements and decide on audit activities to be conducted and may be conducted in conjunction with the surveillance audit.

11. SHORT NOTICE AUDITS

Audits at short notice may be carried out including unannounced visits where ForeFront will require to investigate complaints, or due to changes, or where a follow up may be required for any suspended clients.

12. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS Forefront Certification Limited will make every effort to resolve any concerns from clients. Appeals, complaints and disputes associated with assessment reports, certification decisions, auditors, or other matters will be resolved in accordance with our processes.

Where possible, complaints and appeals will be resolved internally. In situations this is not possible, the incident will be chaired independently.

The complaint or appeal will be delivered in a timely manner dependant on the nature of the appeal or complaint, ForeFront will communicate the ongoing progress. The following process is followed:

- ForeFront will forward you an acknowledgement on receiving the complaint or appeal.
- ForeFront will gather, verify, and validate information on the complaint or appeal.
- Within 10 working days, ForeFront will send you the proposed action on the complaint or appeal.
- Updates of progress will be sent to the complainant.



- Correction and corrective actions will be taken.

We commit to transparency, impartiality and will not result in any discriminatory actions against the complainant.

All information received will be treated with confidentiality. The directors will involve relevant members of Forefront to attend meetings, as necessary.

Date	Changes	Approved by
04 02 2019	Review of all documents referenced	Managing Director
20 02 2019	Update ref. non-conformance and corrective action – form FF125. FF136 Auditor Guide	Managing Director
31.01.2021	A review and update for the website	Managing Director
02.02.2022	review of document overall, tweak of minor word changes for update to the website	Managing Director