

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

DQS GmbH observes the developments around the spread of COVID-19 very closely and focuses on the health of its employees, auditors and customers in all decisions.

With this document we would like to give you answers to questions which have reached us in the last few days increasingly through customers and which possibly also concern you at the moment.

For any industry specific regulation we would like to also refer to the information pages of further DQS companies: [DQS CFS](#), [DQS MED](#), [DQS Inc](#), [DQS Holding](#)

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An appointment with a DQS auditor is pending. Has he possibly visited risk areas in the last weeks?

Already since 10 February 2020 DQS has prohibited business trips to the People's Republic of China to all employees. This was also communicated to all freelance auditors as an urgent recommendation for action and was extended on 05.03.2020 to all risk areas declared [by the Robert Koch Institute](#).

However, if you would like to know exactly which countries the auditor was last in, please contact the auditor directly or contact your customer service representative.

We have a COVID-19 suspected case in the company and cannot conduct a pending audit as planned. What is to be done now?

Please inform us immediately if a scheduled audit cannot be performed as planned. Of course we will postpone the audit date. An extension of the deadline of initially up to 90 days is generally possible for 95% of all standards. Please note, however, that such a postponement in the case of recertification audits may result in a transition period without a valid certificate. We will discuss this with you in detail and find the best possible solution for you.

We will also be pleased to examine together with you the extent to which individual audit components can be carried out as a remote audit (video conference).

Please note that we will charge costs such as travel expenses that cannot be cancelled.

We have an audit appointment in the next few weeks. Should we postpone it as a precaution?

Experience has shown that DQS auditors are already working at full capacity months in advance. Therefore, we recommend to postpone audits only for concrete reasons, but never purely as a precaution.

As a precaution, can we postpone our surveillance audit planned for 2020 to 2021?

ISO 17021 (the globally valid accreditation standard) requires accredited certification bodies to plan and conduct surveillance audits at their customers' premises on an annual basis. The first surveillance audit after an initial certification must even be planned and carried out for a specific week. The IAF (International Accreditation Forum) does not deviate from these requirements even in Covid-19 times.

DQS GmbH will therefore conduct all surveillance audits scheduled for 2020 in 2020. This will mainly serve to avoid negative effects on the certification status.

In many places the Covid-19 situation is such that on-site auditing is basically possible in compliance with hygiene rules (mouth-and-nose protection, distance of at least 1.50 meters and forming small "audit teams"), as is already practiced by DQS GmbH to almost 100%.

In any case, DQS GmbH can carry out planned and scheduled audits, be it as a "remote audit" or "on site".

In special cases, surveillance audits may be performed as 100% remote audits after consultation with the audit manager and the DQS office in Frankfurt am Main.

If you feel constrained to postpone an audit already planned with us, please inform us immediately.

A postponement to the first quarter of 2021 is only possible in exceptional cases and requires approval by the DQS office in Frankfurt am Main.

Can we turn an on-site audit into a remote audit?

Basically, we support the use of video conferencing techniques to avoid on-site appointments, whereby the infrastructure for this must be provided by you for reasons of information and data security. The extent to which the audit or only individual parts of it can be carried out remotely must be examined in each individual case together with your customer service representative and an individual risk assessment must be prepared.

[Explanatory Video Remote Audit](#)

How do we plan a remote audit?

Instead of the confirmed audit schedule, DQS GmbH will clarify the feasibility of a remote audit together with your auditor and with you.

Whether a remote audit can be performed depends on the following factors:

- the processes that can be effectively audited remotely
- the rules of the respective certification scheme
- from information and communication technology
- the personnel available in your organization to support the remote audits
- the degree of your current business and operational capability

In order to be able to assess the situation in your organization and the risks associated with conducting remote audits in advance, we need your information and declaration of consent to conduct remote audits. Please use our [COVID19 questionnaire](#). We can then determine the feasibility and scope of the remote audit on the basis of your information.

After the remote audit has been carried out, we will then set up a time for the remaining audit days on site together with you.

We are aware that these future audit dates are provisional, depending on when it is safer to resume the on-site audits.

Can remote auditing be done for all standards and their certification programs?

At this time, the external regulations of ISO/TS 22163 (IRIS) do not allow remote audits.

Also IATF 16949 is not allowing remote auditing. For more information please read the [IATF release](#).

Due to the Covid-19 situation, we are not able to complete the audit preparation (internal audits, management review etc.). So how do we deal with this?

As soon as the audit can then be carried out, this particular situation must be documented and evaluated as a deviation (force majeure) in the classification of the audit finding, combined with a closure date.

Can my auditor please provide a medical certificate or health certificate as proof that he is not ill with Covid-19?

In principle, you are welcome to ask your auditor to provide an explanation of his or her non-illness.

At this point, however, we would like to point out that most of the laboratories currently do not carry out tests on patients without a concrete suspicion of illness due to overwork and your auditor may therefore not be able to provide the desired proof.

We ask for your understanding that we will charge you for the costs in connection with a corona test initiated by you and not medically indicated.

We therefore advise against a prophylactic corona test. The number of suspected cases and contact persons is likely to increase, so all resources should be concentrated on those persons who actually present a risk.