



January 25, 2008

Dear TUV USA Customer,

Subject: **NOTICE OF CHANGES TO THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS AT TUV-USA**

This letter is to inform you of some of our upcoming accreditation changes that TUV USA, Inc. must implement to ensure we comply with the latest industry requirements.

The overall aim of certification is to give confidence to all parties that a management system fulfills specified requirements. The value of certification is the degree of public confidence and trust that is established by an impartial and competent assessment by a third-party (ISO 17021:2006, 4.1.2).

To enhance this, the accreditation agencies (the auditors who audit us) have adopted ISO 17021 as the basis for approving and reviewing registrars.

The ISO 17021 standard specifies requirements for certification bodies like TUV-USA in much the same way ISO 9001 specifies the basic requirements certified companies must meet. Implementation of the ISO 17021 requirements is intended to ensure that TUV-USA operates our management system certification programs in a competent, consistent, and impartial manner.

While most of the changes TUV-USA has made to comply with this standard are transparent to you, there are a number of items that may affect future audits.

1) Stage 1 readiness review for new audits

This change should not impact your company since you are already certified. If you add a new location that is not already certified, the certification audit for this location will be performed in two steps. In some cases (major system or scope changes, e.g.) a two stage audit may be required for recertification.

2) Root cause analysis as part of audit nonconformance (NCR) closure

For most, this is not a change to current practices. However, the requirement for root cause analysis to be included in NCR closure is now mandated.

3) Surveillance audit scheduling will be based on the last day of the certification audit

This may cause an adjustment of the due dates for your surveillance and recertification audits. The allowance for scheduling will be minus three months, plus zero, from the last day of your certification audit.

4) Impartiality

Being impartial, and being perceived to be impartial, is necessary for a certification body to deliver certification that provides confidence. (ISO 17021, 4.2.1)

We have implemented internal steps, such as the establishment of an independent impartiality review board, to ensure the administration of our certification programs is done in an impartial manner.



Additionally, TUV-USA will implement an auditor monitoring process to assess our auditing staff's overall competence, including impartiality. This may involve onsite witness of the auditor's performance, or scheduling of a different auditor for one of your audits.

All of us at TUV-USA are committed to providing you and your organization with the highest level of service and quality. To this end, we have embraced the ISO 17021 standard as an input into the continuous improvement of our company and most importantly, our services to you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our North American headquarters at (603) 870 8023 or me directly at rgates@tuv-usa.com.

Sincerely,

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