Automotive

IATF 16949 6th Edition Rules

Answering your questions

FAQs

Introduction

The 6th Edition of the IATF 16949 rules, published on 31 March 2024, introduces significant updates to the auditing and certification processes and is set to take effect on 1 January 2025.

While the standard and its requirements remain unchanged, the new rules will streamline and refine the audit procedures. Here we answer some of the frequently asked questions about the 6th Edition Rules.

Frequently asked questions

Q

What is IATF 16949?

A

IATF 16949 is a global quality management system standard specifically designed for the automotive sector. It aims to harmonise the different assessment and certification systems worldwide in the supply chain for automotive parts.

Find out more about LRQA's IATF 16949 solutions →

Q

When was IATF 16949 first published?

A

IATF 16949 was originally published in October 2016. It replaced ISO/TS 16949:2009.

Q

What is the IATF 16949 6th Edition?

A

The 6th Edition refers to the updated rules for audits and certification processes under the IATF 16949 standard. These updates do not change the IATF 16949:2016 standard itself but revise the guidelines for conducting audits.

Q

When was the 6th Edition of the IATF 16949 Rules published?

A

The 6th Edition of the IATF 16949 Rules was published on March 31, 2024

Q When will the 6th Edition rules come into effect?

A The new rules will become effective on January 1, 2025. From this date, all audits will be conducted according to the new 6th Edition rules, and the previous 5th Edition rules will become obsolete.

Q Will there be any changes to the IATF 16949:2016 standard itself?

A No, the IATF 16949:2016 standard remains unchanged. The changes pertain solely to the rules governing the audit and certification processes.

Q What are some significant changes in the 6th Edition rules?

A

- Extended Manufacturing Site (EMS): Redefined to be within 10 miles (16 km) and 60 minutes driving distance from the main site. Sites not meeting this definition will be reclassified.
- Surveillance Audit Intervals: Only two surveillance visits are permitted in each 3-year audit cycle.
- Audit Duration: Includes both audit days and additional audit time for various activities.
- Non-conformity Management: Stricter timelines for addressing major and minor non-conformities.
- Virtual Audits: Permitted only for Standalone Remote Supporting Locations under specific conditions.

Q What are the new requirements for surveillance audit intervals?

A Surveillance visits with 6-monthly and 9-monthly intervals are no longer permitted. Only two surveillance visits are allowed in each 3-year audit cycle. Clients on these intervals must transition to 12-monthly contracts.

Q

How has audit duration been affected by the new rules?

A

Audit duration now includes additional audit time for activities such as verification of nonconformities, translation time, and investigation of significant changes. A minimum of 1.5 days is required for regular visits at main manufacturing sites, and at least 30% of the audit time must be spent on the client's manufacturing process.

Q

Can virtual audits be conducted under the new rules?

A

Virtual audits are permissible only for Standalone Remote Supporting Locations and must follow specific guidelines. Onsite audits are mandatory for Main manufacturing sites regardless of the client's remote work setup.

Q

What changes are there in non-conformity management?

A

- Major NCs: Corrective actions must be submitted within 15 days and completed within 60 days.
- Minor NCs: Corrective actions must be submitted within 60 days.
- Failure to meet these timelines will result in the invalidation of the recent visit and withdrawal of certificates.

Q

What is the impact of the new rules on corporate clients?

A

For clients under a corporate structure, the previous reductions in mandatory calculations are no longer applicable. All corporate clients will now have a uniform 15% reduction applied to their minimum audit days.

Q Given the group scheme setup (e.g., one company is IATF-certified and another is not, with different certification bodies), is a central Quality Management function required in a corporate scheme?

A According to the International Automotive Task Force (IATF) Rules, Sixth Edition, the corporate scheme must include a minimum of two manufacturing sites, with or without an Environmental Management System (EMS), operating under a shared Quality Management System (QMS). Since we are discussing a shared QMS, such a scheme must have a designated central location where the QMS function is based. This central location is responsible for defining, organising, and overseeing the shared QMS.

Q We manage RSL offices only, and most of these sites are engaged in 'paperwork' activities—no design, warehouse, or physical activities on site, just Sales and Admin support. Are 18-month cycles and remote auditing permissible for these sites?

A For non-product design standalone remote support locations (SA-RSL), the minimum requirement is two audits within a three-year period: an initial or transfer audit and at least one surveillance audit. These functions must be audited at least once every two years (i.e., every 24 months, with an allowable variation of minus three or plus three months). In practical terms, this means the minimum interval between the initial or transfer audit and the surveillance audit can be 21 months, while the maximum interval is 27 months.

Q We have hundreds, possibly thousands, of 'Remote of Remote' functions. Must all of these be listed in the certificate/Audit PVP document? This seems impractical for us.

A We believe there is no intention to collect information about indirect support functions (i.e., remote support for remote support locations) in the audit planning document, also known as the Programme Validation Plan (PVP). However, it is important for the organisation to have a clear internal understanding of these indirect support functions and to communicate them during the audit. Indirect support locations are not included within the certification scope of a manufacturing site and, therefore, will not be listed on the certificate.

Q Could you clarify what qualifies as indirect remote locations? How should the organisation identify these, and how are they communicated to the certification body?

A Indirect support can include any process or activity, such as a standalone remote location (SA-RSL) with information technology (IT) functions that provides support to another SA-RSL responsible for product design. Identifying such indirect support within the organisation can follow the same approach used for identifying direct remote support functions, such as through the quality manual. To allow the certification body (CB) to audit indirect support (e.g., remotely) during the audit of the supported SA-RSL, it is crucial to communicate this information to the CB during the audit planning phase.

Q Concerning major non-conformity changes to timings under section 5.11.1: is this applicable only to recertification, or does it also apply to surveillance audits?

A This is applicable for both surveillance and recertification audits. However, in the case of a recertification audit, the expiry date of the certificate may influence the maximum allowable timing, potentially resulting in a shorter overall timeframe.

Q Does the distance requirement for extended sites apply if the organisation has already started a new certification cycle?

A Yes, the distance requirement for extended sites will apply to all organisations starting from January 2025.

Q **If an audit at a standalone remote support location (SA-RSL) fails for any reason, does this necessarily initiate the decertification process for multiple manufacturing sites?**

A If the audit result at the Standalone Remote Support Location (SA-RSL) is unsuccessful, the certification body will not be able to issue a positive certification decision for the manufacturing site it supports.

Q **The 6th edition of the rules does not specifically address the auditing of standalone remote support locations (SA-RSL) and their "indirect support locations." Could you explain the process?**

A According to the language in the Rules, Sixth Edition, it is mandatory to audit an indirect remote support location if it exists and provides support to a standalone remote support location (SA-RSL). The method of conducting the audit—whether onsite or remotely during the audit of the SA-RSL—is at the discretion of the certification body. Employees from the indirect support location can participate virtually in the SA-RSL audit to review process activities, interfaces, and interactions. However, the certification body should not audit an indirect support location independently of the SA-RSL.

Q **Could you explain the change affecting the audit cycle, where only two annual surveillance audits are required per site in a three-year audit cycle? Does this mean there are two surveillance audits and one recertification audit, i.e., three audits over three years?**

A Yes, if we are referring to manufacturing sites.

Q Regarding product design within the certification scope: if the company assembles a product with purchased components except for one component produced at the company's plant, where the design is clearly supported by our R&D department, how should the company handle this in the certification scope?

A A manufacturing site (whether a single site or part of a corporate scheme) can only be classified as non-product design responsible if it neither receives design support from nor provides design support to another client location. Additionally, it must receive fully designed and developed product specifications from its customer (i.e., "make to print") for all automotive products it manufactures or plans to manufacture.

If the manufacturing site is part of a corporate scheme that includes product design capabilities, the site must demonstrate that there is no interaction with any product design support functions and that product design is excluded from its quality management system.

As per this definition, if the site is involved in designing even a single component of an entire assembly (co-design) and demonstrates its design capabilities, either at the manufacturing site or a supporting standalone remote location (SA-RSL), the certification scope must include design.

Q Does the new edition impact internal audits in relation to IATF requirements?

A No, the new rules do not impact internal audits in relation to IATF requirements.

Q Where can I find sanctioned interpretations for the 6th Edition Rules?

A IATF Rules sanctioned interpretations can be found in here...

Find out more →

Automotive

Your changing landscape

About LRQA:

LRQA is a leading global assurance partner, bringing together decades of unrivalled expertise in assessment, advisory, inspection and cybersecurity services – underpinned by data-driven insights – to help its clients navigate a new era of risk.

Operating in more than 160 countries with a team of more than 5,000 people, LRQA's award-winning compliance, supply chain, cybersecurity and ESG specialists help more than 60,000 clients across almost every sector to anticipate, mitigate and manage risk wherever they operate.

Get in touch

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