IFS Remote Surveillance Check Guidance

VERSION 1

MARCH 2020

ENGLISH

Remote verification of supporting management processes

0   Objective

Ensuring that supporting procedures and management processes are in place and maintained under the current extraordinary circumstances, i.e. if a scheduled IFS on-site audit cannot take place due to Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) travel / access restrictions.

Note: this document is applicable for all IFS Standards and IFS Global Market Programs.

IFS would like to emphasize that this voluntary check does not replace or contribute to any part of the IFS Certification / IFS GM Program

1   Scope

The remote surveillance check is only applicable for companies which are already IFS certified and where a scheduled IFS Renewal audit was not possible due to the Corona virus crisis.

Within the IFS Database, there is a new section where certification bodies are able to select or tick a check-box to indicate the above situation and save all of the documentation associated to the remote surveillance check (for further details see point 9).

The remote surveillance check is an overview how companies are operating in the current Corona crisis as well as a verification of the main supporting management processes since the last IFS Audit. Due to the fact that this is just a "spot check", the result of the remote surveillance check cannot be taken into account for future IFS Certification audits according to ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

The remote surveillance check can never be used to replace the re-certification audit and cannot be used to reduce the duration of the re-certification audit in any way.

Note 1: a remote surveillance check is always site specific (COID).

Note 2: only the certification body who issued the last certificate is allowed to conduct this remote surveillance check.

Note 3: this remote surveillance check should preferably be conducted by the same auditor who did the last initial/renewal audit.

2   Duration

Eight (8) hours (=1 day) documentation / checklist review.

The eight (8) hours can be split into a maximum of two (2) consecutive days.

Note: The certification body needs to consider that in certain cases more time is needed to present documents by remote techniques (e.g. switching of pages, returning to previous documents for cross checks, internet connection, etc.).

3   Auditor Competency

As required per IFS Standard/Program (product and technology scope rules)

Note: We expect that certification bodies train the IFS auditors in a way that they can do the remote surveillance check in line with IFS principles, to provide a high professional standard.

4   Framework / Trail

Only records and documents presented to the auditor during the ongoing remote surveillance check or documents submitted prior to the remote surveillance check can be considered as evidence.

- HACCP / changes and verification actions (cleaning, pest control, trainings, corrective actions)
- Traceability check using a product with an increased risk of possible raw material shortages / supply chain challenges due to current situation – one (1) product
- Crisis management (business continuity) + management responsibility, including recalls / withdrawals documentation
- Complaint management
- Requirements as listed in the designated remote surveillance checklist as per Standard/Program

5 Scoring

The scoring of the checklist requirements consists of a basic evaluation of

- "OK"
- "Not OK"
- Major (as defined in the Standard/Program)
- KO = "not OK" on KO requirements

Note: The requirement must be rated as "not OK" if the auditor determines that a corrective action is necessary, as otherwise legality or quality could be compromised.

6 Non-conformances

In case of "Not OK" and Major or KO, details of the non-conformances need to be listed in the corrective action plan. Companies have up to two (2) weeks (14 days) to respond and provide a completed corrective action plan to the certification body for review.

- If the non-conformances consist of "Not OK" only, the letter "Result of Remote Surveillance Check" is issued once the certification body has accepted the completed corrective action plan clearly stating the "Passed" result.

- If the non-conformances include a Major/KO, the letter "Result of Remote Surveillance Check" is issued clearly stating the "Failed" result. The certification body still has to review and accept the completed corrective action plan. Once the completed corrective action plan is accepted, the company can request a new date for a remote surveillance check. The new date has to be at the earliest four (4) weeks after the previous remote surveillance check.

- Corrective actions taken by the company need to be verified at the latest during the next IFS Certification audit.

7 Results of the remote surveillance check

There are no percentages as a result of the remote surveillance check, only:

Passed or **Failed**

- If only "OK" evaluations are made during the check, the surveillance check is passed.

- If "Not OK" evaluations are raised and the certification body accepts the completed corrective action plan, the surveillance check is passed.

- If "Not OK" evaluations are raised and the certification body does not accept the completed corrective action plan, the surveillance check is <u>failed</u>.
- If a Major/KO is raised, the surveillance check is <u>failed</u>. A follow-up is not possible. The company can request a new date for a full remote surveillance check, four (4) weeks after the previous remote surveillance check was failed.
- If there is a current and still valid IFS certificate/letter of confirmation and the surveillance check is failed:
  - For accredited IFS certificates, according to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 clause 7.11.1, IFS expects that in case of evaluation of a "Major" or "KO", the certification body applies the same approach in line with IFS Standards Part 1 clause 5.8.1 and 5.8.2 (respectively 6.8.1 and 6.8.2 in the IFS HPC Standard).

8   Reporting

- The certification body shall issue a reviewed report (remote surveillance checklist, including all evaluations) plus a corrective action plan, stating the remote technique used and the date(s) of the remote surveillance check.
- The template letter "Result of Remote Surveillance Check" is provided by IFS.
- The certification body shall complete the template letter "Result of Remote Surveillance Check" – companies are to receive the document regardless of the result (i.e. also in case of a failed remote surveillance check).

Note: additional hand written notes shall be taken by the auditor and be available on request.

9   Uploading of documentation to the IFS Database

- The certification body has to select the option "*Due to precautionary measures and/or governmental restrictions concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19) the renewal audit has to be postponed*" in the IFS Database.
- There is one check box to select:
  - Remote surveillance check /Documentation check
- The certification body has to provide the following information:
  - Name of the auditor
  - Date of the remote surveillance check
- The following documents are mandatory to upload:

- o "Result of Remote Surveillance Check"
- o Completed corrective action plan

- The validity of the "Result of Remote Surveillance Check" letter is valid for a maximum of six (6) months. As soon as a full IFS on-site audit is possible again, the audit has to take place. At this point the "Result of Remote Surveillance Check" letter expires!

10   IFS Database Notifications

- Favorites will receive a notification when the option *"Due to precautionary measures and/or governmental restrictions concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19) the renewal audit has to be postponed"* is selected.

- Favorites will receive a notification that the check box "Remote surveillance check /Documentation check" is selected and that the documentation is uploaded.

11   Technical guidance

The certification body conducting the remote surveillance check shall be able to ensure compliance with below essential requirements:

- The security and confidentiality of electronic or electronically-transmitted information is ensured when using remote techniques for this check.

- The use of remote techniques for this check shall be mutually agreed between the certification body and the auditee in accordance with information security and data protection measures and regulations before remote techniques are used.

- The certification body is responsible for sufficient IT infrastructure at the certification body's office. Further, the certification body is obliged to review the IT infrastructure at the auditee office to ensure that the remote surveillance check can be successfully conducted. This includes also that the company is capable to provide documents, records and personnel for interview by using remote techniques defined by the certification body.

- The certification body shall ensure that a remote tool is used which allows recording of the session as objective evidence. The identification of participants by name needs to be clearly stated / understood and be recorded as part of the session.

- The certification body is obliged to record these session and store the data (for at least 3 years).

12   IFS uploading fees

IFS will charge for every uploaded remote surveillance check a fee of:

- 100,00€ + VAT for IFS Certification Standards
- 10,00€ + VAT for IFS Global Markets Programs