

Coronavirus 2019-nCoV

VDA QMC approved global waivers in response to manage related extraordinary events

Revision 1.0 --- 17. March 2020



The purpose of this information to VDA-recognized Certification Bodies for VDA 6.x is to advise everyone (including all affected certified organizations and other stakeholders) that VDA QMC has approved several global waivers in response to the outbreak of the recent coronavirus, affecting certification activities globally.

The waiver and measures below described are not limited to a certain country or region but can be applied globally if the audits and certification activities are affected as described.

Due to this extraordinary event certification bodies may temporarily be unable to carry out specific certification-related activities, mainly but not limited to on-site audits.

The VDA-recognized certification bodies need to establish (in consultation with certified clients) a reasonable planned course of action outlining the steps they will take in the event that a VDA 6.x certified organization is affected by this extraordinary event.

VDA QMC has developed and approved the following global waivers for which the VDA-recognized certification bodies will not need to request a waiver from VDA QMC. However the certification body is required to document the justification and all related information in the following cases internally.

Whenever it is specified: "...VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of X days..." in the following situations, it is to be understood that these are additional days to the defined maximum timing(s) of the Certification Requirements for VDA 6.1, VDA 6.2 and VDA 6.4, 6th revised edition, September 2016. This extra time will allow for a certain flexibility and prolongation of activities for affected audits and certification activities.

Affected certification-related activities:

1. On-site audits

Stage 2 audits:

In cases where the stage 2 audit cannot be conducted within the specified ninety (90) calendar days from the last day of the stage 1 readiness review, VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) calendar days to commence the stage 2 audit.

As a result, the stage 2 audit shall commence within a maximum of one hundred and fifty (150) calendar days from the last day of the stage 1 readiness review.

Surveillance audits:

In cases where the required surveillance audit cannot be conducted within the allowable intervals and timing as per the Certification Requirements 6th revised edition (Table 5.1: Possible surveillance intervals), VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of ninety (90) calendar days to commence with the surveillance audit without starting the decertification process. In these situations, the decertification process has to be initiated only if the additional allowable timing is exceeded.

In cases where the decertification process has already been initiated as per Certification Requirements, 6th revised edition, clause 8.1 e) and the rescheduled surveillance audit cannot be conducted within the ninety (90) calendar days from the suspension of the certificate, VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of ninety (90) calendar days to commence with the rescheduled surveillance audit.

Recertification audits:

In cases where the required recertification audit cannot be conducted within the allowable interval and timing as per Certification Requirements, 6th revised edition, section 5.1.1, VDA QMC is granting an additional extension to commence with the recertification audit within thirty (30) calendar days after the expiration date of the recent/last valid VDA 6.x certificate.

While an extension to the certificate cannot be applied, these late recertification audits can be conducted without additional requirements. VDA QMC is aware that this might result in a time without a valid VDA 6.x certificate until the positive certification decision is made.

Transfer audits:

In cases where the required on-site transfer audit timing cannot be met (see Certification Requirements, 6th revised edition, section 7.1.1), VDA QMC is granting an additional extension to commence with the transfer audit latest prior to the expiration date of the currently valid VDA 6x certificate.

While an extension to the certificate cannot be applied, the transfer audit can be conducted without additional requirements. VDA QMC is aware that this might result in a defined period without a valid VDA 6.x certificate until a positive certification decision is made.

In cases where a transfer audit is planned to take place during the surveillance audit cycle, the previous certification body will apply the above described global waiver conditions for not conducting a surveillance audit in time (VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) calendar days without starting the decertification process).

Special audits (and potentially affected certification decision):

In cases where a (required) special audit on-site cannot be conducted, VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) calendar days to commence with the special audit. VDA QMC is aware that this might affect e.g. situations to investigate performance complaints or to verify effective implementation of corrective actions.

A subsequent extension of a maximum of sixty (60) calendar days is therefore granted in situations where a certification decision could not be made based on a postponed on-site special audit.

VDA QMC is also aware that an extension to conduct a required special will result in situations where a certificate suspension will exceed 110 calendar days. Also in these situations the suspended certificate still remains valid and is still recognized by VDA QMC.

In all the above-mentioned situations the certification body is required to enter a comment in the VDA 6.x Database, i.e. in the relevant comment field of the affected audit and/or the affected certificate.

2. Nonconformity management

In cases where the client is unable to submit required documentation as per the timings of the Certification Requirements, 6th revised edition, VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of a maximum of sixty (60) calendar days for the relevant required steps.

This includes a potential extension of a maximum of sixty (60) calendar days for late certification decision as a consequence of the late submission of the required documentation.

3. Certification decision

As described in the section “Special audits” and “Nonconformity management” above, VDA QMC is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) calendar days for making a certification decision in situations where a certification decision could not be made based on a postponed on-site special audit and/or the late submission of required documentation.

4. Auditor assignment

In cases where the original audit team member(s) cannot be assigned to an on-site audit due to official travel restrictions, the certification body may assign new audit team member(s) to an audit. The certification body shall determine required additional audit days based on experience with the client.

5. Certification Body internal witness audit

In cases where the relevant audit has to be postponed which was planned for an internal witness audit, VDA QMC is granting an extension to the required timing(s) for conducting an internal witness audit.

It is recognized that the planning of a new internal witness audit might take additional time, therefore an additional extension of ninety (90) calendar days is granted to the internal witness audit timing.

6. VDA 6.x witness audits and office assessments (Geschäftsstellenaudits)

VDA QMC will also be required to cancel or postpone VDA QMC witness audits or office assessments. VDA QMC is taking into consideration situations in which countries are imposing different measures, e.g. travel restrictions.

Additionally, we are aware of situations where organizations have imposed their own restrictions to limit the access for visitors and certification bodies are limiting travel activities of their auditors.

Nonetheless, it is in the interest of all stakeholders to keep up the normal processes (including the monitoring activities of the VDA QMC) where possible.

7. VDA 6.x 3rd party auditor related global waivers

Initial qualifications:

It may be possible that initial qualification events will be cancelled by VDA QMC due to the outbreak of the virus whenever needed. In situations where the auditor candidates are unable to meet the full qualification within the required 12 months due to cancellations of events, the VDA 6.x Training Organization can apply an additional extension up to six (6) months to this timing requirement.

The present document corresponds largely to the CB Communique 2020-001 – Rev01 published by IATF on 13 March 2020 and will not be translated in German.

VDA QMC continues to closely monitor the situation and will decide on further adjustments if needed. If you have any questions, please contact VDA QMC.

Stay safe and healthy.