



## A-3, rev. 3 — Joint audits conducted by Measurement Canada and quality system registration bodies

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**Category:** Accreditation

**Document(s): S-A-01:** Criteria for the Accreditation of Organizations to Perform Inspections Pursuant to the *Electricity and Gas Inspection Act* and the *Weights and Measures Act*.

**Supersedes:** A-3, rev. 2

### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to set out general guidelines and conditions to be followed for the coordination and execution of Measurement Canada and quality system registration body (QSRB) joint audits.

Note: For the purpose of this bulletin, “trade sector” has the same meaning as “category of trade”.

### 2.0 Background

As a result of the Electricity Trade Sector Review, Measurement Canada has agreed to coordinate its audits with those conducted by QSRBs, when requested by an accredited organization. In June 2002, a working group was formed with representation from Measurement Canada and the Canadian Electricity Association with the mandate of developing the administrative policies surrounding the coordination of joint audits. Consultations with representatives from two QSRBs (Quasar and ITS Intertek) and a pilot joint QSRB/Measurement Canada audit were also conducted. This bulletin reflects the decisions made as a result of these meetings and audits. It is important to note that the purpose of conducting joint audits is twofold:

- a) To minimize the impact of the audit process, not to replace the QSRB or the Measurement Canada audit.
- b) To reduce the duplication of Measurement Canada and QSRB audits without compromising results.

### 3.0 Definitions

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Quality system registration body | Nationally or internationally recognized entity that performs certifications or registrations of quality systems.  |
| Registered organization          | Organization that operates a quality system that has been certified or registered by a quality system registration body.                                       |
| Accredited organization          | Organization that operates a quality system that has been initially assessed and qualified by Measurement Canada as meeting Measurement Canada’s requirements. |

## **4.0 Policy**

### **4.1. Requests for joint audits by organizations holding certificates of registration issued by a quality system registration body**

Measurement Canada is prepared to consider requests to conduct joint audits with a QSRB if a written request is submitted by an accredited organization. Measurement Canada will consider such factors as the accredited organization's previous performance, previous joint audit experience with the proposed QSRB and whether a joint audit will provide adequate assurance that the organization's quality management system is in compliance with all the requirements of accreditation standard S-A-01 before advising the organization if its request is accepted.

### **4.2. Scope and limitations**

- 4.2.1.** Joint audits may be conducted for expansion of scope or surveillance purposes, but not for initial accreditation.
- 4.2.2.** All expenses incurred by the QSRB are the responsibility of the accredited organization requesting the joint audit.
- 4.2.3.** The standard used by the QSRB must be recognized by Measurement Canada: ISO 9001 or ISO 17025.
- 4.2.4.** The QSRB must be an organization accredited according to internationally recognized standards or national accreditation programs. Proof of this accreditation must be provided to Measurement Canada.
- 4.2.5.** Measurement Canada and the QSRB are not bound by each other's findings.
- 4.2.6.** ISO registration is not dependent on Measurement Canada accreditation, and similarly, Measurement Canada accreditation is not dependent on ISO registration.

### **4.3. Before the audit**

- 4.3.1.** A formal written request for joint audits must be submitted to Measurement Canada by the accredited organization. In this request, it must be acknowledged and accepted that information about the accredited organization will be shared between the QSRB and Measurement Canada. Upon receiving a request, Measurement Canada will provide the applicant with guidelines and conditions.
- 4.3.2.** For combined audits, work documents should be developed to avoid duplication of audit activities.
- 4.3.3.** The work documents should be adequate to address all those elements of the quality management system within the joint audit scope.
- 4.3.4.** The QSRB is to share the audit plan with Measurement Canada.
- 4.3.5.** The QSRB, the accredited organization and the Measurement Canada auditor should agree on the joint audit plan and process.

#### **4.4. During the audit**

- 4.4.1. The audit will be led by the QSRB for the purposes of certification or registration; however, Measurement Canada will still assign a lead auditor to administer the auditing process related to Measurement Canada's requirements and its accreditation program.
- 4.4.2. The QSRB may be accompanied by the Measurement Canada auditor during the audit. The Measurement Canada auditor, along with the technical expert as applicable, will focus on the legal and technical aspects of the audit.
- 4.4.3. Measurement Canada will assess, as a minimum, those areas within the quality system where additional requirements exist, as documented in S-A-01.
- 4.4.4. Measurement Canada may further assess areas where more evidence of compliance with requirements is required.

#### **4.5. Audit conclusions**

- 4.5.1. Measurement Canada may withhold an expansion of scope even if the report by the QSRB identifies no non-conformances or the QSRB accepts the accredited organization's corrective actions.
- 4.5.2. QSRB registration is not dependent on Measurement Canada accreditation, and similarly, Measurement Canada accreditation is not dependent on QSRB registration. However, the QSRB may request Measurement Canada's concurrence with corrective actions related to legal or metrological requirements.

#### **4.6. After the audit**

##### **4.6.1. Audit reports**

Two separate reports will be prepared as a result of the audit. One report will be prepared by the QSRB for the purpose of registration or maintenance. Another report will be prepared by Measurement Canada for the purpose of accreditation. The QSRB report will be appended, when possible, to the Measurement Canada report and recorded.

##### **4.6.2. Corrective action**

- 4.6.2.1. Measurement Canada is not obliged to accept a corrective action that has been accepted by a QSRB.
- 4.6.2.2. Both parties conduct their respective follow-up and assessment process.
- 4.6.2.3. Where a nonconformance is raised in relation to a Measurement Canada requirement, corrective action or disposition must be accepted by Measurement Canada.

## **5.0 Revisions**

The initial version of this bulletin became effective January 28, 2004.

**5.1.** The purpose of revision 1 (February 15, 2008) was to allow Measurement Canada to decline a request for a joint audit and the possibility to have a single Measurement Canada auditor participating in a joint audit.

**5.2.** The purpose of revision 2 (December 8, 2014) was to:

- clarify that the term “trade sector” has the same meaning as the term “category of trade”;
- make minor editorial corrections.

**5.3.** The purpose revision 3 (July 4, 2016) is to:

- simplify the steps for planning an audit;
- make minor editorial corrections.

## **6.0 Additional information**

For additional information regarding this bulletin, please consult the [contact us](#) section of the Measurement Canada website or your departmental contact. The copy of this document located on Measurement Canada’s website is considered to be the controlled copy.