

### B On-Site Audit Activities

#### Objectives

The on-site audit objectives should reflect those of the environmental audit, which are:

- Verification of legislative and regulatory compliance
- Assessment of internal policy and procedural conformance
- Establishment of current practice status
- Identification of improvement opportunities



#### Actions

##### 1. Opening Meeting

Conduct on-site audit Opening Meeting with Office manager and site personnel to:

- Introduce audit team members
- Present audit scope and objectives
- Outline the audit approach and methodology
- Address questions or concerns of site personnel
- Rally staff support and assistance



##### Proceed With Caution

*Audits are unfortunately often perceived as part of a scheme to dig up dirt or find faults with personnel. Dispel misconception by stressing the audit is a systems performance assessment and that every staff can take part in contributing towards an overall performance improvement.*

##### 2. Document Review

Audit Team member to undertake a review of relevant document such as:

- Management policy
- Management system documentation
- Operational procedures
- Records (utility, inventory, monitoring, calibration, transportation, training etc.)
- Previous audit reports
- Green management team meeting minutes
- Green suggestions



##### Tips & Hints

*Refer to Pre-audit questionnaire, Operational document checklists and other documents such as environmental license and permits, records and etc. for detailed list of documents to be reviewed during the audit.*

In particular, to evaluate whether the records are:

- Current
- Properly completed
- Signed and dated
- Consistent
- Meet relevant requirements

### 3. Detailed Site Inspection

Conduct detailed site inspections with aid of on-site audit protocols to look for evidence on:

- Compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements
- Conformance with internal policies, procedures and guidelines
- Status of operational practice
- Staff participation in management system implementation

### 4. Staff Interview

To obtain information on

- Actual practices (current and past)
- Compliance with/or deviation from statutory and departmental requirements
- Awareness of requirements and expectations
- Ideas to *do it better*
- Comments and suggestions



#### Tips & Hints

1. *Keep a balance between records review, interviews, and observation.*
2. *Time is limited, better address all areas in the scope to some extent than to leave out entirely*
3. *Maintain a flexible agenda*
4. *Learn and use the protocols, but also use common sense and natural curiosity*
5. *Take time to observe events as they occur.*
6. *Use sound judgement despite the regulations and standards*
7. *Everyone can identify with this one- a well deserved compliment goes a long way!*



#### Information

*Site inspection activities may also include sampling and analysis as defined by the audit scope.*



#### Tips & Hints

Whom to interview:  
*Balanced representation from all levels of organisation, ie. from senior management to support personnel.*

Where:

- *at or near the interviewees work station*
- *private, one-to one*
- *minimal distraction*

When:

- *when not interfering with job performance*

## CONDUCTING AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT



### **Tips & Hints**

#### How (the 3-Up Technique):

##### *i Warm-Up*

- state objective of interview assure confidentiality and anonymity of information
- start by asking for job overview
- be informal and show courtesy

##### *ii Open-Up*

- ask open ended questions (i.e., the 5Ws)
- summarise and provide feedback to responses

##### *iii Follow-Up*

- ask funnelling question
- request examples from past experience to back up responses



### **Pitfalls To Avoid**

#### *Always be on guard against:*

- excessive use of acronyms or foreign language(s)
- prolonged silence during interview
- speculation on the part of the interviewee
- personal advocacy of opinion

## **5. Review Audit Evidence**

Ensure adequacy of audit evidence at the conclusion of on site audit by:

- Reviewing information gathered
- Collecting additional information as needed
- Substantiating audit findings
- Summarising and documenting all findings and observations
- Identifying issues requiring immediate attention/mitigation
- Noting outstanding issues requiring follow-up
- Preparing debriefing material for the Closing meeting



### **Tips & Hints**

*To be effective, the presentation of the audit findings must be*

- clear and unambiguous
- linked to audit criteria as per audit
- verified by objective evidence



### **Proceed With Caution**

*All audit findings should be evaluated in context to establish if the evidence represents an actual deficiency or a one time occurrence.*

## 6. Closing Meeting

The Closing Meeting provides an opportunity at the conclusion of on-site audit to:

- Debrief the senior site management
- Summarise the audit activities and findings
- Highlight system strengths and weaknesses
- Discuss preliminary findings and recommended corrective actions
- Bring up findings requiring immediate attention
- Clarify any outstanding issues
- Address staff questions or concerns
- Agree on reporting schedule and chain of communication



### Tips & Hints

1. *Identify and resolve all contentious issues before the meeting.*
2. *Open the meeting by acknowledging the co-operation of site personnel.*
3. *Start with the positive; give commendation where justified.*
4. *Focus on strengths and deficiencies on the systems level.*
5. *Listen attentively and respond directly.*
6. *Discuss all findings, no matter how minor.*
7. *Write down all evidences before leaving to minimize future site visits*



### Pitfalls to Avoid

*Under no circumstances during the Closing Meeting should the followings occur:*

1. *Finger pointing*
2. *Lingering on the negatives.*
3. *Inflexibility towards different opinions and disagreements.*
4. *Argument.*
5. *Leaving without agreement on contentious issues or reporting schedule.*

## Output

- ☐ Documented audit findings and supporting evidence
- ☐ Basis for evaluating conformance status in relation to statutory and internal
- ☐ requirements
- ☐ Basis for assessing performance status and improvement recommendations