

13. RESOLUTION OF NONCONFORMITIES DISCOVERED DURING ASSESSMENT AND SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE

To establish a procedure for handling nonconformities when discovered during assessment and surveillance activities.

SCOPE

This Procedure applies to FSAB assessments and surveillance activities performed for accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs).

If fulfilment of specified requirements has not been demonstrated, the finding of nonconformity may be reported. For example, a finding of nonconformity would be noted if an assessor observed that a CAB gave examinations in the course of the year under review, and there are no records of the dates the examinations were taken or the outcomes.

PROCEDURE

When a finding of a nonconformity is made during assessment or surveillance activities, the finding shall be clearly communicated to the CAB. If the finding is made during an on-site visit, the finding shall be reported to the CAB by the ARC Chair or Team Leader before the on-site visit ends. The time required for corrective action(s) depends on the seriousness of the nonconformity. Evaluation of a nonconformity may reveal that it is of a singular nature without negative consequences, and, therefore, the nonconformity may be corrected immediately.

If, however, the nonconformity may have produced negative effects on the CAB certification process, the FSAB provides a timeline to the CAB for corrective action plans. The CAB shall generally have 30 days from the report of the finding of a nonconformity to submit a corrective action plan for approval. The corrective action plan is sent to the FSAB point of contact, usually the Lead Assessor, who reported the nonconformity to the CAB. The ARC Chair or Team Leader shall respond to the CAB within seven days of receiving the plan either to approve the plan or to ask for more information. Once approved, notice of the completed plan should be sent to the ARC Chair or Team Leader within 30 days.

Nonconformities and resolutions are recorded by the Lead Assessor, included in the records of the assessment or surveillance activity and archived by the Administrative Manager.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE CAB

Communication between the FSAB and the CAB is critical to resolving nonconformities. In general, this communication shall take place between the Lead Assessor or designee and the designated CAB representative.

RECORD RETENTION AND ARCHIVING

The record of the resolution of nonconformities arising from assessment, or surveillance activities shall be preserved and archived at the Administrative Office (see Procedure 3: Record Control).