



March 18, 2020

Dear Valued Customer,

Given the escalation of the COVID-19 outbreak, we realize we need to be flexible and address the changing needs of our customers with proactive solutions while following the recommendations of National Health groups and our Government. In this regard, and for the health and safety of both your employees and our auditors, we have decided it best not to conduct on-site audits until at least the end of May. This action is warranted for the mutual protection of our organizations until the outbreak is under control. We will continue to monitor the government and National Health group recommendations to see if we can restart on-site auditing before the end of May or whether we will extend remote auditing even further.

Note we will make exceptions in this time only where the onsite audit is to be conducted in and the auditor is not from a country where the outbreak is not a current risk. This will be determined in accordance with National Health group and government recommendations.

In place of the confirmed plan, we ask that our customers allow us to conduct remote audits at the currently scheduled dates. The portion of the audit to be conducted remotely depends on the processes that can be effectively audited remotely, certification program allowances, technology and personnel available in your organization to support remote auditing. In order to assess the situation in your organization and risks involved in remote auditing, we are asking that you complete the attached form as soon as possible. We can then determine based on your input the feasibility and extent of the remote audit. We anticipate that many audits can be 100% conducted remotely.

In cases where we determine the audit cannot be completed in full remotely, we will then work with you on scheduling any remaining on-site audit days in approximately 90 days. We do recognize that these future audit dates are tentative depending on when it is safer to resume onsite audits.

At this time, the external rules governing IATF 16949 and SQF standards do not allow for any remote auditing. In this case, we will reschedule the audit based on their allowances as needed. We are hopeful that the rules will change given the pandemic situation. Due to this, we will reschedule only as the audit approaches as we want to maintain given dates until two weeks prior if there is an allowance released for some remote auditing. DQS firmly believes that remote auditing can be as effective and efficient as on-site auditing. In organizations where employees/ processes already function/ interact in digital platforms, the auditing can readily be conducted using application sharing, video conferencing and web sharing platforms. For processes where the auditor needs to physically view the operation or facility and how an activity is performed, we can use applications like FaceTime or Google glasses. FaceTime or a similar application works well because the person being audited can also see our auditor to help set them at ease using facial expressions.



Please note that a remote audit is not the same as a document review. We will coordinate an agenda and the technologies to be used for each portion of the audit. It may vary from video conferencing, web sharing platforms, FaceTime, phone and email, etc. Our auditors will directly interact with members of your organization throughout the audit just as they would in person. Remote auditing allows for less intrusion factor, ability for your employees that are working remotely to participate and results in lower travel expenses.

We have found that typically if an organization regularly uses such technology tools for other meeting purposes, it works more effectively for us to conduct the audit using the organization's technology tools. If not available, DQS will be happy to provide a GotoMeeting account to our auditor as the web sharing platform we use internally. We are also happy to work with you on a dry run of the technology before the audit commences.

DQS is also recording a video with Tips for Customers on Preparing for a Remote Audit. We will provide a link to it for your viewing as soon as it is posted.

We appreciate your cooperation with DQS in altering the planned audit approach. If your organization has an on-site audit scheduled between now and the end of May, please complete the form and return to your Lead Auditor and Customer Service Professional.

We pass on our wishes for the continued success of your organization and the health and safety of your management and staff during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Brad McGuire
President and CEO
DQS Inc.