

LRQA First to Transition to ISO/IEC 17021 Accreditation

Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) has been accredited as the first certification body to make the transition under United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to ISO/IEC 17021 accreditation on a global level. ISO/IEC 17021 is the International Standards Organisation (ISO) standard which gives the requirements for certification bodies delivering all types of management system certification. LRQA is the only certification body to be awarded ISO/IEC 17021 accreditation by UKAS for all three management system products: QMS (ISO 9001), EMS (ISO 14001) and OHSAS (OHSAS 18001) for all industry sector scopes. The new standard requires changes to the ways in which assessments are to be performed by certification bodies.

Jenny Butler, Corporate Quality Manager for LRQA, said, "LRQA was the first certification body to be accredited by UKAS back in 1986, receiving registration number 001. We are proud that, 22 years later, LRQA is still leading the way as the first global certification system body to achieve this higher standard of accreditation for the three main types of management system certification covering all industry and business sectors."

Accreditation places rigorous requirements for competence and impartiality on the bodies that offer audit and certification to management system standards like ISO 9001:2000 (quality management), OHSAS 18001: 2007 (health & safety) and ISO 14001:2004 (environmental management). ISO/IEC 17021 replaces and improves on two separate documents, ISO/IEC Guide 62:1996 and ISO/IEC Guide 66:1996.

There are two major changes which will impact organisations with certified quality and environmental management systems.

ISO/IEC 17021 strengthens the requirement on certification bodies for a three year certification cycle with a recertification audit, including a new requirement that the recertification audit and the decision on issuing the new certificate must be performed prior to the expiry of the existing certificate.

ISO/IEC 17021 also introduces a new requirement with regards to the way in which "Minor Nonconformities" (minor deficiencies present in a management system that is being audited) are addressed during the certification process. Under the new requirement, certification bodies are not allowed to issue a certificate to an organisation where Minor Nonconformities have been raised until it has reviewed and accepted the organisation's plan to correct the issue in question.

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF), in consultation with ISO, has set the date for implementation of ISO/IEC 17021 as 15 September 2008.

For further information on the new ISO/IEC 17021 standard, please visit us at www.lrqa.com or contact us at enquiries@lrqa.com.

LRQA is a member of the Lloyd's Register Group



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