

The quality system helps us to achieve higher customer satisfaction

The quality system helps you to do a good job, and helps the whole company meet customer requirements and expectations, and achieve higher customer satisfaction. Quality cannot be achieved by will or conviction alone. The effort must be planned, coordinated, and organized into a system.

Quality is a team achievement. Everyone must participate, because quality problems at any stage will inevitably show up in the final product or service.



How important are the listed benefits to you and the company?

There is a box next to each benefit. If you think the benefit is:

Very important - cross **X** the box

Important - check **✓** the box

Not important - leave the box blank

For you, the quality system will ensure that:

- You get good materials and correct data and information to work with;
- The equipment and tools you use are suitable and in good condition;
- You receive the necessary instructions and training to do your job;
- You are able to quickly find things and obtain the information you need;
- Your work area is clean and well organized;
- Should there be anything that prevents you from doing a good job, you are able to report the problem and get help to do something about it.

For the whole company, the quality system will ensure that:

- Customer requirements, needs and expectations are well understood;
- Our products are well designed to satisfy these requirements and needs;
- Vendors and subcontractors supply high quality materials and services;
- All activities, from taking orders to shipping finished products, are planned and coordinated;
- Rejects and rework rates are kept down, saving materials and time while improving efficiency and productivity;
- Problems affecting quality are identified and corrected, and the quality is continually improved;
- Our company supplies better quality products and wins new, satisfied customers and markets.

Our quality system is defined in three levels of controlled documents

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Not everyone in the company must read and know the quality manual and all operational procedures. But everyone should know where to find these documents.

Note the location (or network or internet address) where these documents can be found.

Our quality system is documented in:

Quality manual

Quality manual provides policies (or principles) on which the quality system is based. It is like the constitution of our country — it states the general principles, but it does not prescribe specific ways to implement them. The manual also defines the major processes of the system, assigns management responsibilities, and describes how the system is documented.

Operational procedures

Operational procedures define various processes of the quality system and instruct how to carry them out. They define the conditions and assign responsibilities for initiating activities, outline the main steps to be taken, and instruct what records must be established to document the results of the activity. For example, operational procedures may instruct when to initiate a corrective action, how to receive and process customer orders, how to control drawings, how to select subcontractors, how to carry out the final inspection, and so forth.

Work instructions

Work instructions are similar to operational procedures but they instruct how to carry out a specific task rather than a whole process. For example, there may be work instructions explaining how to operate a machine, how to assemble a product, how to carry out a test, how to calibrate a measuring instrument, and so forth.

Controlled documents

All three levels of documents are controlled. This means that the documents are reviewed and approved before issue, they are identified with a revision level, obsolete or invalid documents are removed, and all document changes and corrections are authorized. In addition to the quality system documentation, all drawings, specifications, bills of materials, parts lists, etc., are controlled in the same way.

To effectively use, maintain and improve the quality system, you should:

Understand how the quality system works

Find out who is responsible for the quality system and quality functions. Read the quality manual and operational procedures, or ask your supervisor to explain how the quality system works and which procedures apply to your work.

Critically assess your procedures and work instructions

Carefully read your procedures and work instructions. If you don't understand something, ask for explanation. You must understand your instructions and they must make sense to you.

If your procedures are new, compare them to the way you used to do your work. If you find anything you don't like, talk to your supervisor or the person who wrote the procedure. It may be that he or she did not fully understand what you do, or that the procedure makes you do things that waste your time. Don't object to changes only because you are asked to do something new. We must constantly change the way we do things to improve quality.

Help maintain document control

Process, distribute and file documents promptly. Don't let them accumulate on top of desks, cabinets or other such temporary locations. Always fill out forms completely. If some spaces are not relevant, write "NA" or cross them out. If some spaces are never used, ask to have them deleted from the form. Don't forget to sign and date documents and records.

Don't cross out, write in, or otherwise change anything in documents. If something has to be changed, it must be authorized.

Check that the documents you use are current. Return or destroy obsolete and superseded documents.

Report nonconformities

Even though you may not be an inspector or internal auditor, you should also watch for and report defective products, problems with equipment, and practices that depart from procedures and instructions.

The most powerful technique auditors use is the most simple one — just looking around. The first impression is very important. If the impression is negative, the auditor will feel that there are nonconformities to be found and will not go away before finding them. On the other hand, if everything seems to be in order, the auditor may just ask a couple of routine questions and move on.

Specifically, auditors look for the following conditions when walking through the office, production, storage and yard areas.



Read carefully the list of sights and conditions that may make a negative impression on the auditors, and decide which apply to your department and your immediate work area.

Check the box next to the sight or condition that applies.

Use the list to prepare your own checklist for cleaning up the areas where you work (see page 24).

Office areas

In the office areas the signs of potential problems are:

- Piles of documents waiting to be processed and/or filed;
- Catalogs, files, drawings, samples, etc., scattered on tops of filing cabinets, under tables, and in other such obviously unauthorized locations;
- Filing cabinets and files without labels identifying their contents;
- Neglected libraries of catalogs, standards, software, etc.;
- Dust, dirt and accumulation of trash;
- Overcrowding, poor lighting and unsuitable working conditions.

Production areas

In the production areas the offending sights are:

- Chaotic arrangement of production flow, and intermingling of unrelated operations in the same area;
- Storage of materials, components and supplies in unauthorized “free spaces” around the production areas;
- Equipment parts, tools and supplies scattered around and/or intermingled with materials and components used in the manufacture of products;

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- Accumulation of unused, downgraded, and/or scrapped materials around machines and work stations;
 - Products, materials and components without tags, labels, or travelers identifying what they are and what is their inspection status;
 - Unauthorized instructions posted on walls, work stations, and machines;
 - Signs of disrepair or inadequate maintenance of support equipment, such as containers, carts, lifting and transportation equipment;
 - Dirty or damaged uniforms and violations of dress code;
 - Obstructed transport or fire lanes;
 - Leaking roofs, broken windows, and other signs of building disrepair.

Storage, receiving and shipping areas

In areas where materials, components and products are held, auditors get their leads for finding nonconformities from the sites of:

- Inadequate separation of storage areas from production areas and the lack of arrangements restricting access;
- Apparent lack of organization and segregation of different types of products, materials, components and supplies;
- Unidentified packages, containers and items;
- Inappropriate stacking, and damaged or deteriorated boxes and goods;
- Items stored in aisles, inaccessible corners and other unauthorized locations;
- Accumulation of dust, dirt, scrap and trash.

Yards and lots (may not apply in your company)

Auditors also look around the outdoor areas and will not fail to notice:

- Damaged fences, old equipment and vehicles, damaged materials, empty drums, and other scrap dumped around the site;
- Material stored “temporarily” without adequate protection;
- On-hold shipments indefinitely waiting for disposition;
- Obstructed transportation and fire lanes.



Make a list of all controlled documents that can be found in your work area, including those that may only be passing through. These can be procedures, work instructions, drawings, bills of materials, parts lists, work orders (travelers), etc.

Make a list of all records that can be found in your work area, including those that may only be passing through. These can be travelers, as-built marked-up drawings, inspection and testing reports and certificates, nonconforming product reports, workmanship standards, calibration certificates, etc.

Now that you know what the requirements are and how auditors work, you can prepare for the audit. This is your personal list that applies only to you and your immediate work area. Managers responsible for preparing the whole company for the audit will be doing much more.

Know the company's quality policy

- The standard requires that the quality policy be understood by everyone in the company. If it is long, you do not need to learn it by heart. But you should be able to explain what it says and how you understand it. It is helpful to have the policy posted in conspicuous locations throughout the company.

Check your documents and records

- If you are on a distribution list for any document, make sure that you have this document and can quickly locate it, and that you have **ONLY** the latest revision.
- If you normally have any procedures, specifications, drawings, etc. in your files, review those files to make sure you have a complete set and that everything is the latest revision. Remove superseded and/or obsolete documents from your files.
- Check that your documents do not have unauthorized changes.
- Look at the machines, work stations, walls, etc. and make sure that there are no unauthorized work instructions posted.
- If you establish or file records, check that all your records are in order, are properly indexed, and are easy to find.

- Organize and index your files, and label your folders and filing cabinets.
- Whether or not you normally deal with documents, look around you and pick up all documents you can find on workbenches, desks, tops of cabinets, floors, etc. Examine each such document, and place it where it belongs or throw it away.

Clean up your work area

- If your job is processing paperwork, this is a good time to throw away anything that you do not need and to organize what is left. When auditors come into your office, you should be able to explain the purpose and status of every document that is out.
- Get scrap and trash out of your work area. Do not accumulate broken equipment, tooling, half-used supplies and other such “maybe-we-could-use-it-someday” items in your work area. Designate a special storage for those items — if you want to keep them at all.

Prepare to answer questions

- Be prepared to answer questions. Not everyone will be asked, but do not take chances. The questions may be about the quality policy, quality system, or your specific work and responsibilities.
- Answer truthfully but do not elaborate. If it is possible to answer *yes* or *no*, do just that and stop. Answer only to the point of the question. Do not volunteer any information that is not directly requested. While being brief, try nonetheless to convey the impression of being forthcoming and cooperative.



Read again this section together with Section 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 and write down a list of things YOU need to do to prepare for the registration audit.
