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	Document Number: F/47QMS/3.5	Subject: Advisory	Issue Date: 2011-May-25
	Revision Level:5	Approved By: <i>Manager, Certification Unit</i>	Last Revised: 2018-February -12

Advisory#: NCBJ-114-2020

Issue Date	March 17, 2020
Revised Date	N/A
Supersedes	N/A

Subject: Communiqué on Response to the Extraordinary Circumstance of COVID-19 pandemic

To: All Interested Parties (NCBJ Clients, Stakeholders, Auditors and Technical Experts)

As the situation with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) unfolds the NCBJ continues to monitor the development using the guidance presented by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The safety of our employees, certification personnel and clients are of paramount importance as COVID-19 affects the human component only and does not affect the hardware, infrastructure of our business.

This Advisory seeks to provide information on goals and strategies for National Certification Body of Jamaica in dealing with this extraordinary situation. We have reviewed our processes and put in place a contingency plan, the objective being to minimize the risk to NCBJ's clients and certification personnel whilst maintaining accreditation requirements and mitigating potential global trade risks. This is in keeping with ANAB's Heads Up 448.


<https://anab.qualtraxcloud.com/ShowDocument.aspx?ID=17419>

Business Critical Functions

The NCBJ has processes in place to continue to deliver on all critical aspects of our business including contracting, invoicing, scheduling of audits, audit package review and certificate issuance. It is understood that during the pandemic organizations may be in various states, including but not limited to, operating with minimal staff, operating with only specific product lines or services, being completely shut down, operating with NCBJ's auditors unable to access to their location.

Stage 1 Audits

Stage 1 audits that were scheduled for a period in March or April 2020 will be rescheduled to May or June 2020. Remote auditing will be employed for part of Stage 1 audit based on acceptable justification. The on-site portion will be completed before or at the beginning of the Stage 2 audit (ISO 17021-1:2015 clause 9.3.1.2.2). The remote audit will be done using electronic means to obtain audit evidence and evaluate it objectively in

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order to determine the extent of conformity to the audit criteria (Principles on Remote Assessments IAF ID 12: 2015).

Stage 2 Audits

Clients who are currently in process of scheduling the Stage 2 audit, based on the associated risk a new date will be agreed between NCBJ and the client. The new date will be up to a period of six months. In determining the interval between Stage 1 and Stage 2, consideration shall be given to the needs of the client to resolve areas of concern identified during stage 1.

Surveillance audits

We have decided to proceed with a combination of remote and deferred assessments depending on the type of visit and associated risk. Each audit will be assessed on a case by case basis to determine the associated risk.

a) First Surveillance Audit


Normally, the first surveillance audit after initial certification is to be within 12 months of certification decision. However, providing that sufficient evidence has been collected to provide confidence that the certified management system is effective, consideration may be given to postpone the first surveillance for a period not normally exceeding 6 months (18 months from date of initial certification). Otherwise the certificate has to be suspended or the scope reduced.

b) Subsequent Surveillance Audits

Based on a case by case basis subsequent surveillance audit shall be rescheduled. However as per ISO/IEC 17021-1 section 9.1.3.3 all the audits must be completed by the end of 2020. Otherwise, the certificate will be suspended.

c) Recertification Audits

Normally the recertification audit must be completed and the recertification decision made prior to expiration to avoid loss of certification (ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 9.6.3.1). However, if the master file review is able to provide sufficient evidence which shows confidence that the certified management system is effective, consideration may be given to extend the certification for a period not exceeding 6 month beyond the original expiry date. The re-certification should be carried out within this permissible extended period.

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Otherwise, a new initial audit should be performed. The expiration of the renewed certification should be based on the original recertification cycle.

Note 1: Changes are communicated in the form of Advisories on an ongoing basis and may be based on changes in NCBJ's scope of operations i.e. structural, procedural, operational, and regulatory and or accreditation requirements.

Note 2: Upon receipt of this Advisory please submit a written response to the Actg. Assistant Operations Officer (AOO) email pwalcott@ncbj.org.jm or Designate to indicate that you have read and is aware of the changes outlined.

Note 3: The recipient of a controlled document shall remove all obsolete versions from points of use. Obsolete documents that are retained shall be clearly identified as such.

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