Steps to Certification

1) Gain awareness - Learn about the applicable standard.
2) Develop understanding - Learn the meaning of each element.
3) Analyze the present system - Perform internal audits.
4) Modify the present system - Make any required changes.
5) Document the system - Describe the system in writing (as required) with manuals, procedures, instructions, and the means to fit the needs of your organization.
6) Apply for certification - Select a registrar. Consider knowledge, experience, and personal traits.
7) Review documents - Registrar reviews policies, procedures, work instructions, forms, etc.
8) Pre-assess the system - Conduct a "mini-audit" of the system to identify major obstacles.
9) Assess the system - Audit the complete system to measure understanding, documentation, implementation, and effectiveness.
10) Make required improvements - Correct nonconformities found during the audit.
11) Obtain certification - Announce your special status to the world.
12) Maintain/Improve the system - Implement continual improvement through surveillance and improvement, followed by more surveillance and improvement.

Audit Processes

Stage 1 Audit:

1) to audit the client's management system documentation
2) to evaluate the client's location and site-specific conditions and to undertake discussions with the client's personnel to determine the preparedness for the stage 2 audit
3) to review the client's status and understanding regarding requirements of the standard, in particular with respect to the identification of key performance or significant aspects, processes, objectives, and operation of the management system
4) to collect necessary information regarding the scope of the management system, processes and location(s) of the client, and related statutory and regulatory aspects and compliance
5) to review the allocation of resources for stage 2 audit and agree with the client on the details of the stage 2 audit
6) to provide a focus for planning the stage 2 audit by gaining a sufficient understanding of the client's management system and site operations in the context of possible significant aspects
7) To evaluate if the internal audits and management review are being planned and performed, and that the level of implementation of the management system substantiates that the client is ready for the stage 2 audit

Stage 2 Audit:

To evaluate the implementation, including effectiveness, of the client's management system, and determine the satisfaction *of "insert standard reference•* against audit findings. The following is included:

− information and evidence about conformity to all requirements of the applicable management system standard or other normative document
− performance monitoring, measuring, reporting, and reviewing against key performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable management system standard or other normative document)
− the client's management system and performance as regards legal compliance
− operational control of the client's key processes
− internal auditing and management review
− management responsibility for the client's policies
− Links between the normative requirements, policy, performance objectives and targets (consistent with the expectations in the applicable management system standard or other normative document), any applicable legal requirements, responsibilities, competence of personnel, operations, procedures, performance data and internal audit findings and conclusions.

Surveillance Audit:

To regularly monitor the representative areas and functions covered by the scope of the management system and to keep the confidence to the effectiveness of the certified management system within certification period. Surveillance activities include on-site audits assessing the certified client's management system's fulfilment of specified requirements with respect to the standard to which the certification is granted:

− enquiries from the certification body to the certified client on aspects of certification
− reviewing any client's statements with respect to its operations (e.g., promotional material, website)
− requests to the client to provide documents and records (on paper or electronic media)
− Other means of monitoring the certified client's performance

The surveillance audit program shall include, at least:

− internal audits and management review
− a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified during the previous audit
− treatment of complaints
− effectiveness of management system with regard to achieving the certified client's objectives
− progress of planned activities aimed at continual improvement
− continuing operational control
− review of any changes, and
− Use of marks and/or any other reference to certification

Recertification Audit:

The purpose of the recertification audit is to confirm the continued conformity and effectiveness of the management system as a whole, and its continued relevance and applicability for the scope of certification.

− The recertification audit shall consider the performance of the management system over the period of certification and include the review of previous surveillance audit reports.
− Recertification audit activities may need to have a stage 1 audit in situations there have been significant changes to the management system, the client, or the context in which the management system is operating (e.g., changes to legislation).
− In the case of multiple sites or certification to multiple management system standards being provided by the certification body, the planning for the audit shall ensure adequate on-site audit coverage to provide confidence in the certification. The recertification audit includes an on-site audit that addresses the following:

a) the effectiveness of the management system in its entirety in the light of internal and external changes and its continued relevance and applicability to the scope of certification
b) demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to enhance overall performance
c) Whether the operation of the certified management system contributes to the achievement of the organization's policy and objectives

Special Audits

Extension to scope:

The purpose of this type of audit is to undertake a review of the application for the extension to the scope of certification already granted by MIC; it may be combined with the surveillance audit.

Short notice:

It may be necessary for MCNA to conduct audits of certified clients at short notice or unannounced to investigate complaints, or in response to changes, or as follow up on suspended clients. In such cases

a) MCNA shall describe and make known in advance to the certified clients (e.g., in documents as described in 8.5.1) the conditions under which such audits are to be conducted, and

b) MCNA shall exercise additional care in the assignment of the audit team because of the lack of opportunity for the client to object to audit team members.

Certification Activities

Responsibility
The process for granting, maintaining, extending, renewing, reducing, suspending, or withdrawing certifications is handled through the Certification Review and Decision process. MCNA's President and Operations Manager is responsible for the effective implementation of the audit package technical review process, including accurate processing and reporting of certifications. Upon the technical review of the audit report package a formal certification decision is made.

Certification Decision
Upon completion of the audit the audit report package is submitted for technical review in accordance with MCNA's policy and procedures. The report package is reviewed for technical content, procedural conformance and the level of confidence placed on the audit team's recommendation based on information contained in the audit package.
Technical approval is based on:
- Scope of audit in relation to the organization's activities
- Conformance of audit with defined criteria
- Evidence presented in audit package
- Recommendation of audit team

The client's performance history is reviewed to determine if the audit frequency should be increased based on poor performance trend. Decisions for renewal audits are based on the results of the recertification audit, as well as the results of the review of the system over the period of certification and any complaints received against the certification. Positive decisions (i.e., "Approved") cannot be made on certification audits with open major or minor nonconformities. When a certification decision is "Approved," an MCNA certification is generated.

Reduction of Scope
The client's scope of certification may be reduced
- Product or service under the certification are no longer applicable or offered by the client
- to exclude the parts not meeting requirements when the client has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements for those parts of the scope of certification.

Reductions will be in line with the requirements of the standard used for certification.

Suspension of Certification
Certification is suspended any time the condition of the client's management system cannot be verified or is verified as not being effectively maintained. Certification is suspended in cases when a client fails to meet its contractual obligations to MCNA. The suspension period should not exceed six (6) months. A certificate may be suspended for:
A. Client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system such as:
   1) Repetitive major nonconformities
   2) Major nonconformities on successive audits
B. Certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies
C. Certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension
D. Failure to pay invoices in a timely manner
E. Refusal to permit ANAB, Industry OP Assessors, customer representatives, and regulatory authorities to accompany an MCNA Audit for the purpose of oversight witness or the confirmation of the effectiveness of MCNA's audit process.

Withdrawal of Certification

Certification is withdrawn when a client's management system demonstrates significant nonconformance(s) with audit standard or planned arrangements and a failure to react to and correct the nonconformance(s). Failure of the client to pay MCNA invoices for services provided (per contract) or a failure of the client to provide MCNA auditors access to the certified facility for audit purposes may also result in withdrawal of the certification.

1) In most cases, withdrawal is preceded by suspension of the certificate, but in cases of severe nonconformance or failure of the client to cooperate, withdrawal may occur immediately.

2) Withdrawal proceedings are initiated when the President is notified of one of the conditions specified above. A formal withdrawal notification is sent to the client. A copy of the communication is maintained in the client file. The notification details the client must immediately cease any claims of certification, including any use of the certification mark(s).

3) If the client disagrees with the decision, appeals are handled according to the appeals process.