

The logo for MSECB is a dark red trapezoidal shape with the letters 'MSECB' in white, bold, sans-serif font centered within it.

MSECB

**POLICY ON MANAGING
EXTRAORDINARY
EVENTS OR
CIRCUMSTANCES
AFFECTING CERTIFIED
ORGANIZATIONS**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define actions to be taken by MSECB in the event of any emergency that prevents access to certified clients, such that planned activities, such as surveillance or recertification audits, cannot take place at that time. This includes events preventing access to specific clients and general access to a geographical area.

This policy is consistent with IAF ID 3:2011.

2. Scope

This policy document is applicable to emergency situations where MSECB or its certified clients may be unable or restricted in their ability to carry out audit and certification activities.

3. Definitions

3.1 Extraordinary event or circumstance: A circumstance beyond the control of the organization, commonly referred to as “Force Majeure” or “act of God”. Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, pandemic, flooding, and earthquake, malicious computer hacking, other natural or man-made disasters.

4. Initial actions

For each affected case, MSECB will evaluate the risks presented to the organization and to the certification concerned.

MSECB will evaluate the extent of the impact of the situation on the ability of the certified organization to continue to operate in accordance with the certification requirements, and whether it is possible for the certification to be maintained under the circumstances.

To do this, MSECB will gather necessary information from the certified client before deciding on an appropriate course of action. The information should include the following, as appropriate:

- When will the organization be able to function normally?
- When will the organization be able to ship products or perform the service defined within the current scope of certification?
- Will the organization need to use alternative manufacturing and/or distribution sites? If so, are these currently covered under the current certification or will they need to be evaluated?
- Does existing inventory still meet customer specifications or will the certified organization contact its customers regarding possible concessions?
- If the certified organization is certified to a management system standard that requires a disaster recovery plan or emergency response plan, has the certified organization implemented the plan and was it effective?
- Will some of the processes and/or services performed or products shipped be subcontracted to other organizations? If so, how will the other organizations' activities be controlled by the certified organization?
- To what extent has operation of the management system been affected?
- Has the Certified organization conducted an impact assessment?
- Identification of alternative sampling sites, as appropriate.

If MSECB determines the risk of continuing certification is low, based on the collected information, it may consider alternative short-term audit methods to verify continuing system effectiveness for the certified clients. This may include reviewing crucial documentation (for example, management review meeting minutes, corrective action records, results of internal audits, etc.) to be reviewed off site by MSECB to determine continuing suitability of the certification (on a short-term basis only).

If contact with the organization cannot be made, MSECB will follow normal processes and procedures for suspension and withdrawal of certification.

5. Surveillance audits

If surveillance audits cannot be completed within 12 months, providing that sufficient evidence has been collected by MSECB, as described above, to provide confidence that the certified management system is effective, consideration may be given to postpone the surveillance for a period not exceeding 6 months. Otherwise the certificate will be suspended or the scope reduced. This decision to postpone surveillance audit will be communicated to the accreditation body.

Surveillance activities must be completed as quickly as possible once the current emergency status has been lifted and as soon as travel to restricted areas is possible and businesses are operational.

Wherever possible the surveillance must take place within the current certification year. Subsequent surveillance activities should continue in line with the original program.

Extended periods between surveillance visits may result in a need for additional surveillance visits for the remainder of the certification cycle.

6. Recertification audit

If recertification audit cannot be completed prior to expiration of a certificate, providing that sufficient evidence has been collected by MSECB, as described above, to provide confidence that the certified management system is effective, consideration may be given to extend the certification for a period not normally exceeding 6 months beyond the original expiry date. This decision to extend the certification will be communicated to the accreditation body.

The re-certification should be carried out within this permissible extended period. Otherwise, the certificate should be suspended and new initial audit should be performed. The expiration of the renewed certification should be based on the original recertification cycle.