



OFFICIAL NOTICE
IOAS Assessment and Surveillance and Coronavirus COVID-19
March 13, 2020 – updated September 4, 2020

Dear CBs,

As you can see, we first issued this notice in March and have been updating regularly as we learn more and adapt to the ongoing and constantly changing situation. Concern for public health and the well-being of your personnel, that of your clients, and our own team remains a priority but, like everybody, we are looking to balance that with ensuring we continue our work. We continue to post expectations of scheme owners and any updates regularly on our web site. All visits planned for the remainder of 2020 are being organised on a case by case basis, to be conducted either on site or remotely depending on the in-country conditions and the possibilities for IOAS personnel to travel.

Remote assessment of CB offices has been going well and we have been able to do some first remote operator visits which have been successful. However, we are finding that there is additional preparation time required for remote assessments, such as conducting a test call, that was not accounted for in our fee schedule. For this reason, we are now including an additional 0.5 days for preparation for all remote assessments (all including office and operator visits) in addition to the usual 1 day the IOAS requires for report writing. In the past our assessors were doing prep work during travel time, which is no longer being charged for remote assessments, so the overall cost to the CB is still lower than budgeted.

For initial accreditations the office assessment and witness audits must be completed on site according to all current scheme and IOAS accreditation rules. In order to facilitate this, we are introducing a hybrid option for witness audits which will allow new accreditations and scope additions to proceed. In this case we would assign a qualified assessor attending remotely while a locally contracted personnel attends in person. The attending personnel will live stream the inspection activities using a cell phone or tablet camera via video conference program such as Zoom. There is an additional daily rate of \$500 USD plus expenses associated with this option to cover the cost of the additional personnel resource.

Another option that our client CBs may find helpful is for IOAS to collaborate with local Accreditation Bodies. In this case we may subcontract the assessment to a local AB, who will assign one of their assessors to complete the visit following IOAS procedures and using IOAS forms and documents. For this service IOAS would pass through their daily rate with a \$200 US/day markup to cover our administration costs. The rates will vary depending on the collaborating Accreditation Body's daily rate, with an expected range between \$1000-\$1600 USD instead of the IOAS current daily rate of \$850.

** Note: In this case the review and closure of NC responses and the accreditation decision would still be completed by IOAS. The only portion of the process to be sub-contracted would be the assessment visit itself. Reference ISO/IED 17011 §6.4

To summarize,

- For all CBs who have not yet completed their planned assessment activities for 2020, we will be moving forward with organizing office assessments, witness, and/ or review audits at operator sites through whichever of the above approaches can work

- If for some reason neither an onsite visit nor a remote audit is possible during 2020, we will refer to our PL0510 Policy on dangerous situations and PL0522 Emergency exceptions granting policy. This will allow the IOAS to grant exceptions for the visit in extreme cases. Instead we will require the CB to submit information to allow IOAS to conduct a desk audit to support the continuation of accreditation by IOAS. This option may be subject to scheme owner restriction;
- Unfortunately, we will not be able to grant accreditation for new applications if circumstances do not allow us to make an on-site visit to the CB office and conduct the necessary operator site visits. We will however progress the assessment in terms of document and file review as far as possible and give priority to new applications to avoid such circumstances and/or reduce the impact of delays. The need for operator visits as part of extensions of scope will be required according to our normal policy.

We are committed to being even-handed with CBs in applying the different approaches over time. For example, CBs in circumstances where we are unable to complete the required surveillance in 2020 may be subject to additional activities in 2021/22 etc.

This is additional work for us as well as for you, so we seek your understanding and cooperation under these special circumstances. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Client Manager in the first instance.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Crucefix', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Crucefix PhD
Executive Director