



# IATF Oversight Certification Body Communiqué

**CB COMMUNIQUE # 2020-001**

**ISSUE DATE:** February 2020

	YES	NO
CONFIDENTIAL		X
MANDATORY CONTENT	X	

**SUBJECT: Coronavirus 2019-nCoV – IATF approved global waivers in response to manage related extraordinary events**

The purpose of this Certification Body Communiqué is to advise all IATF-recognized certification bodies (and subsequently all affected certified organisations and other stakeholders) that the IATF has approved global waivers in response to the outbreak of the recent coronavirus, affecting certification activities mainly in the People's Republic of China.

Due to this extraordinary event certification bodies may temporarily be unable to carry out specific certification-related activities, mainly but not limited to on-site audits.

The IATF-recognized certification bodies need to establish (in consultation with certified clients) a reasonable planned course of action outlining the steps they will take in the event an IATF 16949 certified organization is affected by this extraordinary event.

The IATF has developed and approved the following global waivers for which the IATF-recognized certification bodies will not need to request a waiver from their relevant IATF Oversight Office however the certification body is required to document the justification and all related information in the following cases internally.

Whenever it is specified: "...the IATF is granting an additional extension of X days..." in the following situations, it is to be understood that these are additional days to the defined maximum timing(s) of the IATF Rules, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. This extra time will allow for a certain flexibility and prolongation of activities for affected audits and certification activities.

Affected certification-related activities:

1. On-site audits

Stage 2 audits:

In cases where the stage 2 audit cannot be conducted within the specified ninety (90) calendar days from the last day of the stage 1 readiness review, the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days to commence the stage 2 audit.

#### cont. Stage 2 audits:

In cases where an initial audit (stage 1 readiness review and stage 2 audit) is to be conducted to “upgrade” from a letter of conformance to an IATF 16949 certificate, the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days to commence with the 50% reduction in the stage 2 audit after the expiration date of the letter of conformance.

As a result, the stage 2 audit shall commence within a maximum of one hundred and fifty (150) days from the last day of the stage 1 readiness review.

In cases where an initial audit (stage 2 audit) is to be conducted to “reapply for another letter of conformance, the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days to commence with the 50% reduction in the stage 2 audit after the expiration date of the letter of conformance.

#### Surveillance audits:

In cases where the required surveillance audit cannot be conducted within the allowable intervals and timing as per the IATF Rules, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (Table 5.1: Surveillance interval), the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days to commence with the surveillance audit without starting the decertification process. In these situations, the decertification process has to be initiated only if the additional allowable timing is exceeded.

In Cases where the decertification process has already been initiated as per IATF Rules, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, clause 8.1.e) and the rescheduled surveillance audit cannot be conducted within the ninety (90) calendar days from the suspension of the certificate, the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days to commence with the rescheduled surveillance audit.

#### Recertification audits:

In cases where the required recertification audit cannot be conducted within the allowable interval and timing as per the IATF Rules, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition section 5.1.1, the IATF is granting an additional extension to commence with the recertification audit latest prior to the expiration date of the currently valid IATF 16949 certificate. While an extension to the certificate cannot be applied, the recertification audits can be conducted without additional requirements. The IATF is aware that this might result in a time without a valid IATF 16949 certificate until the positive certification decision is made.

#### Transfer audits:

In cases where the required on-site transfer audit timing cannot be met (see IATF Rules, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition section 7.1.1), the IATF is granting an additional extension to commence with the transfer audit latest prior to the expiration date of the currently valid IATF 16949 certificate. While an extension to the certificate cannot be applied, the transfer audit can be conducted without additional requirements. The IATF is aware that this might result in a defined period without a valid IATF 16949 certificate until a positive certification decision is made.

In cases where a transfer audit is planned to take place during the surveillance audit cycle, the previous certification body will apply the above described global waiver conditions for not conducting a surveillance audit in time (IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days without starting the decertification process).

Special audits (and potentially affected certification decision):

In cases where a (required) special audit on-site cannot be conducted, the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days to commence with the special audit. The IATF is aware that this might affect e.g. situations to investigate performance complaints or to verify effective implementation of corrective actions. A subsequent extension a maximum of sixty (60) days is therefore granted in situations where a certification decision could not be made based on a postponed on-site special audit.

The IATF is also aware that an extension to conduct a required special will result in situations where a certificate suspension will exceed 110 calendar days. Also in these situations the suspended certificate still remains valid and is still recognized by the IATF.

In all the above-mentioned situations the certification body is required to enter a comment in the IATF Database, i.e. in the relevant comment field of the affected audit and/or the affected certificate.

2. Nonconformity management

In cases where the client is unable to submit required documentation as per the timings of the IATF Rules 5th Edition, the IATF is granting an additional extension of a maximum of sixty (60) days for the relevant required steps.

3. Certification decision

As described in the section “Special audits” above, the IATF is granting an additional extension of sixty (60) days for making a certification decision in situations where a certification decision could not be made based on a postponed on-site special audit.

4. Auditor assignment

In cases where the original audit team member(s) cannot be assigned to an on-site audit due to official travel restrictions, the certification body may assign new audit team member(s) to an audit (see IATF Rules, 5th Edition section 5.6 – force majeure). The certification body shall determine required additional audit days based on experience with the client.

5. Certification Body internal witness audit

In cases where the relevant audit has to be postponed which was planned for an internal witness audit, the IATF is granting an extension to the required timing(s) for conducting an internal witness audit. It is recognized that the planning of a new internal witness audit might take additional time, therefore an additional extension of ninety (90) days is granted to the internal witness audit timing.

6. IATF witness audits and office assessments

The IATF will also be required to cancel or postpone IATF witness audits or office assessments. Mr. Sam Chen of the IATF Administration office is staying in close contact with the IATF-recognized certification bodies in the People's Republic of China.

The IATF continues to closely monitor the situation and will decide on further adjustments if needed. If you have any questions, please contact your relevant IATF Oversight Office.

Stay safe and healthy.