WORKING MATERIAL · SUBCHAPTER 4.8

Recertification: Reading a Cycle as One Document

GUIDING QUESTION *Which document in your property reads three years at once? If the honest answer is that the only one is written by an auditor from outside, every three years, then recurrence and drift are things your system can produce but cannot see.*

Property: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

How to use this sheet: work through the four parts with the people who own the process. The left-hand text comes from the book; the empty columns are for what is true in your property.

1. Verification Pact: what the market says, what actually holds, and your property

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
"Recertification costs about two-thirds of what we paid in 2019."	No. Audit time is set under Global ACI TECH-3-004 (formerly IAF MD 5) from effective personnel and complexity as they are now. The applicable document relates recertification time to what an initial audit would need for today's organisation, not to the 2019 invoice; a hotel that has grown, outsourced or added activities over the cycle should expect the base to have changed.	
"The auditor will look at the last twelve months, the way they do every year."	No. Recertification is planned on a review of performance over the whole period of certification, previous surveillance reports included, and examines the continued fulfilment of the requirements by the system as a whole (ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015). An audit that samples only the last twelve months is a surveillance visit under another name.	
"If we cannot close the findings in time they will extend the certificate."	No. Recertification has to be completed, and corrections and corrective actions for any major nonconformity verified, in time for the renewal decision before expiry; otherwise certification is not renewed and validity is not extended. After expiry the body can restore certification within six months if the outstanding activities are completed, and beyond that at least a stage 2 audit is required. The certificate is not valid in the interval.	
"Every change was accepted at a surveillance, so our scope is current."	Partly. Notifying significant changes and having each one examined is what the certification arrangements expect, and the hotel did it. But acceptance of individual changes does not show that the documented determination of processes and the scope still describe the organisation; keeping them current is the hotel's own obligation under ISO 9001, and recertification reads the result.	
"The review of the three years is part of the days we are buying."	Partly. ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 places the review of the client's performance over the period of certification in the planning of the recertification audit. Whether and how a body counts it within the audit days is its own determination under TECH-3-004; the proposal should make it visible, and it is worth asking before the quotation arrives.	
"A complaint closed to the customer's satisfaction is a	No. Closing a complaint to the customer's satisfaction is a correction. Where a	

What the market says	What actually holds	In our property
complaint closed.”	nonconformity occurs, ISO 9001 also requires the organisation to evaluate the need for action on its causes, including determining whether similar nonconformities exist or could potentially occur, and to take corrective action appropriate to the effects (10.2, kept in the 2026 edition).	

2. Objective evidence: what an auditor would examine

Line	What to examine	Found? (Yes / Partly / No)	Notes and location
Document	The determination of processes and their interactions as it currently stands, with its revision date set against the dates of the structural changes made during the cycle.		
Record	Every customer signal channel exported for the full certification period into a single file, sorted by date and location rather than by system.		
Read	The report of the audit that opened the cycle and all surveillance reports since, read consecutively in one sitting, looking for findings that describe the same mechanism under different words.		
Seen	A process that still appears on the documented map performed as it is performed now (the laundry handover, the leased restaurant’s interface with the kitchen) rather than as the map describes it.		
Told	What each department head says has changed since certification, collected separately and compared: the four structural changes will be named by everyone, the accumulated effect by nobody.		
Re-performed	One recurring condition followed through all three of its closure records to what actually changed in the operation as a result of each.		
Absence	No document in which the three years are read as one, and no record anywhere that the three channels have ever been compared to each other.		

3. Common mistakes: self-check

Mistake	Why it matters	Present here? (Yes / Partly / No)
Treating recertification as the third surveillance.	It is the only audit in the cycle whose subject is the cycle, and a property that prepares for it by tidying the last twelve months has prepared for the wrong audit.	
Measuring closure rather than recurrence.	Every record at the Villa Morra was closed, closed correctly, and closed within target. A closure rate is a statement about the speed of a response, and it is silent on whether the same thing is being responded to repeatedly.	
Letting the channel define the condition.	Where the same event is an incident, a survey response and a commercial escalation, three departments will each hold a true and partial account, and the organisation will hold no account at all.	
Approving changes one at a time and never reading the list.	Each of the Villa Morra’s four changes was handled properly. The defect only exists in the aggregate, which means it can only be found by someone who looks at the aggregate on purpose.	
Discovering the audit time arithmetic when the invoice arrives, and disputing the total instead of the calculation, a fight that is lost before it starts because the total was never the disputable object.		

4. Action plan

Position from the book / gap found	Action in our property	Owner	Deadline

In brief

Recertification reads a cycle, and a cycle makes two things legible that twelve months cannot: recurrence, where a condition returns and is correctly handled each time, and drift, where an organisation changes by accumulation until its own documented description no longer fits it. Both are produced by competent work, which is why neither shows up as a failure in any annual instrument.

Source: The Helm and the Lens, Volume 2b: The Lens, subchapter 4.8. This sheet does not reproduce the text of any standard; work with your own copy of ISO 9001:2026 from an authorised source.