WORKSHEET 3.4

The Auditor: Competence and Independence You May Not Have

Subchapter 3.4 · case in the book: Granada

GUIDING QUESTION

Of the last twenty findings your internal audits produced, how many concerned a part of the system the auditor wrote? And how many concerned work the auditor has never done?

This worksheet turns the tools of the subchapter into a form you can fill in. The texts come from the book; the empty columns are for your own property. Adapt it before use: an unadapted checklist is exactly what the book warns against.

Practical application: what to do in your property

Step (from the book)	Done?	What we found / owner
Mark the last two reports for findings in authored sections and findings in unfamiliar work. Both columns are the measure of the problem.		
Write the competence determination for the auditor role in three lines, and note which competence is currently missing.		
Take somebody who does the work into the audit of that work. They notice what is ordinary; the auditor cannot.		
Adopt at least the first two rungs of the impartiality ladder. They cost nothing and reduce the most common failure; check once a year what the second reader actually changed.		
Propose the reciprocal audit with a sister or neighbouring property. It is the only arrangement that addresses both failures at once.		
Spend six mornings a year inside the operations you audit. It buys the third competence and the sources that come with it.		
State in the report what was not examined and why. Coverage that is not declared is assumed to be complete.		

These steps are the book's method, not requirements of ISO 45001. Evidence can take whatever form suits the property; a separate document is needed only where an applicable requirement, or the property's own system, makes it necessary.

Verification Pact: what is believed, tested against the standard

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«The auditor must be independent of the area audited.»	The requirement is that the objectivity and impartiality of the audit process are ensured. Independence of the person is one route; in a single-coordinator hotel it is unavailable and the obligation remains.	
«We are too small to meet this requirement.»	Size removes one route and not the obligation. A second reader, a reciprocal arrangement or a rule about authored sections costs little and gives the clause an arrangement that can be shown; whether it is enough is judged by what it changes in the audits.	

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«A lead auditor certificate makes somebody competent to audit our safety system.»	It evidences audit technique. It says nothing about the work, and the work is where the questions come from that a procedure cannot supply.	
«An internal auditor must understand every operation they audit.»	They must be competent to conduct the audit, which includes recognising the limit of their knowledge and involving somebody who has it.	
«Competence is a training matter.»	The requirement names education, training or experience. Experience is the route that supplies the third competence, and it is acquired by walking the operation, not in a classroom.	
«The auditor's competence is not really covered by the standard.»	An internal auditor is a worker whose work affects performance, so the general competence requirement applies, including the obligation to have determined what the role needs.	

Common mistakes: a self-check

Mistake (from the book)	Present here?	Action / owner
Reading the clause as independence of the person, concluding it is impossible, and stopping. The requirement is about the process and remains in force.		
Treating a lead auditor certificate as the whole of competence. It evidences technique and nothing else.		
Auditing an operation against its own procedure. It establishes that the procedure is being followed where it is followed, and nothing about what people do when it does not fit.		
Leaving the impartiality arrangement unwritten. The requirement is evidential; an unrecorded arrangement is not one.		
Handing internal audits to the heads of department. It solves the competence problem by maximising the independence one.		
Failing to state what was not examined. Undeclared coverage is read as complete coverage by everybody downstream.		

Operative synthesis

- **Two failures meet in the person conducting the audit, and in hospitality they arrive together.** The auditor usually wrote the system, and cannot see the question the system never asks. The auditor usually has never done the work, and therefore asks the questions the procedure suggests rather than the ones the work would.
- **The clause does not require an independent person.** It requires that the objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process be ensured, which converts an impossibility into an arrangement: a rule about authored sections, a second reader, a technical colleague, a reciprocal audit. Competence is governed by the general requirement, which applies to the auditor as to anybody else, and which obliges the property to have determined what the role needs: a determination that, once written, makes the third competence impossible to ignore.
- The reciprocal arrangement has one further property that is worth stating to a general manager who is weighing the two days. It runs in both directions: the property that receives an auditor also sends one, and the person who spends a day and a half examining somebody else's building comes back with a sharper view of their own. Nothing teaches an auditor faster than seeing the

same failure in a property where they did not write the system, because there it is obvious. The two days a year buy an audit and a training, and only one of them appears in the arrangement.

- **Six findings in a day and a half, every one of them in a section she had written or in work she had never done.** A dosing station out of service since autumn, with a procedure that had no step for it. A fan turned down during service for several years, because to the kitchen that was not safety, it was how you hear an order.
- Which raises the question of who else should be telling the auditor where to look, because the sous-chef's answer about the fan was in no document, and the people who hold answers like it are rarely asked where an audit should go.

Action plan for our property

Action	Owner	Due	How we will know it worked

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 3b «The Lens», subchapter 3.4. Edizioni Effedore, 2026. Clause references are paraphrased; this sheet does not reproduce the text of ISO 45001. It is not legal advice: health and safety law is that of the place where the property operates.