WORKSHEET 3.9

An Audit Is Not a Safety Walk: Evidence in an Occupied Building

Subchapter 3.9 · case in the book: Marseille

GUIDING QUESTION

Take the last five findings your audits produced. For each one, say how you know: you were told, you read it, you saw it, or you did it yourself. If most of them are the first, you have conducted an interview and called it an audit.

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
Write the route beside every finding in the working notes: told, read, seen, re-performed, or absent.		
Corroborate before writing. Testimony points at where to look; the finding is written on what you find there.		
Write findings so that the source cannot be identified. It is not a courtesy; it is how the next source stays willing.		
Re-perform what can be re-performed, and state in the report what could not be.		
Record absence deliberately. A gap in an otherwise complete register is the strongest evidence a safety audit usually gets.		
Retain the working notes, not only the report. Without them the audit function has findings and no memory of coverage.		
Before the closing meeting, be able to state for each finding what was examined, when, and what it showed, without naming anybody.		
Keep a standing section for observations outside the scope, so that nothing has to be discarded to protect the method.		

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
«If somebody tells you, you can write it.»	Testimony establishes that an account exists and points to where to look. Written as a finding without corroboration it can be made to look baseless by a single contrary record, even a wrong one, in front of the people whose cooperation the next audit needs.	
«If you cannot prove it, forget it.»	Testimony is evidence of where the evidence might be. The response is to go and look, not to discard it.	

What is commonly believed	What actually holds	Our position
«A safety walk is a kind of audit.»	A walk finds conditions and needs no criteria. An audit compares a scope against criteria. Both are useful and neither substitutes for the other.	
«The standard defines what counts as audit evidence.»	It does not. The grading of evidence is professional convention. This subchapter is mostly method and says so.	
«You cannot audit properly in an occupied hotel.»	You cannot re-perform freely. Everything else is available, and the honest report states what could not be tested.	
«Anything outside the scope is not my concern.»	A hazard seen during an audit is recorded somewhere, even if not as a finding of that audit. The wedged door does not become safe because the scope was engineering.	

Common mistakes: a self-check

Mistake (from the book)	Present here?	Action / owner
Writing testimony as a finding. Uncorroborated, it establishes only that an account exists, and it can collapse against a contrary record, right or wrong.		
Discarding testimony because it cannot be proven. It was telling you where to look.		
Conducting a walk and calling it an audit, or an audit and never walking. They are different instruments with different uses.		
Failing to state what could not be re-performed. Undeclared coverage is read as complete coverage.		
Leaving absence out of the report because it feels like less than a fact. It is usually the strongest thing you have.		
Writing a finding that identifies its source. It answers one question and closes the channel that produced it.		

Operative synthesis

- **Evidence in an occupied building comes by four routes and a fifth that no list usually contains.** You were told, which establishes that an account exists. You read it, which establishes what a record says. You saw it, which establishes a moment. You did it yourself, which is the strongest route and the one a hotel most often forbids. And it was not there, which is absence: the cheapest strong evidence in a safety system and the one most often omitted because it feels like less than a fact.
- **Almost none of this is requirement.** The standard asks for criteria, impartiality, reporting and retention, and says nothing about how evidence is weighed. The weighing is convention, it exists because it works, and this subchapter says so rather than dressing method as obligation.
- **The two failures are mirror images and both were in the same audit.** Testimony recorded as though it were a record produces a finding that collapses in front of the people whose cooperation the next audit depends on. Testimony discarded because it cannot be proven throws away the only thing an audit cannot generate for itself, which is a place to look. Between them sits the craft: go where you were pointed, find something that does not depend on anybody's word, and write the finding so that the person who pointed cannot be identified.

- **And the two mistakes have the same root, which is worth naming because it is not carelessness.** Both come from treating evidence as a property of the thing observed rather than of the route by which it was obtained. The wedge under the door was real and the auditor had seen it; the supervisor's account was true and the auditor had heard it. What differed was not the reliability of the world but what each route could carry into a report, and an auditor who keeps the route beside the finding, in a single word, will not make either mistake again.
- A supervisor who told the truth in a corridor, a finding withdrawn at a closing meeting, eleven permits all correctly countersigned: on the Friday, together, at the end of the week. And a wooden wedge under a fire door, seen and not written, still there the following February.
- Which leaves the question of how much of a department an auditor has to look at before any of this means anything, because everything above concerns a single finding, and an audit is a claim about a whole.

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 3.9. 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.