WORKING MATERIAL 4.6 · CHAPTER 4 — THE CERTIFIER'S LENS · SETTING: NISEKO, JAPAN

Major, Minor and Ninety Days

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7b — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 4.6 (book page 265)

GUIDING QUESTION

A certification body classifies what it finds, and the class decides what the hotel must do and by when. A minor nonconformity is not a footnote: it carries the same ninety days as a major and, left unclosed, becomes one. Who in the hotel owns the clock once the auditor has gone home?

WHO THE RULES BIND

The GSTC Accreditation Manual (AM-I v4.1) cited on this sheet binds certification bodies, not hotels. Where a row refers to it, it describes what the certifier must do and what the hotel can check; it is not a requirement of the GSTC Hotel Standard.

1 · Verification Pact: market claims against the standard

Copied from the book. The last column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know it.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A minor nonconformity can wait until the next annual audit	No	Clause 8.15.3 sets ninety days from the date of issue, with documented evidence of correction	
A corrective action plan accepted by the certification body closes the finding	No	Acceptance of planned actions is a condition for the decision; closure requires evidence of correction	
A major nonconformity means the certificate is lost	Only partially true	Sanctions follow insufficient closure; a major closed on time with root cause and evidence does not by itself remove the certificate	
An unclosed minor simply stays minor	No	Insufficient closure upgrades it to a major, with the heavier closure requirements of 8.15.2	
The ninety days start when the hotel receives the report	No	The Manual counts from the date of issue of the nonconformity	
Correcting the single instance is enough for a major	No	A major requires root-cause analysis and corrective action, not only correction	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property, and note where it shows.

☐ Reading "minor" as optional rather than as a statement of gravity with a ninety-day deadline.

☐ Treating a corrective action plan accepted before the decision as the closure of the finding.

☐ Counting the ninety days from the day the report was read rather than from the date of issue.

☐ Assigning a finding to a person who will leave before it is due.

☐ Correcting the single instance of a major without finding and removing its cause.

☐ Arguing the classification informally instead of using the appeals procedure or doing the work.

☐ Leaving evidence held by head office or a contractor outside the hotel's reach.

☐ Keeping audit findings outside the hotel's own system of corrective actions required by A8.3.

3 · A Checklist for Managing Nonconformities Against the Clock

The book's checklist, with a column for your own answer.

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
Is every finding entered in a register with its date of issue, deadline and owner?	The Manual counts ninety days from the date of issue, for majors and minors alike	
Will the owner of each finding still be at the hotel on day ninety?	Staff turnover is the most common way a minor becomes a major	
Do we know whether the finding needs correction only, or root cause and corrective action?	Closure requirements differ between minor and major	
Has the evidence been sent early enough for the certification body to review it?	Closure is confirmed by the certification body, not by the hotel	
Does the certification body hold a role address for correspondence?	Reminders sent to a departed manager are reminders sent to nobody	
Are corrective actions for minors ready to be verified at the next audit?	The Manual verifies corrective actions for minors at the following audit	

4 · What would show this is working

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. Indicator references point to the GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0; where the evidence lives is this book's practice, not a requirement of the standard.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Is every finding, internal or external, in one register with indicator, date of issue, deadline, owner and evidence?	Findings register	☐
For each certifier finding, is the ninety-day closing date recorded from the date of issue?	Findings register: date of issue and closing date (Manual 8.15: rules for the body)	☐
Does each major have a root-cause analysis, correction and corrective action, with evidence?	Root-cause analysis; evidence sent to the body	☐
Are corrective actions documented under the hotel's own system (A8.3) and reviewed at the annual review (A1.8)?	Corrective-action records; review minutes	☐
Does correspondence from the body reach a role, not one person's inbox?	Shared role address; handover rule (This book's practice)	☐

> *What this sheet is not: the GSTC Hotel Standard does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard's criteria, indicators and guidelines govern the real case. Independent material; not affiliated with or endorsed by the GSTC. The standard's own text at www.gstc.org prevails.*