



# PERRY JOHNSON REGISTRARS, INC.

## Beyond The Audit

### **How changes in your business can affect your certification**

Certification can be a great asset for a company, adding reputability and even potentially opening doors with new clientele who specifically seek out those who are certified. But the certification process can be daunting, and maintaining certification often brings a number of questions with it. What are the next steps? What do we have to do? At PJR, while we're dedicated to helping our clients achieve their certification goals, we know that the partnership between our team and yours extends well beyond the issuance of a certificate.

### **Categories of Change: How changes in your business can affect your certification**

It's natural for a company to grow and change over time – and such updates can be a great indicator of success and progress! However, some of these changes may be significant enough to alter the parameters of your certification, which may require PJR to take action.

The first significant category of change that may have an affect on an organization's certification status is legal change. This umbrella covers the legal nature of the business, including changes in ownership or legal status (corporation, partnership, LLC, etc.). Status changes in these areas may or may not affect an existing certification.



Second is operational change, covering operational day-to-day aspects of a business. This can include updates in any of the following areas: scope of operation (what should appear on the certificate scope statement), management systems and/or processes, staffing changes on the managerial, decision-making, or technical level, and a change in the number of employees. Unlike legal changes, alterations in this category will usually have some impact upon a company's certification.

Physical change is the third and final major category, covering the physical aspects of an organization, such as location/address changes, the addition or removal of sites, as well as significant damage to a site, such as via fire or natural disaster. These changes are likely to impact certification.

### **Short-Notice Audits**

When a change happens and a client notifies PJR, we are tasked by ISO 17021-1:2015 (clause 8.5.3) to “take action as appropriate.” The extent of the response to changes will depend upon the precise nature of the change and whether the issued certificate will be impacted. Some changes will be deemed insignificant and requiring no specific action. Material changes that are judged as significant will require a contractual amendment to be written, capturing and documenting both the change and its mutual approval by PJR and the client organization.

Ideally, reported changes will be assessed as part of the normal auditing cycle to simplify the needed action. However, if this is not possible, a short-notice audit may be required. These audits may also be referred to by PJR as “scope expansion” or “onsite assessments”/“OAs,” or by specific terms for certain certifications such as aerospace or automotive standards. In practice, short-notice audits will usually follow the same steps as a regularly scheduled audit, including an audit plan, opening/closing meetings, interviews with staff members, and a review of documentation. Broadly speaking, the short-notice audit is meant to be a targeted sampling of the change itself.

But what if a nonconformance is found during a short-notice audit? It is always a possibility that an NC can be found during any audit activity. For short-notice audits, nonconformances issued are subject to the same expectations for response and timing as applied to regularly-scheduled audits.

### **Contractual Obligations**

Just as PJR is expected to evaluate all material changes by ISO 17021-1:2015 (8.5.3), PJR clients are likewise bound by the official Terms & Conditions laid out in the F-3 document. The provision in F-3 states “*It is incumbent upon the Organization to notify PJR in writing and in a timely fashion of material changes.*” And also specifies a list of what constitutes “material change” for client reference.

### **Conclusion – PJR is your Partner!**

As always, PJR's goal is to exceed client expectations and deliver 100% satisfaction with all aspects of the certification process. Our team is here to help you succeed; without you, we wouldn't exist! If at any time you have questions regarding material changes, the expectations laid out in the F-3, or any other aspect of post-certification practices, reach out to your scheduler and call **(248) 358-3388**.