

PROCEDURE P5

Suspension, Withdrawal Reduction in Scope, Restoration of a Certificate (SWRSC) Procedure

CERTIFIED FOR COMPLIANCE

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ETHIC Intelligence® is an independent certification agency within The Red Flag Group®.

1. Objectives of the SWRSC Procedure

The objective of the Suspension, Withdrawal or Reduction in Scope of a Certificate Procedure is to ensure that decisions are taken according to the ISO 17021–1 rules and that all certified organizations are treated in the same consistent and fair manner.

2. Principles of the SWRSC Procedure

All decisions related to the Suspension, Withdrawal or Reduction in Scope of a Certificate are:

- taken by the Certification Committee.
- communicated to the Client i.e. the official who signed the certification contract
- eligible for an Appeals Procedure according to the ETHIC Intelligence Appeals Procedure (EI P12 Appeal Procedure)
- published on the web page where ETHIC Intelligence details each certificate awarded (as long as such web page exists). Status of the certificate for one given customer will also be provided to any stakeholder upon request.

3. Rules of the SWRSC Procedure

3.1 A Certificate will be suspended if:

- there is a persistent failure of the client's management system to meet certification requirements – this includes effectiveness of management system
- the Certificate or the Certification mark or logo of ETHIC Intelligence is used in an inappropriate manner (ex: for a different scope) and this has not been resolved by the client after notification by ETHIC Intelligence
- the certified client fails to close a Major non-conformity within the required time frame, or to provide a relevant action plan to close of minor non-conformity within the required time frame
- the certified client fails to accept surveillance audits or recertification audits at the required frequencies. This includes when the client fails to accept a first surveillance audit after initial certification within 12 months of initial certification decision
- the certified client has not paid audit fees
- the certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension

3.2 A certificate will be withdrawn if:

- it is discovered that important facts have been hidden purposely from the audit team
- if the facts that have prompted the Certification Committee to suspend the certificate have not been remediated within three months

3.3 The scope of certification will be reduced:

- if part of the organization fails to meet standard requirements

- if the organization requires the scope to be reduced

3.4 Restoration

The certificate, or the scope of the certificate, will be restored by decision of the Certification Committee, and, if required, after an in-situ audit, when the organisation has taken actions to remediate the causes that led the certificate to be suspended, or the scope to be reduced. Failure to resolve the issues that led to the suspension in a time established by ETHIC Intelligence shall result in the withdrawal or a reduction of the scope of certification.

Once a certificate has been withdrawn, it cannot be restored and the client needs to enter a new certification process starting with an initial audit

4. Modalities of the SWRSC Procedure

1. The Head of Certification launches an SWRSC Procedure investigation when he/she learns, through his or her own research or any other means, that a fact listed in 3.1 to 3.3 could justify the suspension, withdrawal or reduction in scope of a Certificate.
2. Once the Head of Certification has assessed the evidence and the seriousness of the fact(s), he/she reports in writing to the Chairman of the Certification Committee who calls a committee meeting to decide whether to apply the SWRSC Procedure. He/she informs the client in writing of the initiation of the procedure and requests the client to provide any additional information that could be useful to the Certification Committee
3. The situation and Client's answers are examined by the Certification Committee within 7 working days, during which time the Chairman may call for additional information.
4. The decision of the Certification Committee is communicated to the Client.
5. If an appeal is lodged, the Certification Committee's decision is not suspended until the Appeals Board Decision, which is final.
6. The report is filed in the "EI R31 SWRSC Reporting"
7. During the period of suspension, the certificate is temporarily invalid, and the client shall not promote or advertise its certification. Unless the suspension is lifted and the certificate validity is reinstated, recertification or transfers shall not be performed.