

SHIFTING the Window

BY LISA PATEL

AISC Certification is in the process of adjusting audit windows for participants. Here's what you should know.

AISC CERTIFICATION IS shifting the site audit time frame for all of our certified participants.

The change is being implemented in order to allow participants adequate time to both resolve any corrective action requests (CARs) issued during their site audit and to complete the Audit Findings Review Process. The previous time frame allowed little time for participants to resolve their CARs prior to the expiration of their certificates.

Those with certificates expiring in 2017 will see a time frame shift for certificate renewal site audits. The shift started in 2016 for certificates expiring in 2017 and will continue through the end of 2017 for certificates expiring in 2018. The shift is taking place over a two-year window to minimize the impact on participants.

Another reason for the change is to provide adequate time for the additional levels of review AISC Certification has incorporated into the Audit Findings Review Process. Once we receive the audit findings from the audit agency, the findings are reviewed by a program analyst for audit accuracy and compliance. Next, they are reviewed by a program engineer who compares this year's findings against the past two years. This is done to identify any recurring CARs or issues happening year-to-year or even every other year. Finally, the Certification Review Group meets to discuss each case and make a determination on certification status. This group is made up of the vice president of certification, the director of compliance, two program engineers and the program analyst. In other words, no one individual makes a determination on a participant's certification status.

Before this shift, site audits were typically conducted in a window of 30 to 75 days before the expiration of a partici-

pant's certificate. By the end of 2017, the goal is to conduct site audits 90 to 135 days prior to expiration. For example, if your certificate expires at the end of December, your audit would typically occur as early as mid-August but no later than the beginning of October. Prior to this change, an audit for a certificate expiring in December would have typically occurred between mid-October and the beginning of December.

These changes will increase the number of participants receiving a new certificate before their current one expires, plus they ensure that all audit findings have a rigorous series of reviews, which will only raise the value and credibility of the program for everyone.

If you have questions on this new change or other items related to AISC Certification, please contact us at certification@aisc.org.

When should you apply for a scope change?

Are you interested in adding an additional certification or endorsement to your current scope? If so, you might not realize changing your scope is the same as applying as a new applicant—and prior to having your scope changed, you must complete an application review (confirming the required prerequisites were submitted) and a documentation audit (the in-depth review of the prerequisites). This is done in two ways: during your renewal audit or through a scope-change audit. Here's how both options work.

- **Renewal audit.** It is highly recommended that you begin the process after you have completed your current certification process and have been approved. This means you should apply for a scope change right after receiving your certificate so that it can be combined with your next year's renewal audit, thus eliminating multiple audits and the associated costs. Starting the process early allows time for the application process, makes sure the site audit can be properly scheduled with the correct number audit days (two are required for a scope change) and an eligible auditor accepts the audit.
- **Scope change audit.** This option allows the participant flexibility throughout the year to change their scope at their convenience, but it requires an additional audit (in addition to your renewal audit) and the associated audit fee.

If you have additional questions about either option, please contact us at application@aisc.org. ■



Lisa Patel (patel@aisc.org)
is a program engineer with
AISC Certification.