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**MAHB** Major Accident Hazards Bureau  
Security Technology Assessment Unit

SEVESO COMMON **INSPECTION** SERIES CRITERIA

## Internal Auditing Procedures

*This publication of the European community on Common Inspection Criteria is intended to share knowledge about technical measures and enforcement practices related to major hazard control and implementation of the Seveso II Directive. The criteria were developed by Seveso inspectors to aid in dissemination of good enforcement and risk management practices for the control of major industrial hazards in Europe and elsewhere.*

*This particular issue highlights a number of issues that are critical for successfully reducing risk through effective internal procedures. Note that this document is not intended as a technical standard nor as a summary or replacement of any existing standards on the matter.*

### Definition

Internal auditing can be defined as a process of independent, systematic examination to assess the extent of conformance with defined standards and recognised good practice and to thereby identify opportunities for improvement.

For a major hazards operator a process safety audit checks that what the business does in reality matches up to:

- what it says it does in terms of policies and procedures
- what it should do to ensure that major accident risks are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable.

The task of audit is an integral element to process safety management systems and mandated by the Seveso directive for major hazard establishments.

### Inspection of internal auditing

It should be noted that the term 'auditing' involves fundamental assessment of the validity and reliability of the safety management system itself. It should not be confused with some operator's use of the term "auditing" to refer to activities such as safety



Fig. 1 Internal audit procedures play an important role in the safety management system

tours, physical conditions inspections and behaviour observation carried out by line managers as part of their active performance monitoring activities. The relationship of audit in both monitoring and system review activities is illustrated in Figure 2 on the next page.

It is expected that the description of the operator's arrangements for audit will contain the following;

- the resources and personnel required for each audit, bearing in mind the need for expertise, operational independence and technical support;
- the audit plan indicating how it has been prioritised;





## Contact

This bulletin is a product of the EU Technical Working Group on Seveso Inspections. For more information related to this bulletin or other products and activities of the Technical Working Group, please contact:

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- an individual assigned to follow up on corrective actions; and
- a report made periodically on progress and implementation of the audit programme.

## Post Audit

As the internal auditing programme matures it is expected that the programme is subject to regular review and improvement based on:

- debriefing of auditing teams,
- feedback from audited sites, and
- bench marking of audit processes with peer companies.

Ultimately the audit outcomes should correlate with process safety performance. A worsening process safety performance indicates that there may be problems with the auditing process.

## References

- 1 EPSC (European Process Safety Centre) Process Safety Auditing Report 32 [www.epsc.org](http://www.epsc.org) (freely available on request)
- 2 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Major Industrial Hazards Advisory Safety Assurance Paper No. 1

## Seveso Inspection Series Volume 6

### *Assessment of Safety Management Systems of Major Hazard Sites*

*There are still widespread questions among many Seveso inspectors as to when the assessment of the safety management system can determine that adequate steps have been taken. This document shares the knowledge and experience of a cross-section of Seveso inspectors across Europe to aid other inspectors in benchmarking good practice on inspection and control of SMS demonstrations. The Seveso Inspections Series is intended to be a set of publications reflecting conclusions and key points from technical exchanges, research and analyses on topics relevant to the effective implementation of the inspection requirements of the Seveso Directive.*

