# IATF Rules 6th edition: ensuring confidence and strengthening trust in IATF 16949 certification

**AIAG**
ADVANCING MOBILITY

**Plexus**
INTERNATIONAL

www.aiag.org

www.plexusintl.com

# TABLE OF
## CONTENTS

# Introduction

The Rules for Achieving and Maintaining IATF Recognition 6th Edition (after IATF Rules) contains the requirements for IATF-recognized certification bodies when conducting IATF 16949 audits and issuing certificates. Created by the International Automotive Task Force (IATF), the IATF Rules requirements are binding on the IATF-recognized certification bodies, but there are also certain requirements that should be understood by any organization certified to IATF 16949.

This white paper provides a brief overview of the automotive certification scheme for IATF 16949, as described in the IATF Rules,  a brief description of the most important requirements that affect certified organizations, and the benefits of ensuring confidence and strengthening trust to interested parties that the management system of certified organizations fulfill automotive industry requirements. The final section provides a high-level overview of key changes in the 6th edition of the IATF Rules

# Buy The Publication

**The "Rules for Achieving and Maintaining IATF Recognition – Sixth Edition for IATF 16949" copyright is held by AIAG, ANFIA, IATF France, SMMT, and VDA QMC.**

**AIAG Distributed Languages & Distribution Partners**
English (AIAG), Simplified Chinese (Plexus China), Japanese (JSA/Plexus Japan), Korean (Plexus Korea), Portuguese (Interaction Plexus Brazil), Latin Spanish (Plexus Mexico), and Thai (Quality Partner Co., Ltd)

**The contact information for AIAG's distribution partners can be found here:**

https://www.aiag.org/store/international/certified-distributors

**A full list of authorized distributors of the Rules 6th Edition in all languages can be found at:**

https://www.iatfglobaloversight.org/iatf-publications/

# IATF at a glance

The goal of the IATF 16949 standard is the development of a quality management system that provides for continual improvement, emphasizing defect prevention and the reduction of variation and waste in the supply chain. The IATF Rules are the collection of certification scheme requirements based on the automotive process approach to support the fulfillment of the IATF 16949 goal, as it is written in IATF Rules section 5.8.

"Each IATF 16949 audit shall be based on a sufficient understanding of the client's current quality management system and certification profile from the audit planning process. This understanding shall be continuously refined throughout the audit using the automotive process approach, incorporating customer risk and performance orientation and a focus on Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles. The audit team shall apply agility to complement the automotive process approach when conducting an IATF 16949 audit."

## The key sections and requirements of IATF Rules Include:

### ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION TO IATF 16949 (section 1)

- Organizations manufacturing automotive products, including accessory parts and replacement parts, are eligible for IATF 16949 certification. Key definitions are provided.

- Certification structure types: single manufacturing site, single manufacturing site with extended manufacturing site(s), and corporate scheme.

# The key sections and requirements of IATF Rules Include:

## CERTIFICATION BODY (CB) GOVERNANCE INTERNAL CONTROL, AND RISK MANAGMENT (section 2)

- CBs must be IATF-recognized legal entities with management system requirements including accreditation to ISO/IEC 17021-1, processes for communication of changes to IATF oversights and to clients, managment of business continuity risks and impartiality risks, threats to impartiality, management of conflict of interest, CB internal system audits and witness audits, managment review, management of appeals and complaints.

- IATF ongoing monitoring activities including witness audits, office assessments, nonconformity management (CB problem-solving), and additional monitoring activities

## CERTIFICATION BODY LEGAL CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS WITH THE CLIENT (section 3)

- CB must have a legally enforceable agreement with the client for the provision of IATF 16949 certification activities, including the mandatory notice of significant changes by the clients.
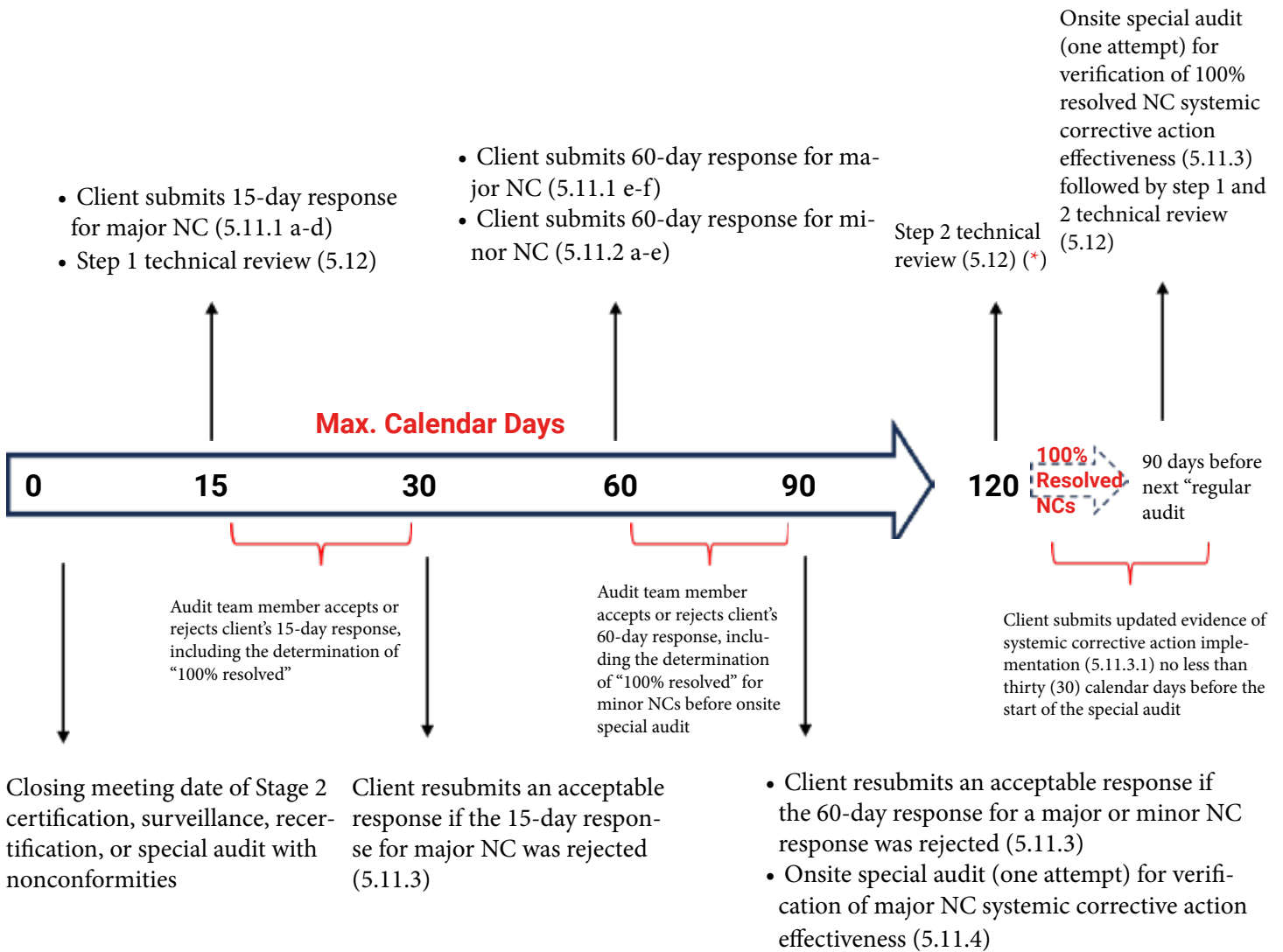
## PERSONNEL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS MANAGEMENT (section 4)

- CB must have a process to define responsibilities and competence requirements for: technical reviewers, application reviewers, IATF 16949 auditor candidates, IATF 16949 auditors, internal witness auditors, internal system auditors, IATF Database specialists, personnel involved in the problem-solving process.

- Requirements for IATF 16949 auditors' competence include: criteria for application, the auditor qualification process, initial qualification (phase 1), full (phase 2). Maintenance of auditor qualification includes minimum audits and audit days, a continuing personal development process (CPD).

## AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS (section 5)

- Key timing requirements for the 3-year audit and certificate cycles, including audit duration (audit \days and additional time), permitted reductions for audit duration, and audit program requirements for support functions.

- Audit planning starts with properly establishing the audit team and auditor rotation and continuity requirements. Compliance to ISO/IEC 17021-1 are complemented with the automotive sector requirements for audit planning, such as comprehensive gathering of client information to prepare the audit plan.

- Audits must be conducted based on automotive process approach, evaluating the clients defined QMS processes, including their remote support functions, focusing audit trails on customer satisfaction, risk to the customer, and performance orientation.

- Nonconformity findings must be recorded with detailed objective evidence gathered during the audit. Nonconformity management requirements for major and minor nonconformities include a robust problem-solving process implemented and verified by the client and evaluated by the CB.

- Technical reviews to confirm the acceptability of corrective actions are required for stage 2 certification, surveillance, recertification, and special audits (see figure below). Timing requirements for certification decisions and issuance, as well as letter of conformance, are also described.

## Timeline Diagram

**Max. Calendar Days**

Timeline: `0 — 15 — 30 — 60 — 90 — 120`  →  `100% Resolved NCs`

**Above timeline (pointing up):**

- Client submits 15-day response for major NC (5.11.1 a-d)
- Step 1 technical review (5.12)

---

- Client submits 60-day response for major NC (5.11.1 e-f)
- Client submits 60-day response for minor NC (5.11.2 a-e)

---

Step 2 technical review (5.12) (*)

---

Onsite special audit (one attempt) for verification of 100% resolved NC systemic corrective action effectiveness (5.11.3) followed by step 1 and 2 technical review (5.12)

---

90 days before next "regular audit

**Below timeline (pointing down):**

Audit team member accepts or rejects client's 15-day response, including the determination of "100% resolved"

---

Audit team member accepts or rejects client's 60-day response, including the determination of "100% resolved" for minor NCs before onsite special audit

---

Client submits updated evidence of systemic corrective action implementation (5.11.3.1) no less than thirty (30) calendar days before the start of the special audit

---

Closing meeting date of Stage 2 certification, surveillance, recertification, or special audit with nonconformities

---

Client resubmits an acceptable response if the 15-day response for major NC was rejected (5.11.3)

---

- Client resubmits an acceptable response if the 60-day response for a major or minor NC response was rejected (5.11.3)
- Onsite special audit (one attempt) for verification of major NC systemic corrective action effectiveness (5.11.4)

---

(*) IATF DB shall be updated within 7 calendar days of decision

## APPLICATION PROCESS AND BASIC AUDIT TYPES (section 6)

- IATF Rules describes specificities for each phase during the certification cycle: the application process, initial certification audit (stage 1 and stage 2 audits), surveillance audit, and recertification audit.
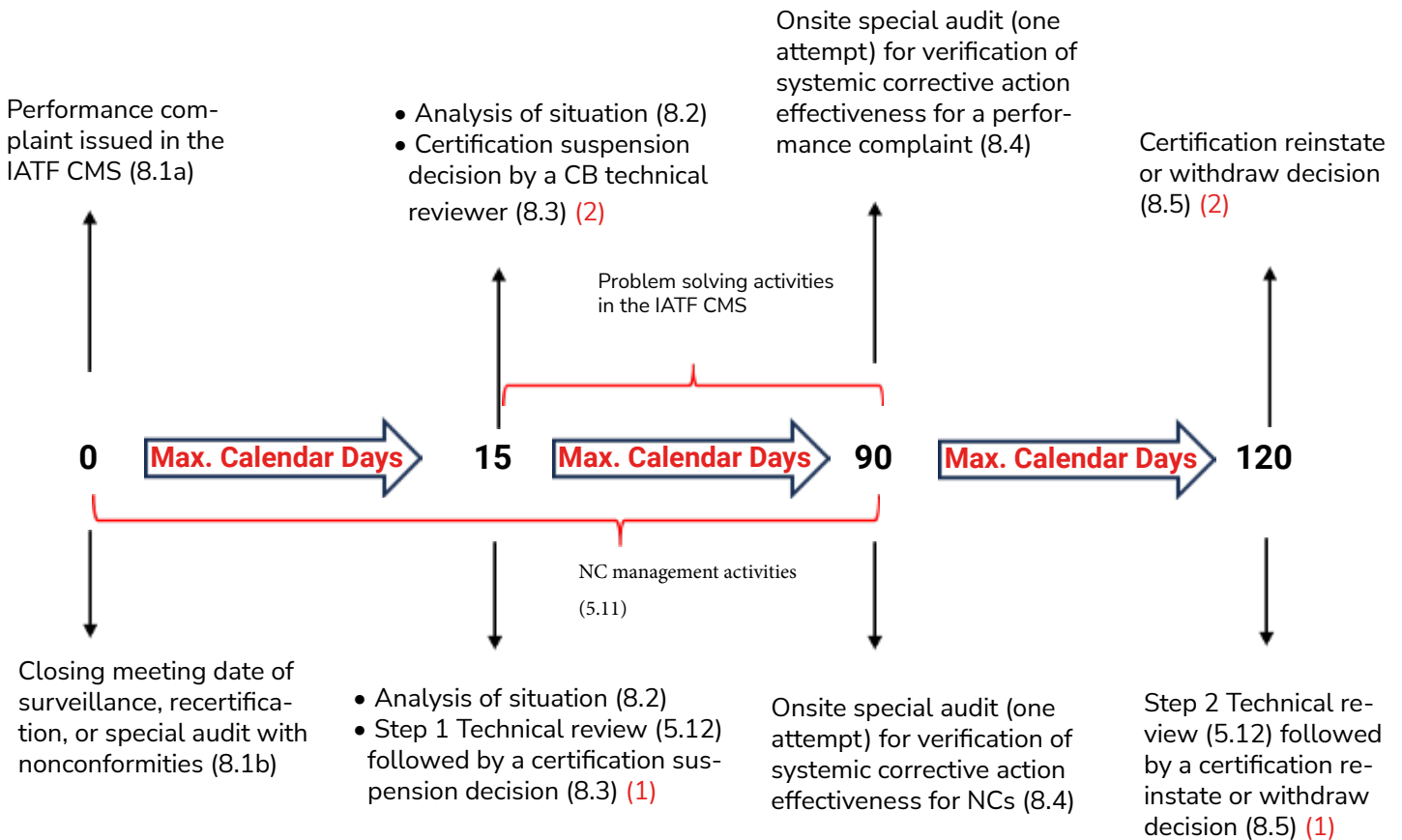
## OTHER AUDIT TYPES AND REMOTE AUDITING (section 7)

- IATF Rules describes other types of audit: transfer audit, special audit, and audits using the remote auditing method.

# DECERTIFICATION PROCESS (section 8)

- The decertification process requires the CB to decide whether or not to suspend the client's certification. Certification suspension is a temporary status and will result in certification reinstatement or withdrawal. The decertification process key requirements and timing is shown in the figure below.

Onsite special audit (one attempt) for verification of systemic corrective action effectiveness for a performance complaint (8.4)

Performance complaint issued in the IATF CMS (8.1a)

- Analysis of situation (8.2)
- Certification suspension decision by a CB technical reviewer (8.3) (2)

Certification reinstate or withdraw decision (8.5) (2)

Problem solving activities in the IATF CMS

**0** [Max. Calendar Days] **15** [Max. Calendar Days] **90** [Max. Calendar Days] **120**

NC management activities (5.11)

Closing meeting date of surveillance, recertification, or special audit with nonconformities (8.1b)

- Analysis of situation (8.2)
- Step 1 Technical review (5.12) followed by a certification suspension decision (8.3) (1)

Onsite special audit (one attempt) for verification of systemic corrective action effectiveness for NCs (8.4)

Step 2 Technical review (5.12) followed by a certification reinstate or withdraw decision (8.5) (1)

(1) IATF DB shall be updated within 7 calendar days of decision

(2) IATF CMS shall be updated within 7 calendar days of decision

## RECORDS REQUIRED OF THE CERTIFICATION BODY (section 9)

- The certification body must have a documented policy and documented procedures that define the controls for the identification, storage, protection, retrieval, retention time, and disposition of the records.

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS (section 10)

- Terms relevant for a proper understanding of the IATF Rules are included in this section.

# IATF Rules 6th edition: High-level overview of changes

Along with providing updated guidance for various processes, approaches, requirements, and IATF intentions, the changes of the new IATF Rules 6th edition cover the following topics:

- Incorporation of Rules 5th Sanctioned Interpretations (SIs) and FAQs,
- Updates on the eligibility requirements for IATF 16949 certification,
- New contract requirements between certification bodies and their clients,
- Improvements to the IATF 16949 certification scheme and client transfer process,
- Clarification of the basic understanding of the Automotive Process Approach,
- New requirements for audit planning,
- Improvements in the timing and linkages between the nonconformity management, decertification process, the role of technical reviewers, and certificate withdraw, and
- Updates of the document structure with clarifications for both certified organizations and those currently seeking certification to IATF 16949.

The new IATF Rules 6th Editon becomes effective on 1 January 2025. As of 1 January 2025, IATF Rules 5th Edition and all IATF Rules 5th Edition Sanctioned Interpretations and Frequently Asked Questions become obsolete.