



10 Internal Audit Tips

1. Create an audit team with enough members: Effective internal audit programs have a team of anywhere from 4-8 or more auditors depending on the size of the company. Remember that you will need to work around the auditors regular work schedule and work load and be able to assign auditors with no responsibility for the area being audited. Provide consistent [internal auditor training](#) for the team so everyone is using the same approach and techniques.
2. Audit by "Process" not procedure. Process auditing has been shown to provide better results because it covers the interaction of the different procedures. For example, by performing an audit of the shipping and receiving area or departments you will cover the whole shipping and receiving processes including all of the procedures that are relevant in that area. You are ensuring that the whole process works.
3. Use a [checklist](#) with the standard requirements, and add your own questions from your documentation. Adding your own questions each audit makes the checklist tailored to your audit and means that each audit will be slightly different, covering the system better over time.
4. Keep employees in the area well informed of when auditors are coming through, and what their purpose is. The more employees are involved and informed the better prepared they are to give the auditors the information they need to do a thorough evaluation of the system.
5. Keep good notes. Do not just check off a box saying complies or does not comply, note what is found. This information will help you give feedback on what is working and what is not. It also demonstrates to your certification auditor that you are performing an effective internal audit.
6. Remember to adjust your audit schedule based on your findings in an area. If an area is showing more issues or nonconformances, increase the frequency of the audits. Audit based on the status of the area. Audit each area or process at least once per year. Your audit team is key in measuring effectiveness and generating improvements to the system.
7. Write a clear, complete audit report and schedule follow up on any nonconformances identified. Make the most of your audit results, it is valuable information that is not always fully utilized by organizations. You have invested time and effort into gathering the information, make sure that you use it to the fullest to improve your system.
8. Provide effective [training for your auditors](#). It is common to present a powerpoint presentation and send auditors out to audit. The auditors have not practiced the steps, and are not confident as they perform their audits. It can be uncomfortable for new auditors to go into the facility and do an audit that involves their peers. Be sure that training covers not only the basic steps of auditing and the requirements of the standard, but also a "how to" training with practice on how to ask questions, review records and perform each step of the process. Send your auditors out with confidence.
9. Provide results to the Management Team for management review. The better the information from the audit program is summarized and presented, the more it will inform management on the status of the system. There is more information to be provided than just the number of nonconformances identified and if the audits are being performed on time. Give management information on what is being found in the different areas along with what improvements are coming from the corrective action process.
10. Provide the resources to perform timely, effective internal audits with thorough corrective action and follow ups. This means providing enough trained auditors, time to perform the audits and time for those who need to complete corrective actions.

For more information, checklists and auditor training: www.22000-Tools.com

