

# SQA Advisory: No. 3

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TOPIC: Cancellations:

## Introduction:

The only inventory that a certification body (registrar) has is “time.” At SQA, this time is allocated to organizations via a scheduling process that includes the assigned auditor (the “account manager”) and the organization’s management representative. Once the schedule is set, the auditor schedules future times to other organizations. Typically, it is not unusual for an auditor to have his/her schedule full at least six months out. Changes to this schedule mean that “inventory” assigned to one organization has to be re-allocated to other organizations, resulting in a very inefficient domino effect. Thus, it is very important to the continuation and maintenance of an organization’s certificate to maintain scheduled assessment times.

## Discussion:

An issue that occasionally needs reiteration has to do with cancellations. There are good reasons where an organization may need to cancel an audit. Most of these are based on unforeseen major or catastrophic events such as significant damage caused by fire or natural disaster.

In recent months, we have received an increasing number of requests for cancellation of assessments based on reasons that are not valid. The most frequent reasons given are: “We are having major customer visits during that time.” “We have had a significant increase in business, and we are just too busy.” “Our management representative will not be available.”

## SQA Position:

Our view is this: a certified system should be sufficiently robust and deployed throughout the organization as to withstand these pressures and should be auditable at any time. We have authorized each assigned lead auditor to schedule assessments within a defined time window. We expect our clients to honor this schedule, however, our Agreement does recognize the need to cancel scheduled assessments as long as the cancellation notice is provided thirty or more days in advance of the start of the assessment, and the re-schedule date does not extend beyond the allowable window. Failure to adhere to these requirements will, at a minimum, result in the assessment of a cancellation charge in accordance with the terms of our Agreement, and possibly other negative sanctions, should the certificate maintenance schedule become compromised.