

Interpretation Question 005:

Is the intent of 17.23.2 to allow the annual surveillance audit to be conducted up to six months earlier or later than the anniversary date of the certificate issuance?

Clause:

The ASC-MSC Certification and Accreditation Requirements v1.01 state the following:

17.23.1 The CAB shall carry out a surveillance audit, which includes a site visit, to monitor the certificate holder’s continued conformity with the Standard at least annually from the date of certificate issuance.

17.23.2 The CAB shall **not** conduct the annual surveillance audit earlier or later than six months from the anniversary date of the certificate issuance.

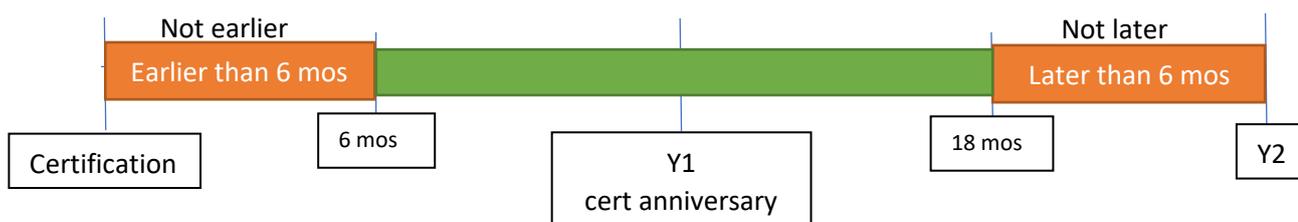
Response:

The intent of the requirements is to allow 6-month flexibility either side of the date of certificate issuance for surveillance audits.

The CAB cannot hold the annual surveillance audit any earlier than 6 months before the certificate anniversary, but it can hold it as early as 6 months before the certificate anniversary and anywhere in between 6 months and the certificate anniversary.

The CAB cannot hold the annual surveillance audit any later than 6 months after the certificate anniversary, but it can hold it as late as 6 months after the certificate anniversary and anywhere in between the certificate anniversary to 6 months after.

This means the certificate anniversary + or – 6 months. But not earlier and not later.



This flexibility allows audits to align with key dates in the seaweed cycle and the expected delivery of conditions according to the Client Action Plan. It also allows the coordination of site visits with audits of other nearby production unit, thereby minimising the inputs required from management agencies and stakeholders. If the next surveillance is proposed to be held later than the certificate anniversary, the CAB should inform stakeholders before the anniversary date so that they are aware of the revised timing. Regardless of revised surveillance audit timings, 2 surveillance audits are to be conducted before the expiry date of the existing certificate.

The CAB shall provide a justification for deviating from the anniversary date as part of the surveillance schedule.