

# Suspending, withdrawing or reducing scope A1603

## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To define the process surrounding the suspension, withdrawal or reduction of scopes of certifications issued by MSC.

## 2.0 PROCEDURE

### 2.1 Policy

MSC is committed to maintaining the credibility of its certificates in all circumstances. We are determined to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure this, even to the point of suspending or withdrawing certification, where deemed necessary.

### 2.2 Suspension

#### 2.2.1 Circumstances leading to suspension

Certification may be suspended in a number of circumstances including:

- The client's certified management system or product has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system
- The client postpones or delays the scheduled surveillance or re-certification assessment more than three months
- The client has voluntarily requested a suspension
- The client fails to make timely payments in accordance with the terms of the contract
- The client fails to take timely and appropriate corrective action on nonconformities raised in an audit.
- The client is found to be misusing the certificate or the certification mark in advertising
- The scheme owner (e.g. PSA) advises that certification should be discontinued

#### 2.2.2 Procedure for suspension

Upon detection of an issue or circumstance as described above, the client is notified in writing and given 14 days to respond. The Committee for Safeguarding Impartiality is informed of the development.

The MD will review the client's reply and evaluate its effectiveness in 1 or more of the following ways:

- Review of the changed procedures/systems/product
- Re-audit
- Confirmation of payment of fees
- Verification from the scheme owner that certification can be reinstated

The MD may engage with other parties including auditors, technical experts etc. to ensure that the evaluation activity is undertaken by competent personnel.

Where the client fails to respond or where the verification activities fail to confirm compliance, the MD will notify the client of the immediate suspension of certification and that suspension will be in place for a maximum of 6 months. The CSI are also advised by the MD of the development.

Clients are advised when they enter a contract with MSC that in the event that certification

## Suspending, withdrawing or reducing scope A1603

is suspended, their certification is invalid and that they shall refrain from further promotion of their certification. This will be re-communicated to the client in the event of suspension. MSC will make the suspended status of the certification publicly accessible on our website ([www.mscert.ie](http://www.mscert.ie)) within the “Suspensions and Withdrawals” tab and we may take any other measures we deem appropriate to protect the credibility of our certification activities and reputation. Depending on the scheme in question, this may involve direct communication with the scheme owner.

### 2.3 Withdrawal

#### 2.3.1 Circumstances leading to withdrawal

Certification may be withdrawn in a number of circumstances including:

- Where the client fails to correct the issues (to the satisfaction of MSC) which lead to a suspension of certification
- Where the client postpones or delays the scheduled surveillance or re-certification assessment more than six months.
- Where the client continues to misuse the certificate or certification mark after a notice of suspension has been issued
- Where the client is found to be misusing the certificate or certification mark, or the mark of the accreditation body to represent the certification status of its product(s) (this may happen without notification of suspension)

#### 2.3.2 Procedure for withdrawal or reduction in scope of certification

If the client fails to address (within the prescribed time frame and to the satisfaction of MSC) the issue(s) which lead to suspension or if any of the circumstances outlined in 2.3.1 present themselves, the client will be advised that either:

- Certification will be withdrawn with immediate effect
- The scope of certification will be reduced with immediate effect to exclude the non-compliant parts of the certified system

The decision on which course of action to pursue will depend on the nature of the issues at hand. Again, the CSI will be informed of this development.

When certification is withdrawn or reduced we shall take whatever steps are appropriate to protect the credibility of our certification process and the accreditation process. This will involve requesting the return of certificates and may include public notice or notification to relevant authorities regarding the status and scope of certification, written communication to the client to advise them to cease or amend (as appropriate) any promotional activities regarding certification claims etc. In all cases, details of withdrawals or reductions will be posted on our website ([www.mscert.ie](http://www.mscert.ie)).

At all times we shall act in a fair manner, and give the client the opportunity to present their case and to take corrective action. We regard withdrawal as the last resort when all other efforts to resolve the matter have been explored.

## Suspending, withdrawing or reducing scope A1603

### 2.4 Client requested termination

Where a client requests that certification be terminated, the same controls regarding public communication and client promotional activities as detailed earlier in this procedure will be enforced.

### 2.5 Integrated management systems

Should the situation arise where one or more (but not all) elements of a certified integrated management system are subject suspension, reduction or withdrawal, MSC management will meet to consider and discuss the impact that this action may have on the remaining compliant elements of the certified system. Where required, they will seek input from the client in relation to the impact. Considerations will include (but may not be limited to):

- The nature of the findings leading to the proposed suspension, reduction or withdrawal
- The scope of the findings in terms of applicability to 1 or more standards
- The ability of the client to communicate the scope of the remaining certification following suspension, reduction or withdrawal

Prior to proceeding with such action, MSC management will satisfy themselves that the clients' system is such that elements can retain certification while other elements cannot. If management cannot satisfy themselves on this point, then they may decide that all elements of the system are to be suspended, reduced or withdrawn.

### 2.6 Restoring and expanding certification

If the circumstances that lead to a suspension or withdrawal/reduction of certification are adequately addressed, certification will be restored/expanded.

References to suspension/withdrawal will be removed from our website.