



QUALITY MEAT SCOTLAND HAULAGE ASSURANCE SCHEME HAULAGE ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Overview

This document explains the assessment process for scheme applicants and for existing members of the QMS Haulage Assurance Scheme. It provides an overview of assessor training, the frequency and duration of assessments and the post assessment process. It should be read in conjunction with Appendix 1 and 2 of the 2020 QMS Haulage Assurance Scheme Standards, and the Certification Body's Regulations, which can be accessed on the QMS website at <https://www.qmscotland.co.uk/haulage-standards>

QMS annually reviews and sets the Haulage Assurance Scheme Standards. Assessments are contracted by QMS an independent inspection and certification company, which is accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to ISO/IEC 17065, the international standard for product conformity certification. QMS has agreed procedures for these assessments with the Certification Body (CB), who is regularly (at least once each year) audited by UKAS to ensure these procedures are maintained.

Training of Assessors and Consistency of Assessment

The CB aims to recruit assessors with a minimum of 5 years recent industry experience and ideally with related formal qualifications such as LGV cat C + E and Welfare in Transport CoC. Assessors complete an intensive training program covering QMS Assurance Scheme Standards, related legislation, codes of practice, assessing skills, an overview of animal welfare assessment procedures and food safety issues. They only become approved after shadowing experienced assessors and assessing several haulage businesses under supervision.

To help to ensure consistency of assessment across all hauliers throughout Scotland, assessor performance is monitored by reviewing their reports and by a program of witnessed on- farm assessments.

Frequency of Assessments

- New applicants wishing to join the scheme will be contacted by an assessor, following receipt of application and payment, to make an appointment for an assessment.
- The date and time for an initial or surveillance assessment will be scheduled by prior agreement to take place within 4 weeks of receipt of application and payment.
- Existing scheme members will be assessed at least once every assessment year.
- The interval between assessments may vary slightly from year to year to allow the business to be seen at different times.

Duration of Assessments

The duration of an assessment will vary depending on the size of unit and nature of the business and may take between 1.5 and 3 hours. The assessment visit will run more smoothly if the Assessment Checklist is completed in advance and documents are readily available for the assessor. The Assessment Checklist can be found on page 6 of the 2020 QMS Haulage Assurance Scheme Standards.

The Assessment Visit

The assessor will begin by explaining how they will conduct the assessment. Normally they will assess the facilities first, including the containers which must be on-site at the time of assessment.

They will look in particular at:

- All livestock containers
- Yard and wash out facilities
- Records of training & maintenance
- Scheme related & statutory documents

If the assessor finds anything that does not comply with the Scheme Standards, they will explain their findings and the reason and record it as a non-compliance. The assessor is not able to offer



advice but will explain the requirements of the standards.

- ▶ *Before and after photographs*
- ▶ *Copies of invoices to show work has been carried out.*

Non-compliances may be raised as a:

Minor non compliance

Where an attempt has been made to meet the requirements of the standard(s), but the standard is not being complied with in full. There will be no serious risk to animal health and welfare or food safety.

Major non compliance

Where there has been no attempt to meet the requirements of the standard(s), or there is a serious risk to animal health and welfare and/or food safety.

Recommendation

A recommendation is an advisory clause which does not require any corrective action.

At the end of the assessment, the assessor will leave a conclusion of their findings. Where corrective action is necessary, the assessor will explain the nature of the evidence required and the timescale for submitting this corrective information. If in agreement with the findings, a signature on the visit report will be requested.

The Post Assessment Process

The assessor submits a report describing their findings of the assessment to the CB's office, where it is independently reviewed by the Certification team and in the event of:

- **No non compliance(s) identified:**
A letter will be issued by the CB confirming **approved status**.
- **Non compliance(s) identified:**
Satisfactory evidence must be received by the CB **within 30 days from the date of assessment** to show that non-compliance(s) have been rectified. The assessor will explain what format is acceptable and this corrective action evidence must be submitted to the CB by email along with a copy of the visit report left by the assessor.

Examples of evidence:

- ▶ *Copies of documents or records*

If more than 30 days is reasonably required, please contact the CB as soon as possible after the assessment, and at least within 30 days, to discuss a possible extension. The CB will request a 'statement of intent' to be completed and returned, which explains the plan of action and proposed timescale.

Note:

*New applicants will only become assured after any non-compliances have been rectified and corrective actions reviewed, after which the CB will send a letter confirming **assured status** and issue a Certificate of Conformity.*

Minor non compliance(s) identified:

Satisfactory evidence must be received by the CB within **30 days from the date of assessment** to show that non-compliance(s) have been rectified. Haulage businesses will retain their **approved status** during this period.

Submitted evidence will then be reviewed along with the assessment report and if the CB are satisfied that the standards are now being met, they will issue a letter confirming **approval status**.

Major non compliance(s) identified:

A letter will be issued by the CB confirming that the **approval status** of the haulage business has been withdrawn and the Certificate of Conformity is then invalid. Any livestock moved for QMS members during this time will affect the Scotch eligibility of the animals.

Satisfactory evidence must be received by the CB **within 30 days from the date of assessment** to prove that non-compliance(s) have been rectified. If a revisit is required to verify that the Scheme Standards are now being met, this will be advised by letter and may incur an additional cost.

Submitted evidence will then be reviewed with the assessment report and if the CB are satisfied that the standards are now being met, they will issue a new Certificate of Conformity along with a letter confirming the date of reinstatement of **approved status**.



Failure to submit evidence within 30 days from the date of assessment:

If the CB do not receive satisfactory evidence within 30 days from the date of assessment to show that non-compliances have been rectified, they will issue a letter notifying that the **approval status** of livestock containers relating to the membership number has been withdrawn and the **Certificate of Conformity** is invalid. It will then be necessary to reapply to join the scheme, pay a non-refundable subscription fee, undertake a reassessment and a new membership number will be issued.

Revisits

During the assessment year, the CB may carry out revisits after the routine assessment, to verify corrective action for non-compliances. This may incur an additional cost to the member, which will be advised at that time. The assessor may be accompanied by a colleague, a Scottish SPCA

representative or a UKAS representative, in order to monitor the assessment performance. In these circumstances, the scheme requires members to allow access to their premises for the purpose and observation of the assessment.

Spot checks

Haulage Scheme members may be subject to spot check visits to ensure ongoing compliance with Scheme Standards. These may be triggered by information received from farmers, other parts of the supply chain, general public, press, government agencies or previous assessment history. The assessor must be given access to the member's vehicles/containers) in order to conduct these visits. In line with Certification Body's Regulations, where a member does not reasonably accommodate a spot check, this may result in withdrawal from the scheme.