

USDA FOREST SERVICE



Pike/San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron/Comanche National Grasslands ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDEBOOK

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4.5.5 – INTERNAL AUDIT

ISO 14001 REQUIREMENTS

This element describes audit procedures to ensure the EMS is conforming to the ISO 14001 standards. Procedures are in place to plan for audits and relay the results of audits to management.

PURPOSE

This procedure identifies the process used to audit the Environmental Management System (EMS) implemented by the PSICC. An audit of the EMS is referred to as an internal audit. The purpose of the internal audit is to:

- Determine if the PSICC operates in accordance with documented procedures and the ISO 14001 standard; and
- Determine if the EMS has been implemented properly and maintained effectively.

SCOPE

An internal EMS audit is performed annually to determine if the PSICC EMS conforms to ISO 14001 and has been properly implemented and maintained. An EMS is established, implemented, and maintained on an administrative unit when an independent audit has verified conformance with the ISO 14001 Standard and the system is working. An independent audit is conducted prior to declaring conformance with the ISO standard and every five years thereafter. Persons conducting the independent audit must not be from the same administrative unit or have any responsibility for the EMS undergoing the audit. Independent auditors may be drawn from other Forest Service units.

The scope of the audit includes the EMS protocol that has been established by the Forest Service. This protocol is based on the ISO 14001 standard.

DEFINITIONS

Audit Criteria – Set of policies, procedures or requirements. Audit criteria are used as a reference against which audit evidence is compared.

Audit Evidence – Records, statements of fact or other information, which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable.

Auditor – Person with the competence to conduct an audit.

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Internal Audit – Systematic, independent, and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the environmental management system audit criteria set by the organization are fulfilled.

Nonconformity – Non-fulfillment of a requirement.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Internal audits will be conducted following the Forest Service Internal Audit Procedures (<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/directives/html/fsm1000.shtml>) and Forest Service Manual directives in FSM 1331.3:

1331.3 – Self Declaration Protocol

As required by Executive Order 13148, and guidance issued by the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive, the responsible official for each administrative unit with an EMS shall self-declare that the EMS conforms to ISO 14001. The self-declaration shall, at the minimum, be based on a finding by an independent, second-party EMS audit (FSM 1331.05, FSM 1331.31) that there are no major non-conformances with ISO 14001. Results of second-party EMS audits shall be maintained and used in accordance with a unit's EMS procedures for internal audits. The self-declaration shall be renewed at least every 5 years.

1331.31 - Independent Second-Party Audit

The purpose of an independent second-party audit is to allow an unbiased and objective review of the EMS to determine if it conforms to the ISO 14001 standard and reflects the EMS in use. While those outside the control or scope of the EMS conduct second-party audits, these audits may be conducted by Forest Service employees. For example, a qualified Regional Office audit team may review the EMS of a unit or facility within the Forest Service. In addition, qualified auditors from one Forest Service unit or facility may audit the EMS of another Forest Service unit or facility. A qualified outside auditor must conduct this audit. Auditors may include a contractor or another unbiased party, such as individuals from a State or Federal voluntary program or individuals from another Federal organization.

Results of all audits are reported to the Forest Leadership Team.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), implementing regulations, and agency policies (FSM 6270), a facility's or unit's EMS documentation, including EMS audit results, shall be available to the public.