



Image: TÜV Rheinland ©

Questions and answers about IFS – unannounced audits

On October 1, 2016, it became possible to register for unannounced audits. There are several things you need to know here. Our experts have answered some important questions. Would you like to learn more? **Then get in touch.**

1. WHAT IS AN UNANNOUNCED AUDIT?

The unannounced audit replaces the annual announced audit. It is important that the company is not informed of the audit date. The introduction of unannounced audits also replaces the unannounced IFS food checks.

2. ARE UNANNOUNCED AUDITS MANDATORY?

No, unannounced audits are voluntary at the moment. Companies can choose between announced and unannounced audits.

3. WHEN SHOULD AN UNANNOUNCED AUDIT TAKE PLACE?

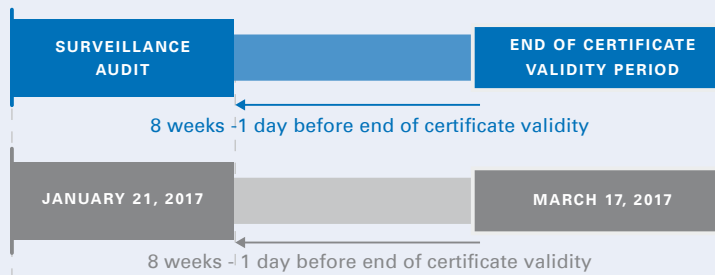
We recommend having the unannounced audit performed as a surveillance audit. However, the decision is fundamentally up to you. You can also ask for your first audit to be an unannounced audit. You must inform your certification body once you have chosen an announced or unannounced audit.

4. HOW DO I REGISTER? WHAT DO I NEED TO KEEP IN MIND?

You can register for unannounced audits when your IFS food monitoring audit is due. The IFS website contains an Excel table that will help you plan your registration day. The unannounced audit must take place within a specified

time window. It must be performed no earlier than 16 weeks before the audit is due, and no later than 2 weeks after. The audit takes place on consecutive days. We must have received the registration for unannounced audits before this time period begins. See the timeline to clarify this time window.

REGULAR SURVEILLANCE AUDIT

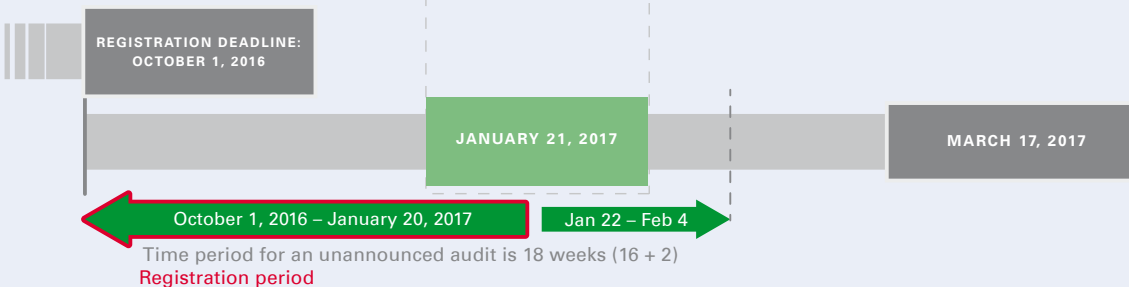
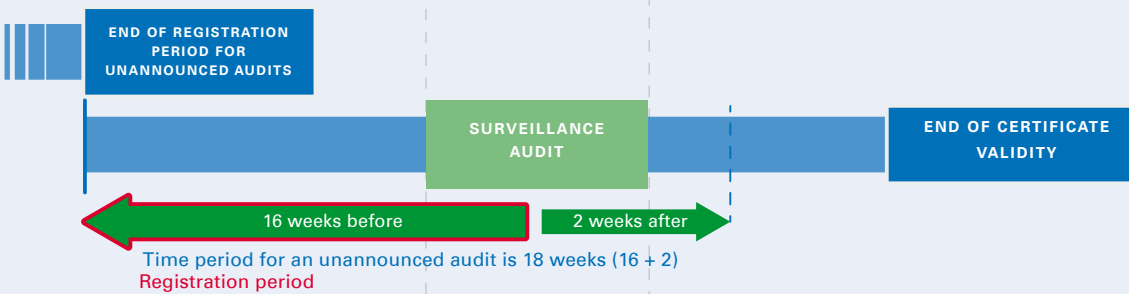


Example

End of certificate validity: March 17, 2017
 Surveillance audit based on initial audit: January 21, 2017

Though the unannounced audit replaces the regular surveillance audit, it is still based on the same dates (16 weeks before to 2 weeks after). If a company decides on an unannounced audit, it must observe the registration periods of 16 weeks (before the planned date of the surveillance audit).

UNANNOUNCED AUDITS



Example

End of certificate validity: March 17, 2017
 Surveillance audit based on initial audit: January 21, 2017
 Registration deadline: October 1, 2016
 Period for unannounced audits: October 1 - February 4, 2017

Source: IFS Management GmbH – www.ifs-certification.com

5. THE UNANNOUNCED AUDIT WAS PERFORMED OUTSIDE THE SPECIFIED TIME WINDOW. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

If the unannounced audit took place outside the -16 weeks / +2 weeks period, it is invalid as an unannounced audit and is rated instead as an announced audit.

6. OUR COMPANY IS CLOSED DURING THE WINDOW FOR UNANNOUNCED AUDITS. IS AN ALLOWANCE MADE FOR THIS SITUATION?

Yes, you can block off a period of no more than 10 working days, split into no more than three sections. You must inform the certification body of this when you register.

7. WE HAVE SEVERAL SITES WITH CENTRALIZED ADMINISTRATION: WHAT DO I NEED TO KEEP IN MIND?

If you use centralized administration for multiple production sites, unannounced or announced audits can be performed here. The audit at your head office must always be performed before the audits of your production sites, and before the time window for unannounced audits of your production sites begins.

8. WE WORK WITH SEASONAL PRODUCTS. IS THERE A SPECIAL RULING FOR UNANNOUNCED AUDITS IN THIS CASE?

Yes. If you work with seasonal products, the time window described above does not apply to you. You must notify the certification body of your seasonal production times. Unannounced audits can take place at any time during this period. You cannot block off any time.

9. AN UNANNOUNCED AUDIT IS COMING UP. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE?

The contact person specified in the audit registration should be available during this period. Also keep your basic documents to hand. IFS specifies the following documents:

- Organizational diagram with the relevant deputies
- Site map with information on the paths taken by staff, resources, semi-finished and completed goods
- Current production plan for the day/week
- Flow chart of the processes with the CCP marked, and a list of CPs and CCPs.

OUR EXPERTS WILL HELP YOU WITH ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS. CONTACT US IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

[ONLINE CONTACT](#)