



**International
Standard**

ISO/IEC 17020

**Conformity assessment —
Requirements for bodies
performing inspection**

*Évaluation de la conformité — Exigences pour les organismes
effectuant des inspections*

**Third edition
2026-03**



COPYRIGHT PROTECTED DOCUMENT

© ISO/IEC 2026

All rights reserved. Unless otherwise specified, or required in the context of its implementation, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized otherwise in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or posting on the internet or an intranet, without prior written permission. Permission can be requested from either ISO at the address below or ISO's member body in the country of the requester.

ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

Published in Switzerland

Contents

	Page
Foreword	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 General requirements	3
4.1 Impartiality.....	3
4.2 Confidentiality.....	3
5 Structural requirements	4
5.1 Independence.....	4
5.2 Legal entity and liabilities.....	4
5.3 Organization and management.....	4
6 Resource requirements	5
6.1 Personnel.....	5
6.2 Facilities and equipment.....	7
6.3 Externally provided products and services.....	8
7 Process requirements	10
7.1 Review of requests, tenders and contracts.....	10
7.2 Inspection methods and procedures.....	10
7.3 Handling of items.....	11
7.4 Inspection records.....	12
7.5 Control of data and information.....	12
7.6 Inspection report or inspection certificate.....	12
7.7 Handling of appeals.....	13
7.8 Handling of complaints.....	14
8 Management system requirements	14
8.1 General.....	14
8.2 Policies and responsibilities.....	15
8.3 Documented information.....	15
8.4 Actions to address risks and opportunities.....	15
8.5 Corrective actions.....	16
8.6 Internal audits.....	17
8.7 Management review.....	18
Annex A (normative) Independence requirements for inspection bodies	20
Annex B (informative) Optional elements of inspection reports and certificates	22
Bibliography	23

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives or www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs).

ISO and IEC draw attention to the possibility that the implementation of this document may involve the use of (a) patent(s). ISO and IEC take no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of any claimed patent rights in respect thereof. As of the date of publication of this document, ISO and IEC had not received notice of (a) patent(s) which may be required to implement this document. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information, which may be obtained from the patent database available at www.iso.org/patents and <https://patents.iec.ch>. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html. In the IEC, see www.iec.ch/understanding-standards.

This document was prepared by the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO), in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/CLC/JTC 1, *Criteria for conformity assessment bodies*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO/IEC 17020:2012), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- the categorization of the inspection body's independence type has been changed to type A and type non-A;
- a definition of "item" and a definition of "client" have been included;
- a new subclause on the control of data and information and actions to address risks and opportunities has been added;
- the common elements in CASCO standards have been incorporated;
- the risk-based thinking applied in this edition has enabled some reduction in prescriptive requirements and their replacement by performance-based requirements;
- there is greater flexibility than in the previous edition in the requirements for processes, procedures, documented information and organizational responsibilities.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

Introduction

This document was developed to promote confidence in bodies performing inspection.

Inspection bodies perform inspection activities on behalf of private clients, their parent organizations, regulatory authorities, or others, with the objective of providing information about the conformity of inspected items with regulations, standards, specifications, inspection schemes or contracts. Inspection parameters include matters of quantity, quality, safety, fitness for purpose, and conformity of inspected item(s) with specified requirements (e.g. safety compliance of installations or systems in operation). This document provides requirements for the competence, impartiality and consistent operation of inspection bodies as a basis to promote confidence about and acceptance of inspection results by clients, regulatory authorities and others.

This document covers the activities of inspection bodies whose work can include the examination of materials, products, installations, plants, processes, work procedures or services, and the determination of their conformity with requirements and the subsequent reporting of results of these activities to clients and, when required, to regulatory authorities. Inspection can concern all stages during the lifetime of these items, including the design stage. Such work normally requires the exercise of professional judgement in performing inspection, in particular when assessing conformity with general requirements.

This document can be used as a requirements document for accreditation or peer-assessment or other assessments.

The requirements of this document can be interpreted when applied to particular sectors.

Inspection can be an activity embedded in a larger process. For example, inspection can be specified as a surveillance activity in a product certification scheme. Likewise, results of other conformity assessment activities can be used as an input when performing inspection activities. Inspection can be an activity that precedes maintenance or simply provides information about the inspected item with no determination of conformity with requirements.

The categorization of inspection bodies as type A and type non-A reflects the level of their independence. The impartiality requirements are equally applicable to both type A and type non-A inspection bodies.

Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies performing inspection

1 Scope

This document contains requirements for the competence and impartiality of bodies performing inspection, and for the consistent operation of their inspection activities.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000:2020, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

Bibliography

- [1] ISO/IEC 17025:2017, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*
- [2] ISO 17034, *General requirements for the competence of reference material producers*
- [3] Brochure “The International System of Units (SI)”, BIPM
- [4] ISO 9001, *Quality management systems — Requirements*