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Your Guide for How to Pass a Nadcap Audit

Proper preparation also means being ready for what happens during and after an audit.

Preparing for any Nadcap audit is a serious undertaking, and it can feel intimidating for good reason—you're being audited on how well you comply with the most stringent industry and customer requirements. When it comes to thoroughly preparing, you should first methodically break the highly demanding process into simple steps.

At a high level, start by organizing the key elements of the audit process into three categories:

1. WHAT YOU SHOULD DO PRIOR TO YOUR AUDIT.
2. WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR DURING YOUR AUDIT.
3. WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO DO AFTER YOUR AUDIT.

This guide will help you figure out what you need to plan for to ensure success.

1. WHAT YOU SHOULD DO PRIOR TO YOUR AUDIT.

A Nadcap audit is a test. And, reassuringly, it's essentially an open-book test. *Nadcap fully explains what it takes to meet audit requirements right on its website.*

Whether you've never been Nadcap approved and want to be or you're familiar with the process, a great way to start is by establishing the scope of your audit. Consider what processes you want approved, which customers require approvals and what processes require the auditing. This will help you focus on what's most important, and keep the auditor attuned to only the areas that matter for the audit, potentially avoiding unnecessary findings.

Your preaudit checklist

☐ **Visit eauditnet.com to access checklists for any audit.** New users will have to register to get this detailed information. Use these detailed checklists to prepare internally for the audit, and use the website to gain insight into the process.

☐ **Apply scrutiny to each preaudit checklist item.** A Nadcap audit is not a "yes and no" process: Explain procedures (details matter greatly) and show your work—demonstrate how you arrived at any point (this makes any finding easier to explain and fix).

☐ **Fill out every job audit in the checklist and fill it out completely.**

☐ **Provide the auditor what the checklist tells you to provide prior to his or her arrival**. Note that some items must be sent 30 days prior to the audit. Take this aspect of your audit seriously, because an auditor can determine findings from it. **Some typical items asked for preaudit include:**

> • **An equipment list**
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> • **Lists of purchased services (including names and contact information for those services)**
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> • **A list of prime customers (those that serve Nadcap-applicable customers)**
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> • **A list of heat-treat specifications and a copy of general procedures for heat treating and pyrometry**
>
> • **Your company's organizational chart**

Other preaudit considerations

Prepare your staff: The Nadcap audit criteria fully explain requirements with respect to training personnel. These include verifiable training procedures that ensure competency, records of training and documentation, evaluation of proficiency and documentation to back it up.

Remember detailed documentation: A Nadcap audit is meant to determine that you're following proper procedures, but a big part of that is proper documentation of those procedures. In a way, it's all about having paperwork that shows that you conform. Of course, the jobs and specs matter, but it comes down to running things the way they are supposed to be run—and being able to verify it. You can't verify without proper, detailed documentation.

Pay close attention to pyrometry: A disproportionate number of findings in audits surround pyrometry. Whether you're new to Nadcap or experienced, taking Conrad Kacsik's Principles of Pyrometry course will expand your knowledge and help you understand the nuance involved in Nadcap audits for pyrometry.

2. WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR DURING YOUR AUDIT.

A Nadcap audit is all about conformance, and meticulous organization is a great best practice for an auditor to see. Having all relevant information at your fingertips while the auditor's on-site and being able to provide it promptly not only saves you time and money, but it also signals to an auditor that you're running a tight ship. **During your audit, expect to be asked for specifics and documentation on:**

> • **Preaudit checklists**
>
> • **General heat-treat procedures**
>
> • **General pyrometry procedures**
>
> • **Pyrometry certifications**
>
> • **Customer requirements**
>
> • **Material testing procedures**

The auditor will also need detailed instructions on how to operate equipment (e.g., instructions on how to load and clean your furnace) for the job audit, which will be referenced when the auditor watches a production run.

People new to Nadcap are surprised to learn that auditors often ask to see a purchase order from a customer. Auditors do this because if things are being done properly, it will contain written procedures for executing that purchase order.

Stay focused

Any staff that's helping facilitate the audit should stay keenly focused on its scope. **Staff should:**

> • **Answer the auditor's questions, but never supply more information than what's needed. Be careful not to volunteer information or get off track.**
>
> • **Remove anything that's not in the scope of the audit. If the auditor doesn't have enough jobs to edit because you didn't properly prepare, he or she can request you show jobs that may be outside of the scope of the audit. If you decline this request, then the auditor can call his or her manager, who will decide whether to continue the audit or end it.**

3. WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO DO AFTER YOUR AUDIT.

Almost no one passes an audit with zero findings, so it's vital to understand the post-audit process, because you will almost certainly have at least a minor finding to address. Once again, the Nadcap website offers all the instruction you need to properly address any finding.

Types of findings

Nadcap audits can have major or minor findings. Major findings require product impact investigations. This means getting verification from the design authority. If, for example, you were two degrees off on heat treating but pass on hardness testing, it's not adequate to overcome the finding.

Minor findings rarely require product impact investigations. They include small oversights like cleaning requirements not being put on a job order.

Whatever finding you're responding to, remember that Nadcap root cause corrective actions are not comparable to those of ISO—Nadcap requires a lot deeper digging, investigation and verification. Another way Nadcap differs is with respect to training. If root cause corrective action training is required, Nadcap offers it at equalearn.com.

The basic steps to address any finding include:

- Immediately taking corrective actions (containment actions)

- Determining the root cause of the nonconformance

- Noting the impact of all identified causes and the root cause

- Reporting the action taken to prevent reoccurrence

- Attaching objective evidence

- Including the effective date (i.e., when the action became effective)

Most suppliers put this information in Word, list answers and then paste it onto the website. Formatting is crucial because if it's not right, the auditor will reject it and it will count as a cycle.

You'll have 21 calendar days to address all findings by doing a root cause corrective analysis. Nadcap will either accept the response or ask for more information. If more information is required, you'll have seven calendar days to respond. Each time a response is rejected, it counts as a cycle. After four failed cycles, you will fail the audit.

Need more information?

Conrad Kacsik experts are contracted by Nadcap to teach companies how to pass audits. They know every facet of the Nadcap audit process and can help you eliminate findings before they happen.

CONTACT US TODAY TO LEARN MORE.