

FAQ

Unannounced Audit

IFS Food 6.1 (applicable from July 2018)

IFS Logistics 2.2 (applicable from March 2018)

IFS PACsecure 1.1 (applicable from July 2018)

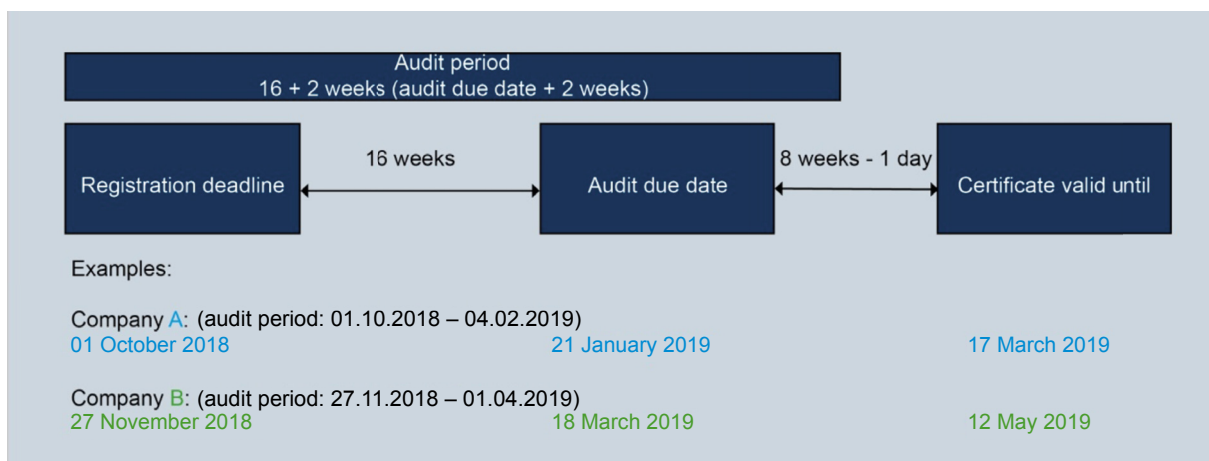


FAQ – Unannounced Audit IFS

1. Which sites can choose and register for the option “unannounced audits”

The unannounced audits can be applied to sites that want to be/are certified according to IFS Food 6/6.1, IFS Logistics 2.2 or IFS PACsecure 1.1.

EXAMPLE



Company A (summary):

Certificate valid until:	17 March 2019
Audit due date/based on date of initial audit:	21 January 2019
Registration deadline:	01 October 2018
Audit period:	01 October – 04 February 2019

An excel tool to help calculating the registration date is provided on the IFS website under:
<https://www.ifs-certification.com/index.php/en/tools/ifs-unannounced-audit-calculator>

2. Can the supplier register himself for the unannounced audit at the IFS?

No, only the chosen certification body can register the supplier for the unannounced audit in the IFS Database.

3. I am an already IFS certified company and would like to register for the unannounced IFS audit. What should I do?

Please contact your certification body well before the audit window starts (for details see also unannounced audit protocol (Part 5), 1.1). The CB has to register your company for the unannounced audit in the IFS Database and shall fill in the details (blackout period, etc.). At the latest 2 working days after the first day of the unannounced audit, the dates shall be recorded in the database (diary function). This ensures that the users of the database are informed that the audit has taken place.

4. What are the registration options?

Companies which are using the option “unannounced audits” (IFS Food, IFS Logistics and IFS PACsecure) have to be registered for this option within a certain time frame defined in the Standards. Therefore IFS offers a tool to calculate the deadlines correctly.

www.ifs-certification.com/index.php/de/tools/ifs-unannounced-audit-calculator

OPTION 1:

This is the regular registration for the unannounced audit, with a timeframe of – 16 weeks; + 2 weeks (18 weeks in total) from the recent audit due date. By choosing this option the certification validity/cycle does not change.

OPTION 2 (NEW):

This option was developed to give companies the possibility to postpone or move forward their audit time frame (18 weeks in total) in order to align it with other schemes and/or due to non-production periods.

Based on the new time frame the validity of the next certificate will change. Therefore certification bodies and suppliers should discuss possible certification gaps before the registration process.

Please note: Your responsible certification body may need some weeks to plan and register the audit, therefore we propose to inform your contact person as soon as possible about the requested audit form.

5. How can we plan an unannounced audit as the initial audit?

For companies having an IFS Food, IFS Logistics or IFS PACsecure audit for the first time it is strongly recommended to choose the announced audit option.

6. Can a company change the CB within the [-16 weeks; + 2 weeks] period?

An unannounced audit is not possible when the company changes CB within the 16 week period before the audit due date (unannounced time window) because the unannounced character is no longer guaranteed. In such a case only an announced audit can be conducted.

7. Do all suppliers get an automatic notification when the registration for unannounced audit is due 18 weeks in advance?

Yes, the IFS has implemented this notification system and all suppliers will receive a message. Please make sure that the contact details in the database are always updated.

8. Only for IFS Food: Seasonal production (audit protocol Part 5, 1.4.2.): "... the above described time window does not apply"? Does it mean that the audit for seasonal products can take place any time during the season?

If a seasonal production is shorter than -16 weeks plus 2 weeks, which is the case for some seasonal procedures (e.g. packing of strawberries or packing of asparagus), logically the time window cannot apply. The unannounced audit shall take place at any time during this seasonal production period. Please note that the company still has to register for the unannounced audit latest 16 weeks ahead of this date.

9. The audit due date is in October and the summer break falls right into the [-16 weeks; +2 weeks] period. How can we move the audit due date?

The time frame for the unannounced audit can be changed by choosing option 2 in the registration process. Based on the new time frame the validity of the next certificate will change. Therefore certification bodies and suppliers should discuss possible certification gaps before the registration.

10. What about extension audits: Do they have to be unannounced or announced?

If during an unannounced audit relevant products or processes could not be investigated (see rules in audit protocol for unannounced audits Part 1, 3.1) the extension audit shall be performed announced. Otherwise the CB would not know when the missing product/process is operative.

11. How to manage the timings when KO or Major is given? Are follow-up audits always announced?

The evaluation of requirements and assessment rules for unannounced audits are the same as written in the audit protocol Part 5.1, chapter 5.8 of the respectively Standard. When an unannounced audit is not approved, a complete new announced audit is required. In case of only one Major rated during an unannounced audit the follow-up audit shall be announced.

12. How do we handle combined audits unannounced IFS Logistics + Broker, unannounced IFS PACsecure + Broker or unannounced IFS Food + Broker? Is this possible?

For IFS Broker there is currently no audit protocol for unannounced audits available, but can be conducted in combination with the IFS Food, IFS PACsecure or IFS Logistics audit, in principle.

It is up to both parties to decide if these audits are conducted combined unannounced or if the IFS Broker audit is scheduled as an announced audit.

Combined unannounced audit: For the IFS Broker, the last possible audit date shall be entered in the database to guarantee the unannounced character of the IFS Food, IFS Logistics or IFS PACsecure audit. The IFS Broker audit can (currently) only be uploaded as an announced audit.

13. Can the IFS unannounced audit be combined with other unannounced audit schemes?

Yes, but only if all requirements for the IFS scheme are fulfilled.

**14. On-site performance (unannounced audit protocol Part 5, 3.1):
“...The company should prepare a minimum set of documents
to be provided to the auditor...” Can the IFS specify which
documents are considered the minimum?**

This minimum set of documents should give the auditor an overview and provide the necessary information to go into the production, respectively warehouse area as soon as possible. The IFS suggests the following documents:

- Organization chart including assignment of responsibilities (deputization)
- Site map describing internal flows of personnel, raw materials, semi-finished goods and final products, storage areas
- Current productions, respectively order schedule of the day/week
- Flow chart of the processes identifying each CCP and a list of CCPs and/or CPs

**15. If some documents cannot be found or provided in an
unannounced audit, which deviation can be expected?**

The deviation depends on the circumstances, the type of documents missing and the impact it has on food/product safety. It is not possible to give a general answer to this question.

**16. What shall be written on the certificate in the following case:
The CB is about to issue the certificate for the present year’s
audit, but the company has not decided on announced or
unannounced audit for the following year.**

The same sentence “Next audit between XX.XX and XX.XX or unannounced” stated in the first page of the audit report shall be written on the certificate.

**17. What if the unannounced audit was conducted but the
certification body forgot to register the supplier?**

The correct registration is an essential part of the unannounced audit program. If any of the registration requirements are not fulfilled, the sign for the unannounced audit (light bulb) will not be visible in the database. Moreover, the certificate can’t state that the audit was unannounced. Nevertheless, it can be written in the audit report (company profile), that the audit was conducted unannounced and this can also be communicated to the relevant customers.

All suppliers are being notified 2 weeks before the registration deadline. We would like to encourage you to log into your IFS Database and check if your registration is correct and the information (e.g. black-out dates) accurate. Please contact your certification body in case of questions and errors before the deadline expires.