

Checklists

Below are two recommended agendas to follow when planning and executing the opening and closing meetings required in a SMETA Audit. The steps listed are recommendations for best practice and designed for support purposes only. They are not exhaustive and the auditor should use their own judgement on how best to structure the meetings based on their experience and knowledge of the site in question.

Opening Meeting

Part 1: Introduction, gathering information, establishing the tone

1	Introduce the audit team to the employment site's management and explain the purpose and scope of the audit, including potential benefits to the employment site.	
2	Remind management of the importance of having union representatives and any other worker representatives present at all stages of the audit, including the opening meeting. This should have already been covered in the pre-audit communication but should be repeated at this stage if worker representatives are not present at the meeting.	
3	Clarify that the purpose of an audit is to evaluate the performance of the site against pre-agreed standards – how they manage each area of the Code as well as areas for improvement.	
4	Confirm the audit will be conducted against the SMETA measurement criteria, and specify whether 2 or 4-Pillar.	
5	Re-confirm the list of documents that are required to be available (this should have already been received by the site with the pre-audit information at least 2 weeks ahead of the audit). The site or auditor may wish to share other documents at the audit and it may be necessary to agree a more detailed list at the opening meeting.	
6	Obtain a floor plan (if not already seen) to cross-check the areas to be visited.	
7	Discuss the need for openness and transparency. For example, indicate where relevant that Sedex members prefer to work with sites on challenging areas such as excessive overtime hours, rather than record that "hours of work could not be verified" because of inconsistent records.	
8	Establish if the site has any previous audit information that they are willing to share. For example, this could be their own internal audits. Assure them that any information from previous audit information shared will not prejudice the results of this new audit, but rather the auditor will review all areas without bias.	
9	Confirm the confidentiality of the audit and any other recipients of the audit report. Confirm that the auditor report will be shared with the customers linked with the site on the Sedex Platform when it is published.	

10	Re-review the information provided in the pre- audit employment site profile, including previous non- compliances and follow-up actions using the previous CAPR where appropriate.	
11	If needed, explain the Sedex process including site registration and upload process.	
12	Confirm that permission has been given to take photographs. <i>Note: The auditor shall ensure that workers cannot be identified from any photos taken, especially those interviewed.</i>	
13	Check that all staff are aware of the audit and establish that the relevant Code has been communicated to them.	
14	Re-confirm the auditor/audit company's own Business Ethics policy.	

Part 2: Planning, scheduling, next steps

1	Discuss and agree the audit schedule.	
2	Agree the managers responsible for each area of the Code (e.g. HR manager, Health and Safety Manager) and where to conduct interviews with these relevant persons.	
3	Request a list of workers who are scheduled to work, together with any details that may be required to ensure that a representative sample can be chosen for interview e.g. gender, nationality, age, contract type, job roles, length of service, dormitory residents, different shifts.	
4	Confirm the structure of the worker interviews and the availability of an appropriate space.	
5	Emphasise the confidential nature of the worker interview process and the expectation that workers will be paid for the time they spend at interview.	
6	Confirm that the workers for interview will be selected by the auditor.	
7	Confirm employees' working hours and shift patterns.	
8	Agree tentative time for the closing meeting and invite attendees. If union and/or worker representatives are present at the site, the auditor should strongly request that they are present at the closing meeting. Ensure that enough time is allowed to re-investigate non-compliances if further evidence is made available.	
9	Agree who will support the audit and accompany the site tour.	
10	Confirm the employment site's peak production periods and explain the need to sample working hours from this period.	
11	Confirm any special arrangements/ precautions required for the employment site tour and whether a routine fire drill is expected.	
12	Review floor plan of the employment site including dormitories.	
13	Review list of chemicals available on site.	
14	Ask the management if they have any questions	

Closing Meeting

1	Thank the management for their time and contribution.	
2	Re-confirm the purpose and scope of the assessment.	
3	Remind them that they may challenge findings at the meeting, but any issues they have agreed to cannot be queried later.	
4	Recognise good examples that have been observed during the day.	
5	Discuss the results of the MSA, focusing on Elements graded at 'Not Addressed' or 'Fundamental Improvements Required', and on systems gaps they may have contributed to NCs on site.	
6	Agree any non-compliances and explain that the audit was based on a sample examination of their employment site and there may be some non-compliances that were not observed.	
7	Discuss any CAR findings, explaining the nature of the findings and the need for the site to develop and upload action plans to address the findings.	
8	Ask the site to identify root causes, suggest corrective actions, timescales and person responsible for correction. Record the corrective actions.	
9	Cancel any non-compliances where evidence is produced to show the finding is not correct, ensuring that this is verified by another route as necessary.	
10	Answer any questions that management have.	
11	Explain when the full audit report will be completed and who it will be sent to.	
12	Summary of Findings and Corrective Actions must be signed by both the lead auditor and site representative.	
13	Leave an understandable copy of the corrective action plan with management.	
14	The corrective actions should include a timeframe for completion and the type of verification needed.	
15	If the Summary of Findings and Corrective Actions are not agreed, the auditor should ask the site to sign the CAPR in the dispute box along with reasons for the dispute. The auditor should then leave a copy with the factory and report disputed points to the audit requestor, copying in the factory.	
16	Inform the facility of the Sedex uploading and corrective action management process that forms part of the Sedex system, ensuring they are made aware of their responsibilities.	