

**OEM Website Audit Steering Committee
Conference Call Notes
November 15, 2005**

A meeting of the OEM Website Audit Steering Committee took place by conference call on November 15, 2005. Participants on the call included Holly Pugliese (US EPA), John Daley, Ron Garrett, Charlie Gorman, Christy Plunkett (for Bill Haas), Aaron Lowe, Dave Scaler, and Donnie Seyfer. Monika Chandra, Doran Stegura, and Twohy Murray, from Perrin Quarles Associates, Inc., were also on the call.

A. Introduction

PQA began the meeting by summarizing the meeting agenda. There were no additions to the agenda.

B. Revised OEM Website Schedule

PQA briefly discussed the revised OEM audit schedule and noted that the schedule would be added to the website (www.oemaudit.com) after it was approved by the steering committee. Following OMB's approval of the auditor application and questionnaire, PQA sent an email to the original 284 applicants. The applicants were requested to fill out the revised survey online by November 11, 2005. A second email was sent to the original applicants that failed to meet this deadline. Once the application period is closed on November 18, a subcommittee of the steering committee will meet to assign auditors to specific websites. Under the revised schedule, the assignments will be finalized in early December 2005, and auditors should be prepared to review their assigned website during December, January, and February. After the results of the audit have been collected, PQA will analyze the data and develop a draft report. The report will then be reviewed by the steering committee, the OEMs, and EPA. PQA will review the comments and incorporate them into a final report, which will be completed in July 2006. EPA commented that although the revised schedule is longer than originally anticipated, the additional time will be necessary to ensure that a comprehensive and well organized report is produced. EPA added that results from the pilot OEM project, which involved only six manufacturers, had taken a considerable amount of time to analyze and summarize in a final report.

A member of the steering committee requested clarification on the nature and timing of an OEM review of the draft report. EPA noted that OEMs would have a limited amount of time to review and comment on the report. EPA emphasized that the OEMs should be provided with the opportunity to provide factual, concise comments to clarify any issues raised by the auditors. In order to maintain the integrity of the OEM audit report, these comments should not include extensive discussion or analysis regarding the issues raised by the auditors.

One steering committee member noted that manufacturers may disagree with the auditors' comments and questioned whether or how any subsequent website revisions in response to those comments would impact the final report. EPA responded that OEMs could update their websites based on comments in the draft report, but these improvements would not be noted in the final report. Instead, any revised websites would be evaluated in subsequent OEM audits. EPA plans to conduct at least two audits on the OEM websites. One member agreed with EPA's response, noting that multiple audits would show a trend in OEM website quality. A second member added that it was still important for the OEM's to have an opportunity to comment. EPA agreed but again noted that the comments made by OEMs would be limited to factual items in the report.

EPA suggested that the steering committee develop some guidance regarding any limitations associated with the manufacturers' comments. One member noted that such a document would be too arbitrary. As an alternative, PQA suggested adding the manufacturer comments to the report. EPA suggested producing a separate response to the comments document, noting that by separating the manufacturer comments from the actual audit summary, the report's integrity could be maintained. The steering committee failed to come to a final agreement on this subject but agreed to discuss the issue at a later date after the audit results have been collected.

C. Technicians Who Have Applied to Perform Evaluations

Current Number - Auditor Application

PQA noted that 203 complete applications have been received from technicians interested in participating in the OEM audit, a significant increase since the November 10 list, which only included 140 applicants. PQA briefly described the organization of the Excel file, which includes two worksheets. The first worksheet ("Master") contains information directly from the auditors' applications, while the second worksheet ("Websites") indicates websites that the applicants had expressed an interest in auditing. PQA commented that a large number of applicants had volunteered to complete multiple audits and that this was reflected in the Websites worksheet. EPA suggested sending an updated spreadsheet to the steering committee following the end of the application period (i.e., November 18). PQA agreed.

After reviewing the Websites worksheet, one member noted that not all websites appeared to have an adequate number of applicants. PQA responded that some of the holes in the November 10 file had been filled by more recent applicants. EPA added that gaps still existed though and some auditors would need to audit multiple websites.

Trainers

The participation of trainers in the OEM audit was discussed during previous conference calls, but a final determination was not made. EPA added that most of the trainers that have expressed interest in the audit are technicians that currently work outside

of the shop, and EPA questioned whether these volunteers should be allowed to participate. After examining the list of applicants, one member noted that several trainers had already volunteered. The member felt that trainers should be allowed to participate as long as technicians also reviewed the websites audited by trainers. EPA agreed and will contact the trainers from the Las Vegas meeting.

Auditors Sorted and Selected for each OEM

The selection process was briefly discussed during previous conference calls. The steering committee discussed creating a subcommittee to manage the selection process. PQA recommended moving forward with the creation of the subcommittee and noted that the steering committee had previously agreed to select eight to ten auditors per website. Based on the current list of applicants, this goal still appears to be feasible. Although some websites currently lack adequate applicants, these gaps could be filled by assigning some auditors to multiple websites. In addition, some websites, particularly Ford and General Motors, appear to be overloaded with applicants. PQA volunteered to create a first draft of the auditor selections. The draft could then be examined by the steering committee subcommittee with the final auditor assignments decided in early December. EPA and several steering committee members agreed to this approach.

EPA requested steering committee volunteers to form the auditor selection subcommittee. Donnie Seyfer and John Daley agreed to help. EPA suggested that the subcommittee meet Tuesday, November 22, 2005 at 1:00 PM Eastern Standard Time to discuss PQA's initial selections and possibly finalize the list of auditors for each website. EPA encouraged other steering committee members to participate in the Tuesday afternoon conference call.

D. Pilot Audit

While OMB was reviewing the OEM auditor application and questionnaire, a pilot audit was conducted by EPA. Five auditors were selected to review one or more of six OEM websites. PQA generated manufacturer-specific reports for each of the six OEM websites that were evaluated as well as an overall report that discussed the results from all six websites. PQA explained that the same type of reports could be created for the full OEM audit but asked for comments from the steering committee on the overall organization and level of detail. One member found the manufacturer reports to be too wordy and difficult to follow due to the level of detail. The member suggested including less detail and more effective summaries in the actual audit report. PQA noted that the summary spreadsheets in the overall OEM pilot project report included a summary of auditors' responses. The member agreed that the spreadsheet was helpful but found it difficult to follow because the manufacturer names were not included. EPA noted that the manufacturer names had been intentionally removed from the pilot report as part of an agreement with the OEMs. In the full OEM audit report, the manufacturer names will be included.

A second member suggested including auditors' responses as submitted rather than compiling summaries of these responses in the overall report. The member felt that maintaining the ability to see the comments or notes as written would be necessary to ensure that OEMs can effectively address the problems identified by the auditors. By assigning each auditor a number (or some other form of identification) and providing the auditors' background information (i.e., experience, certifications, etc.), OEMs would have a better understanding of where to focus their improvements.

EPA agreed with the suggestion, noting that the overall report should provide specific details and suggestions for improvements. EPA also noted that comments from the OEMs and others would help improve the structure of the overall report, and these comments could be incorporated into future OEM audits. EPA added that the pilot project and reports appeared to be very useful to the OEMs, and many were already making the recommended improvements, such as improved access to Mode 6 data and descriptions of monitoring equipment. The steering committee will revisit these issues after data from the OEM audit has been compiled.

E. OEM Website Audit Questionnaire

The OEM pilot project also identified several areas of improvement for the audit questionnaire. EPA noted that several auditors requested clarification on section 1. EPA is in the process of incorporating these suggestions and will send the revised questionnaire to the steering committee once these changes have been finalized. PQA added that changes will also be made in section 3 based on comments from auditors. Almost all the auditors participating in the pilot project found question 3.1 to be particularly confusing. As a result, this question will be removed from the questionnaire.

In addition to comments on specific questions, several auditors also offered advice as to how the forms should be submitted and saved. All five auditors chose to submit the questionnaire as a complete document rather than in sections. PQA also found it easier to manage the surveys. For the actual audit, the introduction to the audit questionnaire will be revised to encourage auditors to submit only complete applications. With three months to perform the audit, EPA did not believe this would be a problem for auditors.

F. Next Steps

PQA reminded the steering committee that John Daley, Donnie Seyfer, Holly Pugliese, and others would meet on Tuesday to assign up to ten auditors to each OEM website. Other members of the steering committee were encouraged to attend. Future steering committee meetings were not scheduled. However, EPA encouraged steering committee members to continue to communicate by email. EPA also reminded the members that the application deadline is Friday, November 18, 2005. Technicians that apply after this date may not be considered for this OEM audit.

G. Action Items

- (1) PQA will send the steering committee an updated list of auditor applicants.
- (2) PQA will generate a first draft of the auditor assignments. John Daley, Donnie Seyfer, Holly Pugliese, and Monika Chandra will meet on Tuesday, November 22, 2005 at 1:00 PM Eastern Standard Time to discuss PQA's initial selections. A finalized list of auditor assignments will be distributed to the steering committee during the week of November 28, 2005.
- (3) Trainers will be allowed to participate in the audit. Trainers that attended the recent industry meeting in Las Vegas and expressed interest in the audit will be contacted by EPA.
- (4) PQA and EPA will revise the audit questionnaire based on comments from auditors during the pilot project. The revised questionnaire will be sent to the steering committee.