



IATF Observer Guideline

Dear IATF Observer,

Please study the following “IATF Observer Guideline”, for persons observing any type of IATF 16949 audit or assessment. The following rules are binding for each person being considered an IATF Observer.

IATF Observers can be representing an IATF Member Organization or the Oversight Office.

- Observers may accompany a recognized Certification Body audit team at a client’s site, or may request to participate remotely in exceptional circumstance only. Observers may be IATF members or IATF Oversight Office members, or other justified persons representing an IATF OEM member organisation.
- The presence of observers at an IATF 16949 audit or assessment should be announced in advance to the appropriate IATF Oversight office who will then inform the certification body and client prior to conducting the audit or assessment. The name and role/function of the observer(s) should be communicated to the relevant IATF Oversight Office before the audit starts. The IATF Oversight Office will inform the Certification Body who in turn will inform the client.
- It is recommended, although not a requirement, that observers be knowledgeable in the IATF certification scheme requirements, especially the IATF 16949 standard and the “IATF Rules for achieving and maintaining IATF recognition”, as well as all applicable FAQs, SIs and CB Communiqués.
- OEM Observers should be knowledgeable in their respective OEM Customer Specific Requirements. OEM Observers should be knowledgeable about the client’s performance and other related information pertaining to the purpose for their observation.
- Observers should understand and acknowledge the following guidelines:
 - The certification body, the witness auditor (as applicable) and client should know the purpose of the observer(s) participation and any relevant information about the observer(s).
 - Mutual respect and courtesy shall be displayed at all times.
 - Confidentiality of the proceedings must be maintained among those who are involved in the audit process including any activities in response to or as follow-up to the audit process.



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- **Observers may be required by the client to sign a confidentiality agreement. If the observer(s) is not authorized to sign such an agreement, the observer(s) should immediately contact their own respective organization.**
- **The observer(s) should have advance communication with the relevant IATF Oversight Office, including:**
 - A. Reason for observation**
 - B. Role in the Audit / Authority**
 - C. Confidentiality**
 - D. Answering questions from the CB auditor**
- **The audit plan, pre-audit information and logistical information will be provided to the observer(s) by the Certification Body, the relevant IATF Oversight Office or the witness auditor (as applicable) in advance of the audit where possible.**
- **Observers should introduce themselves at the opening meeting and cover the following: Introduction and role/function within their own organization; Purpose of the visit; Role in the audit including a statement that they are not present to influence or interfere with the audit process or outcome; The observer will maintain confidentiality.**
- **Questions for clarification should be recorded by the observer(s) and asked during breaks. Typically, questions related to the client should be asked via the Certification Body auditor after reconciliation with the witness auditor (if applicable).**
- **The client or Certification Body auditor may ask questions of clarification to the observer(s) regarding information on application of requirements where relevant.**
- **It is the prerogative of the client to request that the observer(s) not be privy to competitive customer data.**
- **Observer(s) should be permitted to view the entire audit process at their discretion, unless issues of competitive customer data and confidentiality are apparent.**
- **Observer(s) are required to bring their own personal protective clothing.**