

Certification Process

What is it all about?

There are International ISO Standards and various Quality Standards specific to the removals industry. Some are British Standards; others are European:



- **BS EN ISO 9001:2015** – (Quality Management Systems)
- **BS EN ISO 14001:2015** – (Environmental Management Systems)
- **BS EN ISO 27001:27001** – (Information Security Systems)
- **BS ISO 45001:2018** – (Occupational Health & Safety)

- **BS EN 12522:1998 Parts 1 & 2** – (Domestic Removals)
- **BS EN 14873:2005 Parts 1 & 2** – (Storage)
- **BS 8522:2009** – (Commercial Moves)
- **BS 8564:2011** – (International Moves)
- **BS EN 15696:2008** – (Specification for self-storage services)
- **BS EN 15713:2009** – (Shredding)
- **BS ISO 15489-1:2016** – (Records management)
- **BS 7858:2012** – (Security screening of individuals employed in a security environment)

The above are all quality service standards against which companies can have their service specification and their provision of service against that specification evaluated and assessed by an organisation called a 'Certification Body' who will determine whether or not they are complying with the requirements of the Standard.

Who are QSS?

QSS is the leading Certification Body for these Standards in the UK. It was established in 1999 by the British Association of Removers and uses highly qualified and experienced auditors to evaluate applicants and carry out on-going annual assessments. It operates at complete 'arm's length' from BAR, and will evaluate both members and non-members of BAR.

QSS itself is accredited by UKAS (the United Kingdom Accreditation Service) and is assessed annually against the Standard for certification bodies BS EN ISO-IEC 17065 2012, which scope only applies to certification to BS EN 12522:1998 Parts 1 & 2.

What needs to be done?

An applicant must be an established business that normally operates against a documented system, which consists of a Quality Manual supported by Quality Procedures and Controlled Forms.

What happens next?

Once an installation is completed, the company should run with the system for three months to ensure that it is properly embedded in working practice. It can then apply for Initial Assessment by QSS and, provided that the auditor finds the company to be compliant, QSS will then issue a Certificate confirming that the applicant satisfies the requirements of the Standard.

If any 'nonconformities' are found, the company is given 30 days in which to address the issues and submit evidence to QSS that it has dealt with them. The Certificate is not issued until this has been concluded to the satisfaction of QSS.

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What benefits are there to the business?

The benefits to your business are that you can advertise to your customers that you are certificated and operate to the applicable standard/s you hold.

Increasingly, organisations such as Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, Housing Associations and many large companies are stipulating that their suppliers must hold the relevant quality standards which they will specify as a pre-requisite for doing business with them.

Each Standard sets requirements for the training, competence and performance of staff. It sets standards for the condition of facilities, their security and their maintenance. It sets standards of customer care, as well as measuring the approach to customers and the documentation that is used.

It sets out to establish the standards by which performance is measured in terms of reliability, promptness, the care of customers' property and the quality of everything that is used and the quality of personnel.

What monitoring is there?

Once initially evaluated and certificated, a company is subject to a surveillance visit once a year. It is also required to undertake an annual Management Review – furthermore an annual Internal Audit of the Quality System (carried out by the company) is recommended as good practice (note, for ISO Standards, internal audits are mandatory). The ways in which it uses the certificate and logos are also carefully monitored.

Expansion of certification

At any time, a company may wish to become certified to additional standards or to reduce the scope of their certification. An appropriate application should be submitted for consideration and will normally be granted.

Use of certificates & marks

The Certificate may be displayed in the premises of certificated businesses. The certificate must be current, i.e. not beyond its expiry date.

The certification mark may be used on stationery, publicity materials and on the vehicles using appropriate artwork supplied by QSS. They will not be used in an inappropriate manner which might result in a negative impact on the certification or on QSS itself.

The UKAS Crown & Tick Mark (when awarded) can only be used as set down by UKAS and may **NOT** be used on vehicles or packaging.

Suspension

Suspension of certification can occur for various reasons, the main ones of which are:-

- Failure to correct a major nonconformity at the time of external audit in the time period agreed
- Inappropriate use of the certificate or certification marks
- A major customer complaint
- Failure to pay certification or surveillance fees

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Suspension may require the return of any certificate and the removal of the certification marks from all stationery and from wherever else they may have been displayed.

Suspension is a decision made by the QSS Board, as a result of a recommendation by the General Manager.

A customer may appeal against suspension, such appeals to be in writing to the QSS Board.

The results of an appeal are remitted in writing, to the customer, once the appeal has been considered.

Can certification be lost?

Yes, it can! For example, if a company does not resolve nonconformities within the agreed timescale following an audit, certification would firstly be suspended and then, potentially, cancelled. Repeated failure to comply with important elements of the Standard, or a breakdown of the Quality System in a number of areas, could also lead to withdrawal of certification.

Certification is highly desirable and is much sought after and the loss of it can be very damaging to a business.

Complaints

A procedure to handle complaints is used by QSS and these are initially recorded by the Quality Manager or by the General Manager. A copy of the Procedure covering complaints is available to customers or others on request.

Appeals

May be made to the QSS Board about any certification decision made by the General Manager or by a Certification Auditor. They must be made in writing and addressed to the Managing Director. An appeal may be heard by the Managing Director or by the Board, depending upon its importance.

Release of information

If / when QSS is required by law or authorised by contractual arrangements (e.g. with UKAS) to release confidential information, the client shall, unless prohibited by law, be notified of the information provided.