



Specific Accreditation Guidance

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Gap Analysis

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Purpose and background information

This document serves as an informative guide mapping the clauses of ISO/IEC 17020:2026 to those in the 2012 edition, highlighting the differences between the two versions.

ISO/CASCO, the ISO committee responsible for conformity assessment standards, defines the structure and mandatory elements for the standards it develops or maintains, including ISO/IEC 17020. This includes requirements relating to impartiality, confidentiality, complaints and appeals, and management systems.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 adopts the revised structure specified by ISO/CASCO. While this results in a different structure from the previous edition, the requirements have been clarified and simplified for greater consistency.

This document is intended to support facility staff in preparing for an assessment to ISO/IEC 17020:2026 under the Inspection Accreditation Program. Refer to the Transition Policy for the implementation of ISO IEC 17020:2026.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- Change in the title of the standard;
- Adoption of the ISO/CASCO common elements and revised structure;
- Introduction of a stronger risk-based approach;
- Changes to independence classifications;
- Enhanced competence and resource requirements;
- Expanded requirements for equipment, traceability, technology and data management;
- Better clarity in wording;
- Revision of annexes.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
Title				Title simplified.
Introduction				Reflecting updated structure, clearer language, and alignment with ISO/CASCO frameworks.
1	Editorial	1	Scope	The text has been simplified.
2	Editorial	2	Normative references	Reference to ISO/IEC 17000 has been updated.
3		3	Terms and definitions	
	New		ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses: — ISO Online browsing platform: available at https:// www .iso .org/ obp — IEC Electropedia: available at https:// www .electropedia .org/	Addition of terminological databases as a reference source.
3.7, 3.8	New		Client: person or organization requesting inspection (3.1) of an item (3.8). Item: object of inspection (3.1) to which the specified requirements for the inspection apply.	Definitions of 'client' and 'item' added.
4		4	General requirements	
4.1	Editorial	4.1	Impartiality	Independence moved to clause 5.1

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
4.1.2	Editorial	4.1.2	The inspection body shall be responsible for the impartiality of its inspection activities and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise its impartiality.	Addition of “it’s impartiality” to last line.
4.1.3	Editorial	4.1.3	The inspection body shall monitor its activities and its relationships to identify on an ongoing basis threats to its impartiality. This monitoring shall include the relationships of its personnel.	
4.1.4	Editorial	4.1.4	If a threat to impartiality is identified, its effect shall be eliminated or minimized so that the impartiality is not compromised. The inspection body shall demonstrate how it eliminates or minimizes such threats.	
4.1.6	Editorial	5.2.1	The inspection body shall be structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality.	
4.1.7	Editorial	6.1.11 & 6.1.12	All personnel of the inspection body, either internal or external, that could influence the inspection activities shall act impartially. In particular, personnel involved in inspection activities shall not be remunerated in a way that influences the results of inspections.	Requirement remains same, minor wording changed.
4.2			Confidentiality	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
4.2.1	Editorial	4.2.1	The inspection body shall be responsible, through legally enforceable commitments, for the management of all information obtained or created during the performance of inspection activities. The inspection body shall inform the client, in advance, of the information it intends to place in the public domain. Except for information that the client makes publicly available, or when agreed between the inspection body and the client, all other information is considered proprietary information and shall be regarded as confidential.	Minor wording changed, no change to the requirements. The note has been expanded.
4.2.2	Editorial	4.2.2	When the inspection body is required by law or authorized by contractual arrangements to release confidential information, the client concerned shall be notified of the information provided, unless prohibited by law.	“Contractual commitments” changed to “Contractual arrangements”, clause reworded but requirements remain the same.
4.2.3	Editorial	4.2.3	Information about the client obtained from sources other than the client (e.g. complainant, regulatory authorities) shall be treated as confidential unless agreed by the source.	“Regulators” amended to “Regulatory Authorities”.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
4.2.4	Editorial	6.1.13	Personnel, including any committee members, contractors, personnel of external bodies, or persons acting on the inspection body's behalf, shall keep confidential all information obtained or created during the performance of the inspection activities.	Requirement remains same, just relocated.
5		5	Structural requirements	
5.1	Major	4.1.6	Independence The inspection body shall meet independence requirements specified in Annex A based on the conditions under which it performs its inspection activities and if applicable as required by the inspection scheme.	Clause 4.1.6 was reworded and simplified to reference Annex A. A new NOTE to inform that an inspection body can meet different independence requirements (i.e. Type A, Type non-A) for different inspection activities.
-	-	5.1.1	-	Withdrawn, requirement moved to clause 5.2.
-	-	5.1.2	-	Withdrawn, requirement moved to clause 5.2.
-	-	5.1.3	-	Withdrawn, requirement moved to clause 5.2.
-	-	5.1.4	-	Withdrawn, requirement moved to clause 5.2.
-	-	5.1.5	-	Withdrawn, requirement moved to clause 5.2.
5.2		5.1	Legal entity and liabilities	The title has been changed from "Administrative requirements"

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
5.2.1	Editorial	5.1.1	The inspection body shall be a legal entity, or a defined part of a legal entity. The legal entity is legally responsible for the inspection body and all its inspection activities.	Minor wording changed.
5.2.2	Editorial	5.1.2	An inspection body that is part of a legal entity shall be identifiable within that entity.	Minor wording changed, note added.
5.2.3	Editorial	5.1.3	The inspection body shall define and document the inspection activities for which it conforms with this document.	Minor wording changed, note added.
5.2.4	Major	5.1.4	The inspection body shall have adequate provision (e.g. insurance or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations. The inspection body shall: a) analyse the risks arising from the inspection activities; b) assess the potential liabilities associated with identified risks; and c) establish the level of provisions consistent with those liabilities.	Change regarding provisions to cover liabilities arising from its activities, to ensure they are adequate, the inspection body shall analyze the risks and assess the potential liabilities.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
5.2.5	Major	5.1.5	The inspection body shall have documentation describing the contractual conditions under which it provides the inspection, except when it provides inspection services to the legal entity of which it is a part. In this case, internal agreements shall be established.	Internal agreements shall be established where the inspection body provides inspection services to the legal entity within which it operates.
5.3		5.2	Organization and management	
5.3.1	Major	5.2.2, 5.2.3 & 5.2.4	The inspection body shall: a) define its organization and management structure, its place in any parent organization and relationships between management, technical operations and support services; b) specify the responsibility, authority and interrelationships of all personnel who manage, perform or verify work affecting the results of its inspection activities; c) maintain its capability to carry out inspection activities as described in 5.2.3; d) document its procedures to the extent necessary to ensure the consistent application of its inspection body activities and the validity of the results.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
5.3.2	Major	5.2.5	The inspection body shall have technical management who have overall authority and responsibility for the: a) development of inspection activities; b) performance of monitoring; c) access to necessary resources; d) requirements for competence of personnel; e) provision of technical aspects of contractual arrangements; f) performance of inspection activities.	The previous requirement for a technical manager has been revised to require technical management to be assigned authority and responsibility for key functions, including the development of inspection activities, implementation of monitoring, and determination of personnel competence requirements.
5.3.3	Minor	5.2.5	The inspection body technical management shall be technically competent for the operation of an inspection body.	
5.3.4	Major	8.2.3	The inspection body shall have personnel who, irrespective of other responsibilities, have the authority and resources needed to carry out their duties, including: a) implementation of management system; b) identification of deviations; c) initiation of actions to prevent such deviations; d) reporting to inspection body management on the performance of the management system and any need for improvement; e) ensuring the effectiveness of inspection body activities.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
5.3.5	Minor	5.2.7	The inspection body shall document the duties, responsibilities and authorities for each function involved in its inspection activities in a job description or other documentation.	Duties, responsibilities, and authorities shall be defined by each function, not by each position category.
-	-	5.2.6	-	Withdrawn, requirement has been changed.
6		6	Resource requirements	
6.1		6.1	Personnel	
6.1.1	Editorial	6.1.2 & 6.1.4	The inspection body shall have access to a sufficient number of competent persons to perform the type, range and volume of its inspection activities. The inspection body shall ensure that each person clearly understands their duties, responsibilities, and authorities within the scope of the functions they perform.	Minor wording changed.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.1.2	Major	6.1.1, 6.1.5 & 6.1.6	The inspection body shall have a documented process for managing competence of its personnel involved in inspection activities. The process shall address the following: a) determination of the competence requirements including where needed for making professional judgement (e.g. education, training, technical knowledge, skills or experience); b) selection of personnel; c) initial training of personnel; d) authorization of personnel; e) monitoring of competence of personnel; f) continual training.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.1.3	Editorial	6.1.3	The personnel performing the inspection shall have knowledge, to the extent required, for the type of inspection undertaken, of the following: a) the technology used for the manufacture of the products inspected, the operation of processes and the delivery of services; b) the way in which products are used, processes are operated and services are delivered; c) any defects which can occur during the use of the product, any failures in the operation of the process and any deficiencies in the delivery of services; d) the significance of deviations in the normal use of products, the operation of processes and the provision of services.	Minor wording changed.
6.1.4	Editorial	6.1.6	The initial training shall include an induction period and a mentored working period with authorized and competent personnel for the relevant inspection activity.	
6.1.5	Major	6.1.8	Personnel involved in inspection activities shall be monitored at a defined frequency by authorized and competent personnel in accordance with a monitoring programme.	Monitoring to be done in accordance with a monitoring programme. Note added for consideration for the design of the programme.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.1.6	Minor	6.1.8	Results of monitoring shall be used as a means of identifying training needs (see 6.1.8) and shall be considered for maintenance of authorisation.	Added “and shall be considered for maintenance of authorisation.”
6.1.7	Minor	6.1.9	Each inspector shall be observed performing inspection, unless there is sufficient supporting evidence that the inspector is continuing to perform competently.	Minor change from observed “on-site” to “performing inspection” and new notes added.
6.1.8	Minor	6.1.8	The inspection body shall identify training needs and provide relevant training to personnel involved in the inspection activities to keep pace with technology developments, inspection methods and other relevant changes depending on their competence, experience and upon the results of monitoring (see 6.1.7).	
6.1.9	Editorial	6.1.10	The inspection body shall have documented information demonstrating competence of its personnel (see 6.1.2).	
-	-	6.1.11 - 6.1.13	-	These clauses have been moved to the appropriate section in impartiality and confidentiality.
6.2		6.2	Facilities and equipment	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.2.1	Editorial	6.2.1	The inspection body shall have available, suitable and adequate facilities and equipment to ensure that inspection activities and all associated activities are performed in a competent and safe manner.	Minor wording change, “to permit” changed “to ensure”.
6.2.3	Minor	6.2.3	The inspection body shall ensure the continued suitability of the facilities and of the equipment mentioned in 6.2.1 for their intended use. NOTE Continued suitability can be established by visual inspection, functional checks, periodic maintenance or re-calibration.	Note added.
6.2.4	Major	6.2.4, 6.2.6 & 6.2.9	All equipment having a significant influence on the results of the inspection shall be determined and where appropriate: a) be uniquely identified; b) be subjected to in-service checks according to a procedure when necessary to maintain confidence in the performance of the equipment; c) for measuring equipment, be calibrated before being put into service, and thereafter calibrated according to an established programme.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.2.5	Major	6.2.5, 6.2.11 & 6.2.12	The inspection body shall have a procedure for handling, transport, storage, use and planned maintenance of equipment in 6.2.4 to ensure proper functioning and to prevent contamination or deterioration.	
6.2.6	New		The inspection body shall verify that equipment conforms to specified requirements before being placed into service or returned to service.	
6.2.7	Major	6.2.7	The inspection body shall ensure that measurement results which have a significant influence on the result of the inspection are metrologically traceable to the International System of Units (SI) through: a) calibration provided by a competent laboratory; b) certified values of certified reference materials provided by a competent producer with stated metrological traceability to the SI; c) direct realization of the SI units ensured by comparison, directly or indirectly, with national standards or international standards.	Added for measurement results having influence on the result of the inspection are metrologically traceable to the International System of Units (SI) through calibration provided by competent laboratory, certified values provided by a competent producer, direct realization of the SI units ensured by comparison.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.2.8	Major	6.2.8	When metrological traceability to the SI units is not technically possible, the metrological traceability to an appropriate reference shall be ensured by, for example: a) certified values of certified reference materials provided by a competent producer; NOTE Reference material producers fulfilling the requirements of ISO 17034 are considered to be competent. b) results of reference measurement procedures, specified methods or consensus standards that are clearly described and accepted as providing measurement results fit for their intended use and ensured by suitable comparison.	Added requirement for when metrological traceability to the SI units is not technically possible, to ensure it is traceable to an appropriate reference.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.2.9	Major	6.2.13	If the inspection body uses technology, in connection with inspections (e.g. computers or automated equipment, data processing, artificial intelligence, augmented reality or remote inspection techniques), it shall ensure that: a) the technology is suitable and adequate for use; b) procedures established and implemented for protecting the integrity and security of data; c) equipment, including hardware and software, is maintained in order to ensure proper functioning.	Modified to refer to broader concept of technology to encompass data processing, artificial intelligence, augmented reality or remote inspection techniques.
6.2.10	Editorial	6.2.14	The inspection body shall have documented procedures for dealing with defective equipment. Defective equipment shall be removed from service by segregation and clearly identified as defective by prominent labelling or marking. The inspection body shall examine the effect of defects on previous inspections and follow the procedure in 8.5.	Minor wording change.
6.2.11	Editorial	6.2.15	Relevant information on the equipment, including software, shall be recorded. This shall include identification and, where appropriate, information on calibration and maintenance.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
-	-	6.2.12		Clause moved or renumbered: wording and/or structure has changed.
-	-	6.2.13		Clause moved or renumbered: wording and/or structure has changed.
-	-	6.2.14		Clause moved or renumbered: wording and/or structure has changed.
-	-	6.2.15		Clause moved or renumbered: wording and/or structure has changed.
6.3		6.3	Externally provided products and services	The title has been changed from "Subcontracting".
6.3.1	New	-	The inspection body shall ensure that only suitable externally provided products and services that affect inspection activities are used, when such products and services: a) are intended for incorporation into its inspection's own activities; b) are provided, in part or in full, directly to the client by the inspection body, as received from the external provider; c) are used to support the operation of the inspection body.	Ensure only suitable externally provided products and services that affect inspection activities are used.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.3.2	Major	6.3.4	The inspection body shall have a procedure and retain records for: a) defining, reviewing and approving the inspection body's requirements for externally provided products and services; b) defining the criteria for evaluation, selection, monitoring of performance and re-evaluation of the external providers; c) ensuring that externally provided products and services conform to the inspection body's established requirements, or when applicable, to the relevant requirements of this document or in other relevant standards for conformity assessment bodies, before they are used; d) taking any actions arising from evaluations, monitoring of performance and re-evaluations of the external providers.	
6.3.3	Major	6.3.1	The inspection body shall itself normally perform the inspections that it contracts to undertake. The use of externally provided inspection activities for part of the inspection or the entire inspection shall be used only in exceptional circumstances	Number of notes are added to provide further information about this requirement.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
6.3.4	Minor	6.3.2	The inspection body shall inform the client of its intention to use externally provided inspection activities for part of the inspection, or the entire inspection, to provide the client with an opportunity to object in advance.	
6.3.5	Editorial	6.3.3	Whenever externally provided inspection activities form part of an inspection or the entire inspection, the responsibility for the inspection results and any determination of conformity of the item inspected with the requirements shall remain with the inspection body.	
6.3.6	Minor	6.3.4	The inspection body shall retain documented information for approved external service providers and for which services the approval applies.	
7.1	New	7.1	Review of requests, tenders and contracts	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
7.1.1	New	7.1.5	The inspection body shall have a procedure for the review of inspection requests, tenders, and contracts. The procedure shall ensure that: a) the inspection to be carried out is defined, the item to be inspected is clearly identified and the requirements to be satisfied are adequately defined, documented, and understood; NOTE 1 The requirements can be part of the inspection scheme. b) the inspection body has the capability, including adequate resources, to meet the client requirements; c) the appropriate inspection methods are available or are to be developed to meet the client requirements; d) the requirements, including any special conditions of the client, are adequately defined and understood, so that clear instructions can be issued to personnel performing the required services; e) the requirements of the request, tender, contract or work order have been met.	
7.1.2	Editorial	7.1.1	Shall inform the client if a requested inspection is considered to be inappropriate.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
7.1.3	New	-	Any differences between the request or tender and the contract shall be resolved before inspection activities start.	
7.1.4	New	-	Each contract shall be acceptable both to the inspection body and the client. Deviations requested by client shall not impact the impartiality of the inspection body or the validity of the results.	
7.1.5	New	-	Records of review of requests, tenders and contracts, including any significant changes, shall be retained.	
7.2		7.1	Inspection methods and procedures	
7.2.1	Minor	7.1.1	The inspection body shall perform inspections using appropriate methods and procedures.	
7.2.2	Editorial	7.1.1	Where inspection methods and procedures are not defined, the inspection body shall develop specific methods and procedures to be used (see 7.2.3).	
7.2.3	Editorial	7.1.3	The inspection body shall use standard inspection methods or procedures. In cases where non-standard inspection methods and or procedures must be used, they shall be appropriate and documented.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
7.2.4	New	-	Development and modification of inspection methods or procedures shall be a planned activity and shall be assigned to competent personnel equipped with adequate resources.	
7.2.5	Major	7.1.2, 7.1.6 & 7.1.9	The inspection methods or procedures shall address: a) the inspection techniques to be used, where appropriate, measurements to be taken, including adequate information on equipment and facilities to be used; b) Activities for which the inspector's judgement may rely on use of technology; c) inspection planning and sampling, where absence of such instructions can jeopardize the effectiveness of inspection process; d) when sampling is relevant to validity of outcome of inspection activities, the inspection body shall establish sampling plan and method; where appropriate, sampling plans should be based on statistical methods; additionally, records of sampling shall be maintained, including details such as method used, date and time, personnel involved, any deviations from the plan, to ensure traceability; e) information supplied by any other party (including client) as part of inspection process, and how integrity and validity of	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			such information shall be verified to extent appropriate for intended use of this information; f) inspection results from AI or digital developments; g) use of safety equipment and rules or instructions for carrying out inspections in safe manner; h) where applicable, criteria to make decision on conformity of inspection item; i) which particular equipment has significant influence (if any) on result of inspection and when relevant, under which conditions (such as environmental).	
7.2.6	New	7.1.3	The inspection body shall validate non-standard inspection methods or procedures including when technology is used. The validation shall be appropriate to meet the needs of the given application or field of application. Records of the validation shall be retained.	Non-standard inspection methods or procedures are when the standard being quoted has been changed or modified. Validations are intended to confirm the modifications made have been effectively implemented and produce accurate and repeatable results.
		7.1.7 - 7.1.9		Incorporated into 7.2 & 7.4.
7.3		7.2	Handling of items	
7.3.1	Editorial	7.2.1	The inspection body shall ensure items to be inspected are uniquely identified in order to avoid confusion regarding the identity of such items.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
7.3.2	Editorial	7.2.2 & 7.2.3	The inspection body shall establish whether the item to be inspected is in a ready state for the intended inspection activities, where applicable. Where there is any doubt as to the item's suitability for the inspection to be performed, or where the item does not conform to the description provided, it shall be recorded and the inspection body shall contact the client before proceeding.	
7.3.3	Editorial	7.2.4	The inspection body shall have documented procedures and appropriate facilities to avoid deterioration or damage to inspection items while under its responsibility.	
7.4		7.3	Inspection records	
7.4.1	Editorial	7.1.7 & 7.1.8	Observations or data obtained in the course of inspections shall be recorded in a timely manner so as to prevent loss of relevant information. Calculations and data transfers shall be checked in an appropriate and systematic manner.	
7.4.2	Editorial	7.3.1	The inspection body shall maintain records to demonstrate the effective fulfilment of the inspection procedures and to enable an evaluation of the inspection process.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
7.4.3	New	-	The records shall identify equipment having a significant influence on the result of the inspection, the date of use, for each inspection activity, and when relevant, the conditions (such as environmental) under which the equipment was used.	Shall identify equipment having a significant influence on results.
7.4.4	New	-	The inspection body shall ensure that amendments to inspection records can be tracked to previous versions or to original observations. Both the original and amended data and files shall be retained, including the date.	Keep track of amendment to records.
7.5	New		Control of data and information	
7.5.1	New		The inspection body's system used for the collection, processing, recording, reporting, storage or retrieval of data relevant to inspection activities shall be validated. Whenever there are any changes, including inspection body software configuration or modifications to commercial off-the-shelf software, they shall be authorized, documented and validated before implementation.	System used for the collection, processing, recording, reporting, storage or retrieval of data be validated.
7.5.2	New		Technical data and inspection records shall: a) be safeguarded against unauthorized access, tampering and loss;	Technical data and inspection records be safeguarded, maintained, and include recording of system.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			b) be maintained in a manner that ensures the integrity and security of the data and information; and c) include recording of system failures and the appropriate immediate and corrective actions.	
7.6		7.4	Inspection report and inspection statement	The title has been changed from “Inspection reports and inspection certificates”
7.6.1	Editorial	7.4.1	The work carried out shall be covered by an inspection report or inspection certificate.	
7.6.2	Major	7.4.2	Any inspection report or certificate shall include, at least, the following: a) identification of the issuing body; b) unique identification of the inspection report; c) date of issue; d) date(s) of inspection; e) identification of the item(s) inspected; f) signature or other indication of approval, by authorized personnel; g) a statement of conformity, where applicable; h) the inspection results, except in inspection certificate where they are available upon request and traceable to the report; i) facility name or location of inspection when relevant.	

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7.6.3	Editorial	7.4.4	All information listed in 7.6.2 shall be reported to the client, correctly, accurately and clearly. Where the inspection report or inspection certificate contains results delivered by external providers, these results shall be clearly identified.	
7.6.4	Editorial	7.3.2	The inspection report or certificate shall be traceable to the inspector(s) who performed the inspection.	
7.6.5	Editorial	7.4.5	Corrections, additions or amendments to an inspection report or inspection certificate after issue shall be recorded in accordance with the relevant requirements of this subclause (7.6). An amended report or certificate shall be issued and clearly identify the report or certificate replaced.	
7.6.6	New	-	When agreed with the client, the results can be reported in a simplified way. Any information listed in 7.6.2 that is not reported to the client shall be readily available.	To allow results to be reported in a simplified manner when agreed with client. Records of the agreement shall be kept on file.
7.7		7.5	Handling of appeals	The title has been changed from “Complaints and appeals”
7.7.1	Major	7.5.1 & 7.6.1	The inspection body shall have a documented procedure for handling	

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			appeals that shall include at least the following: a) a description of the process for receiving, and investigating the appeal, and deciding what actions shall to be taken in response; b) tracking and recording the appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve it; c) ensuring appropriate action is taken.	
7.7.2	Major	7.5.2	A description of the handling process for appeals shall be publicly available.	Change from available to interested parties on request to publically available.
7.7.3	Major	7.6.3	The inspection body shall acknowledge receipt of appeal, and provide the appellant with the outcome and, if applicable, progress reports.	
7.7.4	Editorial	7.5.4 & 7.6.2	The inspection body receiving the appeal shall be responsible for gathering all necessary information to determine whether the appeal is valid.	
7.7.5	Editorial	7.5.4	The inspection body shall be responsible for all decisions for the process of handling appeals.	
7.7.6	Minor		The decision on the appeal shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, persons not involved in the decision that is the subject of the appeal in question.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
7.7.7	Editorial	7.5.5	Investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions.	
7.8		7.6	Handling of complaints	
7.8.1	Major	7.6.1	The inspection body shall have a documented procedure for handling complaints that shall include at least the following: a) a description of the process for receiving, substantiating and investigating the complaint, and deciding what actions shall be taken in response; b) tracking and recording the complaint, including the actions undertaken to resolve it; c) ensuring appropriate action is taken.	
7.8.2	Major	7.5.2	A description of the process for handling complaints shall be publicly available.	Change from available to interested parties to publically available.
7.8.3	Editorial	7.5.3	Upon receipt of a complaint, the inspection body shall confirm whether the complaint relates to its conformity assessment activities and, if so, shall resolve the complaint.	
7.8.4	Editorial	7.6.2	The inspection body receiving the complaint shall be responsible for gathering all necessary information to	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			determine whether the complaint is substantiated.	
7.8.5	Editorial	7.6.3	Whenever possible, the inspection body shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint, and provide the complainant with the outcome and, if applicable, progress reports.	
7.8.6	Editorial	7.5.5	Investigation and resolution of complaints shall not result in any discriminatory actions.	
7.8.7	Major	7.6.4	The resolution of complaints shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, persons not involved in the subject of the complaint in question. Where resources do not permit this, any alternative approach shall not compromise impartiality.	
8.1		8.1	General	
8.1.1	Major	8.1.1	The inspection body shall establish, document, implement and maintain a management system to support and demonstrate the consistent fulfilment of the requirements of this document.	No longer structured around the Option A/B framework.
8.1.2	Major	8.1.2	The management system of the inspection body shall include at least the following: — policies and responsibilities (8.2); — documented information (8.3);	This edition significantly restructures Section 8 by removing preventive action as a standalone clause, integrating documents and records into documented information and separating

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			— actions to address risks and opportunities (8.4); — corrective actions (8.5); — internal audits (8.6); — management review (8.7).	policies and responsibilities into a standalone management system element.
8.1.3	Editorial	8.1.3	An inspection body may meet 8.1.2 by establishing, implementing and maintaining a quality management system (e.g. in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001). This quality management system shall support and demonstrate the consistent fulfilment of the requirements of this document.	
8.2		8.2	Policies and responsibilities	The title has been changed from “Management system documentation”.
8.2.1	Editorial	8.2.1	The inspection body's top management shall establish, document, and maintain policies and objectives for fulfilment of the requirements of this document and shall ensure that the policies and objectives are acknowledged and implemented at all levels of the inspection body's organization.	
8.2.2	New	-	The policies and objectives shall address the competence, impartiality and consistent operation of the inspection body.	

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8.2.3	Editorial	8.2.2	The inspection body's top management shall provide evidence of its commitment to the development and implementation of the management system and its effectiveness in achieving consistent fulfilment of the requirements this document.	The same requirement is essentially retained in the new clause, using the updated wording "requirements of this document".
-	-	8.2.3	-	The management responsibility concept has moved out of 8.2 and into the structural/organisational model in the new standard.
-	-	8.2.4	-	The documentation linkage requirement is now reflected in clause 8.3.4.
-	-	8.2.5	-	The requirement is now reflected in clause 8.3.5.
8.3		8.3	Documented information	The title has been changed from "Control of documents".
8.3.1	Editorial	8.3.1 & 8.3.2	The inspection body shall control the documents (internal and external) that relate to the fulfilment of the requirements of this document. The procedures for the control of documents shall ensure that: a) documents are approved for adequacy prior to issue by authorized personnel; b) documents are periodically reviewed and updated as necessary; c) changes and current revision status of documents are identified;	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			d) relevant versions of applicable documents are available at points of use and their distribution is controlled; e) documents are uniquely identified; f) documents of external origin are identified and their distribution controlled; g) the unintended use of obsolete documents is prevented and that suitable identification is applied to them if they are retained for any purpose.	
8.3.2	Minor	8.4.1	The inspection body shall implement the controls needed for the identification, storage, protection, back-up, archive, retrieval, retaining and disposal of its records.	This edition expands record lifecycle controls by explicitly requiring backup, archiving, and disposal, particularly strengthening management of electronic records.
8.3.3	Minor	8.4.2	The inspection body shall retain records for a period consistent with its contractual obligations. Access to these records shall be consistent with the confidentiality commitments and records shall be readily available.	Requirement of records to be readily available.
8.3.4	Editorial	8.2.4	All documentation, processes, systems and records related to the fulfilment of the requirements of this document shall be included in, or referenced from, the management system.	
8.3.5	Editorial	8.2.5	All personnel involved in inspection activities shall have access to the	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			documented information that is applicable to their responsibilities.	
8.4	New	-	Actions to address risks and opportunities	The inspection body now must include actions to address risks and opportunities as a management system element under 8.1.2, and this is spelled out in 8.4.
8.4.1	New	-	The inspection body shall consider the risks and opportunities associated with the inspection activities to: a) give assurance that the management system achieves its intended results; b) enhance desirable effects to achieve the purpose and objectives of the inspection body; c) prevent, or reduce, undesired impacts and potential failures in the inspection body; d) achieve improvement.	
8.4.2	New	-	The inspection body shall plan: a) actions to address these risks and opportunities; b) how to: 1) integrate and implement these actions into its management system; 2) evaluate the effectiveness of these actions.	
8.4.3	New	-	Actions taken to address risks and opportunities shall be proportional to the potential impact on the validity of the	This is a new requirement because it links risk action directly to the validity of results and scheme-related validity.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			inspection results and, if relevant, on the validity of the inspection scheme.	
8.4.4	New	-	The inspection body shall seek feedback from its clients and, if relevant, its interested parties. The feedback shall be analysed and used to improve the management system and inspection activities.	This makes feedback a formal system input and improvement mechanism within the risk and opportunity clause.
8.5		8.7	Corrective actions	
8.5.1	Major	8.7.1	The inspection body shall have a procedure for identification and management of nonconformities. This shall include any aspect of the management system and operations, that do not conform to the inspection body's own procedures or this document, as well as inspection activities that do not conform to inspection body's procedures or agreed requirements of the client	The scope is broadened beyond operational nonconformity.
8.5.2	Major	8.7.2 & 8.7.4	When a nonconformity occurs, the inspection body shall: a) ensure that the responsibilities and authorities for the management of nonconformities are defined; b) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable: 1) take action to control and correct it; 2) address the consequences;	The corrective action model is strengthened by explicitly requiring attention to consequences, review of similar issues, updates to risks and opportunities, and necessary management system changes.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			c) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the cause(s) of any nonconformity, in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere, by: 1) reviewing and analysing the nonconformity; 2) determining the causes of the nonconformity; 3) determining if similar nonconformities exist, or can potentially occur; d) implement any action needed, in a timely manner; e) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken; f) update risks and opportunities determined during planning, if necessary; and g) make changes to the management system, if necessary	
8.5.3	New		In the case of nonconformities related to inspection activities that do not conform to the inspection body's own procedures or the agreed requirements with the client, the inspection body shall, in addition to 8.5.2 c) to g), also ensure that: — actions that are defined (including halting or repeating of work and withholding of reports, as necessary), are based upon the risk established by the inspection body;	This requirement extends corrective action from general management system nonconformities to include nonconforming inspection work.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			— an evaluation is made of the significance of the non-conformity, including an impact analysis on previous results; — a decision is taken on the acceptability of the inspection work affected by the nonconformity; — where necessary, the client is notified and work is recalled or disregarded; — the responsibility for authorizing the resumption of work is defined.	
8.5.4	Editorial	8.7.3	Corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the nonconformities encountered.	
8.5.5	Editorial	8.7.4	The inspection body shall retain records of: a) the nature of the nonconformities, causes and any subsequent actions taken (8.5.2 to 8.5.4); b) the effectiveness of any corrective action.	
8.6		8.6	Internal Audits	
8.6.1	Major	8.6.1, 8.6.2 & 8.6.4	The inspection body shall conduct internal audits at planned intervals to provide information on whether it: a) conforms to: 1) the inspection body's own requirements for its management system, including the inspection activities;	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			2) the requirements of this document; b) has effectively implemented and maintained the required management system.	
8.6.2	Major	8.6.1, 8.6.2, 8.6.3, 8.6.4 & 8.6.5	The inspection body shall: a) plan, establish, implement and maintain an audit programme including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the inspection activities concerned, changes affecting the inspection body and the results of previous audits; b) ensure that internal audits are performed by personnel knowledgeable in conducting inspection activities and auditing and the requirements of this document and that these personnel do not audit their own work; c) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit ensuring that all requirements of this document are covered by the internal audit program; the requirements to be covered shall be considered for all fields of inspection and for all premises where inspection activities are managed or performed; d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management and to	The audit programme is made more flexible, removing the fixed 12-month minimum and instead requiring planned intervals that ensure coverage of all requirements for all fields of inspection, and for all premises where inspection activities are managed or performed.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			the personnel responsible for the area audited; e) implement appropriate corrections and corrective actions without undue delay; f) identify any opportunities for improvement; g) retain records as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.	
-		8.6.3		Covered in clause 8.6.2
-		8.6.4		Covered in clause 8.6.2
-		8.6.5		Covered in clause 8.6.2
8.7		8.5	Management review	
8.7.1	Major	8.5.1.1	The inspection body management shall review its management system at planned intervals in order to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness, including the stated policies and objectives related to the fulfilment of the requirements of this document.	
8.7.2	Major	8.5.2 & 8.5.1.3	The inputs to the management review shall be recorded and shall include information related to the following: a) changes in internal and external issues that are relevant to the inspection body; b) suitability of policies and procedures; c) outcome of recent internal audits;	Expanded inputs now include internal/external issues, policy suitability, assessments, feedback, workload, improvement effectiveness, resources, risk/impartiality, and competence and replacing preventive action with a risk and opportunity model.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			d) assessments by external bodies; e) client, personnel, and, if relevant, interested parties feedback; f) corrective actions; g) status of actions from previous management reviews; h) the fulfilment of objectives; i) changes in the volume and type of the work or in the range of inspection activities; j) appeals and complaints; k) effectiveness of any implemented improvements; l) adequacy of resources including current human and equipment resources, projected workloads and the need for training of both new and existing personnel; m) results of risk identification including impartiality threat identification process and its conclusions; n) review of the effectiveness of processes established to ensure adequate competence of the personnel, including monitoring and training of inspectors and other personnel involved in inspection activities; o) other relevant factors.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
8.7.3	Minor	8.5.3	The outputs from the management review shall record all decisions and actions related to: a) the effectiveness of the management system and its processes; b) improvement of the activities related to the fulfilment of the requirements of this document; c) provision of required resources; d) any need for changes.	Outputs are largely unchanged but clearer and slightly broader, with “any need for changes” now made explicit.
-		8.8		Withdrawn
-		8.8.1		Withdrawn
-		8.8.2		Withdrawn
-		8.8.3		Withdrawn
Annex A		Annex A	Independence requirements for inspection bodies	
A.1 Requirements for type A inspection bodies	Major	A.1	An independent inspection body shall meet the requirements below. a) The inspection body shall be independent of the parties involved. b) The inspection body and its personnel shall not engage in any activities that can conflict with their independence of	Requirement unchanged but clarified: “parties involved” now includes purchasers and regulators (not the general public), and independence restrictions extend to similar competitive items.

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			judgment and integrity in relation to their inspection activities. In particular, they shall not be engaged in the design, manufacture, supply, installation, purchase, ownership, use, maintenance of the item inspected, or similar competitive items. c) The inspection body shall not be a part of a legal entity that is engaged in the design, manufacture, supply, installation, purchase, ownership, use or maintenance of the items inspected or similar competitive items. d) The inspection body shall not be linked to a separate legal entity engaged in the design, manufacture, supply, installation, purchase, ownership, use or maintenance of, the items inspected or similar competitive items by the following: 1) common ownership, except where the owners have no ability to influence the outcome of an inspection; 2) common ownership appointees on the boards or equivalent of the organizations, except where these have functions that have no influence on the outcome of an inspection; 3) directly reporting to the same higher level of management, except where this cannot influence the outcome of an inspection; reporting to the same higher level of management is permitted on matters other than the design, manufacture, supply,	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
			installation, purchase, ownership, use or maintenance of the items inspected or similar competitive items; 4) any means that can establish the ability of the separate legal entity to influence the outcome of an inspection, including but not limited to contractual commitments that establish the separate legal entity's control or authority over the inspection body.	
A.2 Requirements for type non-A inspection bodies	Major	A.3	An inspection body that does not meet the requirements of A.1 shall meet the requirements below. a) The legal entity, (see 5.2.1), shall provide safeguards within the organization to ensure adequate segregation of responsibilities and accountabilities between inspection and other activities. b) The design, manufacture, supply, installation, servicing, maintenance and the inspection of the same item carried out by the inspection body shall not be undertaken by the same person. An exception to this is where a scheme requirement explicitly allows an individual person from an inspection body to undertake both the design, manufacture, supply, installation, servicing, maintenance and the inspection of the same item, as long as this exception does not compromise the inspection results.	

ISO/IEC 17020:2026 Clause No.	Emphasis of Change	ISO/IEC 17020:2012 Clause No.	Summary of text/extract from ISO 17020: 2026	Comments
		A.3		Withdrawn, requirements changed.