Procedure for the Performance of Product Surveillance

VdS Guidelines

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This document is binding only if its use has been agreed on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, any consideration of this document is non-binding. An agreement for application of this document is entirely optional. On a case-by-case basis, third parties may also accept, at their discretion, other requirements that do not comply with this document.

In order to avoid impairing the understanding of the text, VdS Schadenverhütung uses the generic masculine throughout. This expressly does not imply any preference or other evaluation of the male, female or other sex.

CONTENT

1 Scope

1.1 General

These procedural guidelines apply to the testing and certification services of VdS Schadenverhütung (hereinafter referred to as VdS) listed below. However, they do not apply to the performance of the verification of factory production control (FPC) for the CE conformity evaluation procedure in accordance with the Construction Products Regulation.

Surveillance measures carried out by VdS for other certification companies (such as members of EFSG) are not part of these guidelines, these are regulated in the respective individual contracts.

Note: VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH is a company of the German Insurance Association (Gesamtverband der Deutschen Versicherungswirtschaft - GDV).

The services are offered for devices, components, hardware and software as well as other VdS-approved/PROVE-certified products (hereinafter referred to as products) of fire protection and security technology.

Information on the current responsibilities and contact persons for a specific service and for a specific product can be obtained from the VdS head office or from the respective customer centre. (Phone: +49 221 7766-0, Fax.: +49 221 7766-341, E-Mail head office: info@vds.de / E-Mail fire protection: cs-fire@vds.de / E-Mail security technology: cs-sec@vds.de, Homepage: www.vds.de).

In these guidelines, irrespective of the service and product, the body responsible for product testing or product certification in each case is referred to as 'VdS-Lab' or 'VdS-Zert' for short.

These guidelines apply in conjunction with VdS Guidelines 2344 "Procedures for the Testing, Approval and Certification of Products and Systems of Fire Protection and Security Technologies" and describe the performance of product surveillance.

1.2 Validity

These guidelines are valid from 01.05.2022. They supersede version VdS 2841en : 2005-12 (03).

Note: This is a translation of the German guidelines. If there are any discrepancies, the German version shall be binding.

2 Normative references

These guidelines contain dated and undated references to other regulations (in alphabetical order). The normative references are cited in the respective clauses, the titles are listed below. For dated references, subsequent amendments to or revisions of any of these regulations apply to these guidelines only when published by revision or amendment of these guidelines. For undated references the latest edition of the regulation referred to applies.

EN ISO 9001 Quality management systems – requirements

EN ISO/IEC 17000 Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles

EN ISO/IEC 17065 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

VdS 2344en Procedure for Testing, Approval and Certification of Products and Systems of Fire Protection and security Technology

VdS 3177en General Terms and Conditions of VdS Schadenverhütung for the Provision of Services of the Department Products and Services

VdS 6005en Use of Registered Word and Figurative Marks of VdS

Note: All VdS publications can be requested from: VdS Schadenverhütung, Verlag, PO Box 10 37 53, 50477 Köln, Fax No.: +49 (0)221/7766-109. Some VdS printed documents can also be downloaded from www.vds.de.

3 Definitions

For the application of this document, the terms and descriptions of VdS 2344 apply.

4 Assessement by VdS

4.1 Measures of product surveillance

The following modules can be applied depending on the commissioned procedures:

Action	Module				
	1	2	3	4	5
Assessment of the production, the provision of the service or the execution of the process	X				X
Testing or inspection of samples from the production site		X		X	
Testing or inspection of samples from the open market			X		

Table 4-1: Modules of product surveillance

Feasible actions per product/product group	Module				
	1	2	3	4	5
Physical products	X	X	X	X	X
Non-physical (virtual) products			X	X	X

Table 4-2: Feasible actions per product/product groups

Module 1: Product audit at the manufacturing site(s) of the approved/certified product

The surveillance part of this programme enables the regular assessment of the production process and any test systems that may be in place (in accordance with VdS 3837).

Module 2: Sampling at the manufacturing site(s) of the approved/certified product with subsequent inspection at VdS-Lab or at the manufacturing site(s) by the auditor.

The surveillance part of this programme involves periodic sampling of the product at the point of manufacture to determine whether products manufactured after initial confirmation continue to meet the specified requirements.

Module 3: Sampling at public points of sale (market surveillance) with subsequent inspection at VdS-Lab

The surveillance part of this programme involves sampling of the product from the market to determine whether products manufactured after initial confirmation continue to meet the specified requirements.

Module 4: Provision of test samples by the approval holder/certificate holder with subsequent testing at VdS-Lab

The monitoring part of this programme involves sending samples of the product from the manufacturing site to determine whether the products manufactured after initial confirmation continue to meet the specified requirements.

Module 5: Virtual product audit at the manufacturing site(s)

The surveillance part of this programme enables the assessment of the production process and any existing test systems of the production site in virtual form.

As a minimum, at least one module shall be applied during the certification period.

As a rule, modules 1 and 2 are used in combination. Individual specifications, especially with regard to modules 3 to 5, are laid down in the VdS-internal and product-specific certification principles.

The scope within which surveillance activities are carried out can be changed for a specific situation as defined in the programme.

For both services and processes, the surveillance part of this programme should include regular audits of the management system as well as regular assessment of the services or processes.

4.2 Special cases of product surveillance for several manufacturing plants

The following explanations apply in the event that production and assembly take place in one company and the final tests in another, legally and, if necessary, spatially separate company.

In this case, the production site is the company that carries out the final inspection. The VdS 2344 guidelines require proof of a certified quality management system (hereinafter "management system") for this company.

In addition, the client must conclude a documented quality assurance agreement with the spatially separated companies involved, so that the conformity of the product fully corresponds to the approved/certified version. The holder of the approval/certificate must convince himself of this conformity at regular intervals (e.g. in the form of audits carried out).

The agreement must include the following points to ensure that the product complies with the VdS-approval or PROVE-certificate to a sufficient extent:

- Determination of the submitted documents, such as drawings, parts lists, work plans, QM plans and material specifications, on which the production and assembly of the approved/certified products are based
- Determination of necessary trainings and provision of qualified personnel
- Determination of the type and frequency of all necessary tests in the production with specification of target values and the associated tolerances
- Determination of the records of the tests carried out in the production process, which must be available to the production site at the time of the final test, so that the results and the completeness of all previous tests can be traced and included in the evaluation of the final test
- Determination of the process for reviewing the effectiveness of the quality assurance agreement (e.g. initial audit, regular audits)
- Determination of the responsibility for archiving quality records

The activities specified in the quality assurance agreement must be documented, kept for at least 6 years and presented to VdS, e.g. during a product audit. This enables VdS to convince itself of the effectiveness of the quality assurance agreement. Furthermore, VdS reserves the right to also carry out an audit in the direct supplier companies which are significantly involved in the production of VdS-approved/PROVE-certified products (Keyword: subcontractor/extended workbench).

5 Requirements

5.1 Requirements for the production facility

The client must provide proof that the products are manufactured with the same quality and design. For this purpose, each production site must have a management system for quality, usually certified according to DIN EN ISO 9001. The management system must cover all product-related activities. The client and the manufacturing sites notified in accordance with Annex E of VdS 2344 allow VdS to check the functionality of the management system of the notified manufacturing site.

New VdS-approvals, PROVE-certificates or extensions of the validity of existing approvals/certificates are consequently - with the exception of section 5.2 - only granted for these products if the client can provide evidence of a certified management system for the manufacturing site of the product.

Certifications of management systems that have not been carried out by VdS-Zert are accepted as a basis for the VdS-approvals/PROVE-certification of products if the certification body has been accredited by an accreditation body that is a member of the "European cooperation for Accreditation" (EA for short) and has signed the "Multilateral Agreement" (MLA) there.

Product groups with the obligation to provide evidence of a certified management system are, for example:

- Alarm systems
- Fire detection and alarm systems
- Extinguishing systems (water/gas/foam)
- Smoke and heat exhaust ventilation systems
- Physical security technology
- Alarm management systems
- Transmission paths

5.2 Special regulations

For all product groups/product subgroups, proof of an effective management system can be provided by one or more combinations of the procedures described below, subject to prior approval by VdS.

5.2.1 Replacement of the proof by additional measures

If no certified management system is in place, the following measures can be used as an alternative for product surveillance:

- The documentation relevant for a consistent manufacturing quality is checked by VdS before issuing the VdS product approval or the PROVE certificate. The positive completion of the documentation check is a prerequisite for the further application of the special regulation.
- A product audit is carried out at the manufacturing facility every 6 months.
- In all product audits, the relevant documentation is also included in the audit.

5.2.2 Replacement of the proof by other certified systems

For individual product groups/product subgroups, the proof of a certified management system can also be replaced by other, equivalent procedures, such as individual on-site inspections.

5.2.3 Replacement by special sampling/special audits

For individual product groups/product subgroups, special arrangements can be made regarding audit intervals, sampling and audit requirements with the prior consent of VdS.

6 Measures according to modules 1 and 2

6.1 VdS-product audit

6.1.1 Frequency

In principle, the first audit (initial audit) is carried out immediately before the product approval/certification is issued by VdS. If this is not possible for comprehensible reasons, the product audit can also be postponed to a maximum of 6 months after issuance of the product approval/certification after consultation with the certification body. Afterwards regular product audits are carried out in the manufacturing facility.

The intervals of the product audits to be carried out repeatedly thereafter and the number of products/product groups to be audited during these product audits are specified in Table 6-1. The number of VdS-approvals or PROVE-certificates manufactured in the respective production facility is used as the basis for assessment.

Note: This does not take into account the number of approval holders associated with the production of the respective manufacturing facility and the production volume.

Number of VdS-approvals or PROVE-certifications for products manufactured at the respective manufacturing site	**1 - 10**	**11 - 49**	**from 50**
Assessment interval in months	24	12	12
Number of products/product groups to be assessed during one product assessment *if practically possible	1	2*	3*

Table 6-1: Audit frequency general

Note: The specifications in Table 6-1 do not distinguish between basic and parallel approvals/certifications (see also VdS 2344). This means that the number of complete approvals/certificates is counted.

Table 6-2 determines the number of product audits to be carried out in deviation from Table 6-1 for individual specific product groups/components and equipment for a manufacturing site.

Product groups/components and equipment	Audit frequency or sampling in months
Smoke detectors	6
Retrofit products for facade elements	12
Bike locks	12
Smoke and heat detectors	12
Chemical products	12
Batteries	18
Locks	18
Warning devices	18
Safes	18

Table 6-2: Audit frequency for special product groups

If Table 6-1 and Table 6-2 show different audit intervals for a production site, the shorter interval shall be applied.

The information in Table 6-1 and Table 6-2 is based on the VdS-internal and product-specific certification principles (see Section 4). VdS reserves the right to deviate from the above rules for given reasons. A justification for this can be, for example, a negative result of the last product audit, a negative result of the sampling inspection, an unscheduled virtual product assessment (remote assessment) or a deviation from the basic surveillance (section 4.1).

Furthermore, in the case of product-specific VdS-guidelines, such as bracing fabric VdS 3158, extinguishing water additives VdS 3472, etc., other intervals are specified in the respective guidelines. These take precedence over VdS 2841 in this respect.

6.1.2 Performance

When carrying out product audits in the production facilities, the following points are usually audited:

- Planned/implemented product changes, such as drawing changes, software changes or technical change reports
- Procedures and documentation for ongoing production/development
- Documented results of incoming, intermediate and final inspections
- Corrective actions since the last audit (if required)
- Inspection equipment monitoring/calibration records and machine maintenance (product-specific)
- Control of documents/standards and guidelines (product-specific; e.g. VdS-guidelines, EN standards or DIN standards)
- Customer complaints
- Procurement process
- Product labelling (e.g. according to VdS-guidelines, standards, etc.)
- Accompanying documentation

- Basic quality assurance measures in production
- Qualification and knowledge of the employees
- Penetration of the quality assurance agreement between the client and his notified manufacturing bodies (see section 4.2)

It must be ensured that the product to be audited is manufactured on the day of the product audit. Alternatively, a technically similar product can be audited in production after consultation with VdS. In this case, however, the VdS-approved/PROVE-certified product must be able to be taken as a sample from the warehouse. Furthermore, the complete production documentation must be available during the audit. In the case of virtual products (software), the production process and the complete documentation must be clearly traceable. Depending on the number of products to be audited, the time required to conduct a product audit is between one and two days, plus travel to and from the site. If the auditing of additional points (e.g. of the management system within the scope of the special regulation according to section 5.2) is necessary, the effort may increase.

In the case of product audits that are carried out as part of an MS audit conducted by VdS, the effort required for the product surveillance measure is reduced.

During the performance of the assessment, a written audit report is prepared, which is subsequently provided to the assessed company and the approval holder/certificate holder in copy or digitally.

If deviations or improvement potentials are identified during this product audit, they are documented on additional forms. In the case of deviations, corrective measures are agreed on the relevant form, which must be carried out within a specified period (up to a maximum of 3 months). Proof of the corrective measures carried out is provided in writing. In special cases, or in the event of an audit being cancelled, a follow-up assessment must be carried out on site. In addition, further products can be inspected in the event of serious deficiencies.

If no deviations are found during the assessment or if all corrective measures have been accepted by the VdS certification body, a VdS-internal release is given. This release is a prerequisite for the preservation of the approval/certification, its extension or for the new approval/recertification of products.

6.2 Sampling

6.2.1 Frequency

In principle, two samples of the audited product(s) are taken for each VdS product audit after consultation between VdS-Lab and VdS-Zert. In the case of larger products (e.g. IAS/FDAS control and indicating equipment or secure storage units), fewer samples may be taken. In the case of products purchased directly by the end customer, more samples may be taken (e.g. smoke detectors). Separate sampling may also be carried out between product audits if necessary (see section 6.1.1).

6.2.2 Performance

Possible sampling locations are manufacturing plants, their distributors, the internet mail order business or other public sales outlets or, if applicable, also installer companies supplied by them. The samples are taken from stocks released for sale/dispatch or use and, after appropriate labelling, are either checked directly by the auditor during the product audit in the production facility or handed over to VdS-Lab for checking. The scope of testing is determined by VdS and includes at least an identification test and, if necessary, a functional test. The approval holder or certificate holder is informed of the test results in writing.

Further requirements from section 6.1.2 regarding deviations and corrective measures apply accordingly at this point.

7 Measures according to modules 3 to 5

7.1 Market surveillance

7.1.1 Frequency

Market surveillance is a continuous measure for a certain period of time and corresponds to sampling of products that are available for purchase by the end customer at public sales points.

7.1.2 Performance

The samples are purchased by VdS at public points of sale (e.g. Internet) and handed over to VdS-Lab for testing after appropriate labelling. The scope of testing is determined by VdS and includes at least an identification test and, if necessary, a functional test. The approval holder or certificate holder will be informed in writing about the test results. The costs arising from the above-mentioned measure will be invoiced to the approval/certificate holder. Further requirements from section 6.1.2 regarding deviations and corrective measures apply accordingly at this point.

7.2 Provision of samples by the approval holder or certificate owner

7.2.1 Frequency

The provision of test samples by the approval holder or certificate holder is an ongoing measure and is based on the VdS-internal, product-specific certification principles (see section 4.1).

7.2.2 Performance

The approval holder or certificate holder takes the samples from stocks released for sale/dispatch or use and hands them over to VdS-Lab for testing after appropriate labelling. The scope of testing is determined by VdS and includes at least an identification test and, if necessary, a functional test. The approval holder or certificate holder is informed of the test results in writing. Further requirements from section 6.1.2 regarding deviations and corrective measures apply accordingly at this point.

7.3 Virtual product audit

7.3.1 Frequency

The measures for product monitoring can also be carried out as a remote audit. The performance of remote audits for physical products is an exceptional case and does not fully replace the on-site audit. For non-physical (virtual) products, however, this procedure can be regarded as standard surveillance.

7.3.2 Performance

When carrying out product audits in the production facilities, the following points are usually audited:

- Planned/implemented product changes, such as drawing changes, software changes or technical change reports.
- Procedures and documentation for ongoing production/development
- Documented results of incoming, intermediate and final inspections
- Corrective actions since the last audit (if required)
- Inspection equipment monitoring/calibration records and machine maintenance (product-specific)
- Control of documents/standards and guidelines (product-specific; e.g. VdS-guidelines, EN standards or DIN standards)
- Customer complaints
- Product labelling (e.g. according to VdS-guidelines, standards, etc.)
- Accompanying documentation
- Basic quality assurance measures in production
- Qualification and knowledge of the employees
- Penetration of the quality assurance agreement between the client and his notified manufacturing bodies (see section 4.2)

8 Basis for the procedure

8.1 General Terms and Conditions

These guidelines apply in conjunction with the "General Terms and Conditions of VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH for Services of the Products and Companies Division", VdS 3177en, in the version valid at the time of conclusion of the contract. The General Terms and Conditions can be downloaded free of charge from the website www.vds.de and sent on request.

In addition to this, VdS Schadenverhütung, by carrying out product surveillance measures, does not assume any guarantee for the correctness and functional efficiency of all products produced as well as for the faultlessness of other services and goods which the production facility provides or delivers to third parties. This also applies in particular to products which are randomly tested by VdS Schadenverhütung within the scope of product surveillance.

8.2 Costs

The performance of the product surveillance measures is subject to a charge. The product surveillance measures shall be invoiced in accordance with the price lists, module A, valid at the time of the provision of the service. The prices for the testing of the samples taken in the manufacturing facilities or in public sales outlets shall be invoiced on the basis of the price lists of the respective VdS laboratory. Upon request, VdS shall prepare a cost calculation and/or provide the price list(s). All prices will be invoiced to the approval holder or certificate holder (not the manufacturing site), unless VdS has received other information.

For manufacturing facilities whose management system has been certified by the VdS certification body, the product surveillance measures are carried out as far as possible within the scope of the management system audits. In this case, only a reduced processing fee (exception: safes) as well as the additional audit time provided for product surveillance are charged, as the correspondence is carried out as part of the planning of the management system audit. The travel expenses are fully covered by the settlement of the management system audit.

If an agreed product surveillance measure is cancelled or postponed for reasons attributable to the holder of the approval or certificate or his production facility, the holder of the approval or certificate shall be charged the following fees:

- In the event of cancellation/postponement at shorter notice than 60 days before the agreed product monitoring measures: 25 % of the estimated costs
- In the event of cancellation/postponement at shorter notice than 14 days before the agreed product monitoring measures: 50 % of the estimated costs
- In the event of cancellation/postponement at shorter notice than 7 days before the agreed product monitoring measures: 100 % of the estimated costs

The estimated costs are determined according to the respective valid price tables. Travel costs will only be charged if cancellation costs have been incurred.

8.3 Advertising

Production facilities of VdS-approved/PROVE-certified products are allowed to advertise with it. The requirements of the VdS 6005 guidelines must be complied with.

Certified companies may advertise with the approval/certification. However, it is prohibited to include the VdS brand or variations thereof or VdS or the approval/certification as such in the company name. When advertising with the approval/certification as such, the content of the text on the certification certificate must be reproduced correctly and must not be done in a way that is contrary to competition law.

The relevant specifications on the certificates must be complied with. Advertising may only be carried out using the company name shown on the certificate/attestation of the manufacturing plant for approved/certified products.

The VdS-/PROVE-logo may be enlarged or reduced in size while maintaining the proportions. The minimum height must not be less than 13 mm. It may be used on letterheads, advertising material and publications of the client.

The accreditation mark of the German Accreditation Body (DAkkS) may only be used by the client in the context of a complete, unchanged reproduction of the certificate.

If the company wishes to indicate that the VdS certification body is accredited, the following wording shall be used:

"VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH is accredited as a certification body by the German Accreditation Body (DAkkS)."

Upon request by the VdS certification body, the company must remove this reference.

In case of doubt, the advertising and use of the logo must be agreed with the VdS certification body.

8.4 Assessments on site

In order to be able to properly carry out technical assessments and inspections, the client undertakes, when placing the order, to grant the inspectors of the VdS certification body unrestricted access to the premises as well as the associated technical supply rooms and associated administrative rooms necessary for the fulfilment of their tasks.

Furthermore, the client undertakes to grant the auditors of the VdS certification body unrestricted access to documents and records.

8.5 Confidentiality

All documents and information received by VdS-Lab and VdS-Zert in connection with procedures carried out in accordance with these guidelines are treated as strictly confidential. The documents will neither be made accessible to third parties nor duplicated without the written declaration of consent of the client. Exception: VdS delegates the performance of product surveillance to third parties, see section 5.1.4 of VdS 2344.

This does not affect the obligation of VdS-Lab and VdS-Zert to allow higher-level bodies (e.g. representatives of accreditation bodies) to inspect documents relating to individual processes.

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