Procedure for the Performance of Product Surveillance



VdS Procedural Guidelines

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The present document shall only have a binding character if its use has been agreed upon on a case-by-case basis; otherwise, taking this document into consideration shall be without obligation. The agreement on the use of this document is purely optional. In particular cases, third parties may also accept other requirements at their discretion which do not correspond to this document.

To avoid any distraction from the understanding of the text, the generic masculine is used throughout. There is expressly no preference or other valuation implied of the male, female or other genders.

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1 Scope

1.1 General

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

Surveillance measures carried out by VdS for other certification bodies (such as EFSG members) are not covered by these guidelines; these are regulated in the respective individual contracts.

Note: VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH is a company of the German Insurance Association (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) in the field of fire protection and security technology.

Information about the current responsibilities and contact persons for a specific service and for a specific product can be obtained from the VdS head office or the respective customer centre (phone: +49 221 7766-0, fax: +49 221 7766-341, head office email: info@vds.de / Fire protection email: cs-fire@vds.de / Email security technology: cs-sec@vds.de, homepage: www.vds.de).

In these guidelines, regardless of the service and product, the body responsible for product testing or product certification 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 for fire protection and security technologies" and describe the implementation of product surveillance.

1.2 Validity

These guidelines apply from 01.01.2026. They replace version VdS 2841 : 2022-05 (04).

Product monitoring can still be carried out in accordance with VdS 2841 : 2022-05 (04) until 31 December 2026.

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 references are provided in the relevant sections; the titles are listed below. Amendments or additions to dated regulations shall only apply if they are published by means of an amendment to these guidelines. The latest version of undated regulations shall apply.

DIN EN ISO 9001 Qualitätsmanagementsysteme – Anforderungen (Quality management systems – Requirements)

DIN EN ISO/IEC 17000 Konformitätsbewertung – Begriffe und allgemeine Grundlagen (Conformity assessment – Terms and general principles)

DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 Konformitätsbewertung – Anforderungen an Stellen, die Produkte, Prozesse und Dienstleistungen zertifizieren (Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services)

DIN EN ISO/IEC 17067 Konformitätsbewertung – Grundlagen der Produktzertifizierung und Leitlinien für Produktzertifizierungsprogramme (Conformity assessment – Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification programmes)

VdS 2344 Verfahren für die Prüfung, Anerkennung und Zertifizierung von Produkten und Systemen der Brandschutz- und Sicherungstechnik (Procedures for the testing, approval and certification of fire protection and security technology products and systems)

VdS 3177 AGB der VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH für Dienstleistungen der Bereiche Brandschutzlaboratorien und Security & Geo (General Terms and Conditions of VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH for services in the areas of fire protection laboratories and Security & Geo)

VdS 3837 Richtlinien für Gefahrenmeldeanlagen, Testsysteme, Anforderungen und Prüfmethoden (Guidelines for hazard detection systems, test systems, requirements and test methods)

VdS 6005 Verwendung geschützter Wort-/Bildmarken von VdS (Use of protected word/ figurative marks of VdS)

Note: All VdS publications can be requested from: VdS Schadenverhütung, Verlag, Postfach 10 37 53, 50477 Cologne, Fax no.: 0221/7766-109. Some VdS publications are also available for download at www.vds.de.

3 Definitions

Certification by VdS: Initial confirmation by the certification body of VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH

In addition, the terms and descriptions of VdS 2344 apply to the use of this document.

4 Assessment by VdS

4.1 Product surveillance measures

There are various modules that can be applied depending on the procedures commissioned. The VdS certification body determines which modules are applied for all products and product groups. Combinations of modules may also be used.

As a rule, at least two modules are used in combination. At least module no. 1 in conjunction with one of modules 2-4. VdS reserves the right to specify individual requirements for certain product groups.

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

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

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

Table 4-1: Product monitoring modules

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

Table 4-2: Possible actions by product/product group

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

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

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

The surveillance part of this programme involves the regular sampling of the product at the place of manufacture in order to determine whether the products manufactured after certification by VdS continue to meet the specified requirements. The scope of the tests to be carried out and the criteria for evaluating the results are determined by the VdS certification body.

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

The monitoring part of this programme involves taking samples of the product from the market to determine whether the products manufactured after certification by VdS continue to meet the specified requirements. The scope of the tests to be carried out and the criteria for evaluating the results are determined by the VdS certification body.

Module 4: Provision of test samples by the approval holder/certificate holder, followed by 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 certification by VdS continue to meet the specified requirements. The scope of the tests to be carried out and the criteria for evaluating the results are determined by the VdS certification body.

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

The surveillance part of this programme enables the production process and any existing test systems at the manufacturing site to be assessed in virtual form.

4.2 Special cases of product surveillance at multiple manufacturing sites

The following applies in cases where production and assembly take place in one facility and final testing in another facility that is legally and, if applicable, physically separate.

In this case, the manufacturing site is the company that carries out the final inspection. The VdS 2344 guidelines require this company to provide evidence of a certified quality management system (hereinafter referred to as "management system").

In addition, the client must conclude a documented quality assurance agreement with the spatially separate companies involved to ensure that the product fully complies with the approved/certified version. The approval/certificate holder must verify this compliance at regular intervals (e.g. in the form of audits).

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

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

The activities specified in the quality assurance agreement must be documented, retained for at least 6 years and presented to VdS, e.g. during a product audit. This enables VdS to verify the effectiveness of the quality assurance agreement. Furthermore, VdS reserves the right to also conduct an audit at direct suppliers that are significantly involved in the production of VdS-approved/PROVE-certified products. (Keyword: subcontractors/ extended workbench).

4.3 Preconditions for the testing of samples

Sample testing is carried out in the VdS laboratories or by employees of VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH on site at the production site. For all sample tests in which quantitative measurement results are determined and compared with the original results, the following must be ensured:

Usable measurement results determined in the VdS laboratories must be available.

In the case of initial certifications where the tests were not carried out by VdS-Lab, the necessary measurement results must be determined in the VdS laboratories no later than two years after the initial certification. The determination must be commissioned by the certification holder and is subject to a fee. If the certification holder does not commission the determination, the certification will be suspended and, if necessary, withdrawn.

If no measurement results are available for older certifications (older than 10 years), the necessary measurement results must be determined by the VdS laboratories. The

determination must be commissioned by the holder of the certification and is subject to a fee. If no commission is placed by the holder of the certification, the certification cannot be renewed.

5 Requirements

5.1 Requirements for the manufacturing facility

The client must provide evidence that the products are manufactured with consistent quality and design. To this end, each manufacturing site must have a quality management system, 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 will therefore only be granted for these products – with the exception of section 5.2 – 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 will be accepted as a basis for VdS-approval/PROVE-certification of products if the certification body has been accredited by an accreditation body that is a member of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and has signed the Multilateral Agreement (MLA).

Product groups requiring proof of a certified management system include, 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 consent of VdS.

5.2.1 Replacement of proof by additional measures

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

– The documentation relevant to consistent manufacturing quality is reviewed by VdS before issuing the VdS product approval or PROVE certificate. Successful completion of the documentation review is a prerequisite for further application of the special regulation.
– A product audit is carried out at the manufacturing site every 6 months.
– The relevant documentation is included in all product audits.

5.2.2 Replacement of the proof by other certified systems

For individual product groups/product subgroups, 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 sampling/special audits

For individual product groups/product subgroups, a special arrangement regarding audit intervals, sampling and audit suspensions may be made 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 understandable reasons, the product audit can also be postponed to a maximum of 6 months after the product approval/certification has been issued, following consultation with the certification body. Subsequently, product audits are carried out regularly at 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 basis for assessment is the number of VdS-approvals or PROVE-certificates produced at the respective manufacturing facility.

Note: The number of approval holders/certificate holders associated with the production of the respective manufacturing facility and the production volume are not taken into account.

Number of VdS-approvals or PROVE-certifications for products manufactured at the respective production facility	**1 - 10**	**11 - 49**	**from 50**
Audit interval in months	24	12	12
Number of products/product groups to be audited during a product audit * if practically possible	1	2*	3*

Table 6-1: Audit intervals in 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 deviating from Table 6-1 for individual specific product groups/components and devices for a manufacturing facility.

Product groups/components and devices	Audit interval or sampling in months
Smoke alarm devices	6
Retrofit products for façade elements	12
Bicycle locks	12
Products for use in fire protection systems*	12
Chemical products	12
Virtual products	12
Batteries	18
Safes and strongrooms	18

Table 6-2: Audit intervals according to specific product groups

* Transition period from 24 to 12 months until 31 December 2026

If different audit intervals result for a production facility from Table 6-1 and Table 6-2, then the shorter interval shall apply.

The information in Table 6-1 and Table 6-2 is based on VdS's internal and product-specific certification principles (see section 4). VdS reserves the right to deviate from the above rules if circumstances so require. A justification for this can be, for example, a negative result of the last product audit, a negative result of the sample inspection, an unscheduled virtual product audit (remote audit) 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 regard.

6.1.2 Performance

When conducting product audits at manufacturing 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)
- test 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. in accordance with VdS guidelines, standards, etc.)
- accompanying documentation
- basic quality assurance measures in production
- qualifications and knowledge of employees
- enforcement of the quality assurance agreement between the client and his notified manufacturing sites (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 available for sampling from stock if sampling is planned as part of the product audit. Furthermore, the complete production documentation must be available during the audit. In the case of virtual products (software), the development process and the complete documentation must be clearly traceable. Depending on the number of products to be audited, a product audit takes between one and two days, plus travel time to and from the site. If additional items need to be audited (e.g. the management system within the scope of the special regulation in accordance with section 5.2), 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 assessment, a written audit report is prepared, which is then provided to the assessed company and the approval holder/certificate holder in hard copy or digital form.

If deviations or potential for improvement are identified during this product audit, these are documented on additional forms. In the event of deviations, corrective measures are agreed on the relevant form, which must be implemented within a specified period (maximum of 3 months). Proof of the corrective measures taken must be provided in writing. In special cases, or if the audit is terminated, a follow-up assessment must be carried out on site. In addition, further products may be assessed 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 a renewal of approval/certification of products.

6.2 Sampling

Possible sampling locations are manufacturing facilities, their distributors, online retailers, other public points of sale or, if applicable, installation companies that are supplied. The samples are taken from stocks that have been released for sale/shipment or use and, after being appropriately labelled, are either checked during the product audit at the manufacturing facility or sent to VdS-Lab for testing. The approval holder or certificate holder is informed of the test results in writing. Further provisions 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 an ongoing measure for a specific period of time and corresponds to the sampling of products that are available for purchase by end customers at public points of sale.

7.1.2 Performance

The samples are purchased by VdS at public points of sale (e.g. internet) and, after appropriate labelling, handed over to VdS-Lab for testing. The approval holder or certificate holder is informed of the test results in writing. The costs arising from the above measure are invoiced to the approval/certificate holder. Further provisions from section 6.1.2 regarding deviations and corrective measures apply accordingly at this point.

7.2 Provision of test samples by the approval holder or certificate holder

7.2.1 Frequency

The provision of test samples by the approval holder or certificate holder is an ongoing measure and is based on VdS's 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/shipment or use and, after labelling them accordingly, submits them to VdS-Lab for testing. The approval holder or certificate holder is informed of the test results in writing. Further provisions 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 product surveillance measures may also be carried out as a remote audit. The performance of remote audits for physical products is an exception and does not fully replace the on-site audit. For non-physical (virtual) products, however, this procedure can be regarded as routine surveillance.

7.3.2 Performance

When conducting product audits at manufacturing sites, 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)
- test 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. in accordance with VdS guidelines, standards, etc.)
- accompanying documentation
- basic quality assurance measures in production
- qualification and knowledge of employees
- enforcement of the quality assurance agreement between the client and his notified manufacturing facilities (see section 4.2)

8 Procedural principles

8.1 General terms and conditions

These guidelines apply in conjunction with the "General Terms and Conditions of VdS Schadenverhütung GmbH for Provision of Services of the Departments Fire Protection Laboratories and Security & Geo", VdS 3177, 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, VdS Schadenverhütung does not guarantee the correctness and functionality of all manufactured products or the faultlessness of other services and goods that the manufacturing facility provides or delivers to third parties by carrying out product surveillance measures. This applies in particular to products that are randomly tested by VdS Schadenverhütung as part of product surveillance.

8.2 Cost

The performance of product surveillance measures is subject to a fee. Product surveillance measures are invoiced in accordance with the price lists, Module A, valid at the time of service provision. The prices for testing samples taken at production facilities or public sales outlets are invoiced on the basis of the price lists of the respective VdS laboratory. Upon request, VdS will provide 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 production facilities whose management system has been certified by the VdS certification body, product surveillance measures are carried out as far as possible within the framework of management system audits. In this case, only a reduced processing fee (exception: safes) and the additional audit time required for product surveillance will be charged, as the correspondence takes place as part of the planning of the management system audit. Travel expenses are covered in full by the management system audit invoice.

If an agreed product monitoring measure is cancelled or postponed for reasons for which the approval holder or certificate holder or their production facility is responsible, the following fees will be charged to the approval holder or certificate holder:

– For cancellations/postponements made less than 60 days before the agreed product surveillance measures: 25% of the estimated costs
– For cancellations/postponements made less than 14 days before the agreed product surveillance measures: 50% of the estimated costs
– For cancellations/postponements made less than 7 days before the agreed product surveillance measures: 100% of the estimated costs

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

8.3 Advertising

Manufacturing facilities of VdS-approved/PROVE-certified products may advertise with the approval/certification..

However, it is prohibited to include the VdS trademark or variations thereof, or VdS or the approval/certification as such in the company name. When advertising with VdS certification, the content of the text on the certification document must be reproduced correctly and must not be used in a manner that violates competition law.

The relevant specifications on the certificates must be observed. Advertising may only be carried out using the company name stated in the certificate/certification of the manufacturing facility for approved/certified products.

The VdS-/PROVE-logo may be enlarged or reduced in size while maintaining its proportions. It must not be smaller than a minimum height of 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, unaltered reproduction of the certificate.

If the company wishes to indicate that the VdS certification body is accredited, the following wording must 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.

The requirements of the VdS 6005 guidelines must be observed.

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

8.4 On-site assessments

In order to be able to carry out specialist assessments and inspections properly, the client undertakes, when placing the order, to grant the inspectors from the VdS certification body unrestricted access to the company premises and the associated technical supply rooms and administrative rooms necessary for them to perform their tasks.

The client further undertakes to grant the inspectors from 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 will be treated as strictly confidential. Without the written consent of the client, the documents will not be made available to third parties or reproduced. 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 grant higher authorities (e.g. representatives of accreditation bodies) access to documents relating to individual processes.

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