



Designation: E2107 – 06 (Reapproved 2014)

Standard Practice for Environmental Regulatory Compliance Audits¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2107; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 *Purpose*—This practice² identifies minimum requirements for environmental regulatory compliance audits (audits). It also provides information on the terms and procedures associated with audits as practiced in the United States of America (USA) and other jurisdictions subject to the laws thereof. It provides a reference to which interested parties may refer for definition and description of accepted audit terms and procedures.

1.2 Background:

1.2.1 *Awareness of Benefits Associated with Audits*—Various benefits have been attributed to audits. These benefits may include a better understanding of the compliance status of a facility or organization, identification of opportunities for environmental management systems improvements, reduction or elimination of potential legal and financial liabilities when implemented as part of a comprehensive compliance management program, better communications and improved relationships with governmental agencies, communities, and other stakeholders, providing information for development of both short-term and long-term environmental expenditures, and education of employees.

1.2.2 *Awareness of Risks Associated with Audits*—It is also important to recognize that certain risks have been associated with audits. These risks may be managed and controlled by giving thoughtful consideration to the audit process before beginning an audit. These risks may include increased potential legal and financial liabilities for the audited entity if audit findings are not corrected in a timely manner, disclosure of confidential business information or trade secrets, inadvertent admissions against interest because of the wording of audit

findings, disclosure of audit findings intended to be kept confidential under audit privilege laws or attorney-client privilege or work product doctrine, and inaccurate audit findings.

1.2.3 *Awareness of Legal Issues*—A number of important legal issues are associated with audits. Example legal issues include the qualification for one or more evidentiary privileges, the qualification for limited immunity, the protection of trade secrets and confidential information, the application of a number of government policies associated with environmental audits (including federal and state programs that provide incentives for detecting, disclosing, and correcting potential violations through auditing), the form and language of audit reports, the necessity of reporting certain information to the government (either federal, state, or local agencies), the potential liability of auditors, and the importance of promptly addressing issues identified during audits. Prior to initiating and during an audit, interested parties should consider potential legal issues and consult legal counsel or other experts as appropriate.

1.3 *Organization*—This practice is organized in the following manner:

	Section
Scope	1
Referenced Documents	2
Terminology	3
Significance and Use	4
Responsibilities	5
Auditor Qualifications and Staffing	6
The Audit Process	7
Evaluation and Report Preparation	8
Keywords	9

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:³

- E1527 Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process
- E1528 Practice for Limited Environmental Due Diligence: Transaction Screen Process
- E2365 Guide for Environmental Compliance Performance Assessment

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E50 on Environmental Assessment, Risk Management and Corrective Action and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E50.05 on Environmental Risk Management.

Current edition approved May 1, 2014. Published July 2014. Originally approved in 2000. Last previous edition approved in 2006 as E2107 – 06. DOI: 10.1520/E2107-06R14.

² As used herein, a “Standard” is a document that has been developed and established within the consensus principles of the Society and that meets the approval requirements of ASTM procedures and regulations. A “Guide” is a compendium of information or a series of options that does not recommend a specific course of action. A guide increases the awareness of information and approaches in a given subject area. A “Practice” in contrast, is a definitive set of instructions for performing one or more specific operations that does not produce a test result. See *Form and Style for ASTM Standards*.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard’s Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

2.2 ISO Standards:

ISO 14010 Guidelines for Environmental Auditing—General Principles⁴

ISO 14011 Guidelines for Environmental Auditing—Audit Procedures—Auditing of Environmental Management Systems⁴

ISO 14012 Guidelines for Environmental Auditing—Qualification Criteria for Environmental Auditors⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 *action plan*—a plan to address audit findings that describes planned response actions, parties responsible for their execution, and expected completion dates.

3.1.2 *audit authority*—the entity or body that authorizes, or initiates, the audit process. The audit authority may be internal or external to the audited entity.

3.1.3 *audit criteria*—enforceable environmental requirements that are applicable to an audited entity. Examples include laws, regulations, orders, and permits.

3.1.4 *audit data*—information obtained during an audit to support audit findings.

3.1.5 *audit finding*—a statement of audited entity conditions at the time of the audit compared to audit criteria. Audit findings shall be based upon verifiable audit data and may be either positive or negative with respect to audit criteria.

3.1.6 *audit objective(s)*—broad statement(s) of what the audit intends to accomplish.

3.1.7 *audit plan*—documentation that describes the audit. Elements that should be included or referenced in the audit plan are: the audit objective; audit scope; identities of the auditing entity, audit team, and audit authority; audit schedule; auditor health and safety issues; audit report preparation; record retention and management requirements; logistics; working papers management; a process for promptly communicating auditor concerns for potential environmental or regulatory impact including concerns requiring further evaluation; special conditions or requirements; and whatever measures, if any, desired to maximize audit confidentiality.

3.1.8 *audit purpose*—reason for the audit.

3.1.9 *audit protocol*—a list of issues or questions designed to address the audit objective(s) based upon audit criteria.

3.1.10 *audit report*—a written summary of audit findings that is objective, clear, concise, constructive, and timely.

3.1.11 *audit scope*—a description of what is to be audited. The audit scope shall include a description of the period under review, the audited entity, and the audit criteria.

3.1.12 *audit team*—one or more auditors responsible for conducting an audit. The audit team may be supported by technical experts and auditors-in-training.

3.1.13 *audited entity*—a facility, organization, or part thereof, that is the subject of an audit.

3.1.14 *auditing entity*—the organization that provides auditors.

3.1.15 *auditor*—a person qualified to conduct an audit.

3.1.16 *environmental regulatory compliance audit (audit)*—a systematic, documented, and objective review of an audited entity to evaluate its compliance status relative to audit criteria.

3.1.17 *independence*—a condition characterized by organizational standing where an auditor is free to conduct an audit without being controlled or influenced by others.

3.1.18 *lead auditor*—an auditor designated to lead and manage the audit.

3.1.19 *objectivity*—a condition characterized by the absence of bias, influences, and conflicts of interest that affect or have the potential to compromise audit findings.

3.1.20 *open issues*—potential audit findings that cannot be verified or resolved without additional information.

3.1.21 *period under review*—the time interval over which conditions at the audited entity are evaluated against audit criteria.

3.1.22 *physical inspection*—first hand observation and assessment of audited entity conditions.

3.1.23 *records*—documentation and other forms of recorded information.

3.1.24 *regulatory entities*—organizations that have the legal authority to develop, implement, administer, or enforce audit criteria. For example, federal, state, tribal, or local government.

3.1.25 *working papers*—paper and electronic documentation developed by an auditor from observations, record reviews, and interviews during an audit.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 *Intended Use*—This practice is intended for use by parties who wish to perform or direct an audit, or rely upon audit findings or an audit report. Such use includes audits by internal and external auditors.

4.2 *Other Audit Criteria*—Other audit criteria may be included in the audit scope if specified in the audit plan. Examples include safety and health requirements, and technical, operational, and management requirements.

4.3 *Related ASTM Standards*—This practice is related to Practice **E1527**, which addresses CERCLA liability, and Practice **E1528**, which addresses due diligence for commercial real estate. A number of terms and procedures from these practices are similar to terms and procedures associated with this practice but they may not be the same. Guide **E2365** addresses environmental compliance assessment and may be an appropriate tool for some environmental regulatory compliance audits. The user is advised that Guide **E2365** is not an all-encompassing compliance assessment tool.

4.3.1 *Not Interchangeable*—Although distantly related to Practices **E1527** and **E1528**, this practice is designed to achieve different results. Therefore, these practices shall not be used interchangeably with, or in place of, this practice.

⁴ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.