



AQA International Newsletter

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AQA International News Flash



AQA International is now a proud member of the Central South Carolina Alliance which specializes in helping organizations where significant business investment, location of available and suitable industrial real estate, knowledge of local laws and policies, access to financial resources and community leaders is important. The Central SC Alliance covers 12 counties and two municipal regions. For more information on the Central SC Alliance please visit www.centralsc.org.

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Featured Client



Lang-Mekra North America, an independent company of the Mekra Group, is a manufacturer of rear view vision systems for commercial vehicles. This North American facility also houses the primary engineering, research and design operations for the Western Hemisphere. Behind the doors of its growing 160,000 square foot facility in Ridgeway, South Carolina, the story of Lang-Mekra unfolds every day in the lives of its employees and the quality of their work. As a technology-based company, with its primary focus on innovation and the design of high-quality products, the Mekra Group has achieved a position of global leadership in its industry.

From its founding in 1994, Lang-Mekra North America has grown from a management vanguard of five employees to a workforce of more than 300. Fully-equipped engineering, quality and testing departments supports the development of new design and product innovations for customers worldwide. With the addition of an ex-

panded administrative area in May 1999 and plant expansions in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2006 Lang-Mekra is looking toward the future with the capability to address the growing needs of current and prospective customers.

Perhaps the most striking thing that a visitor to Lang-Mekra would notice is the feeling of family that is at the root of the company's history and growth. The original company, established in Furth, Germany in 1932, was the vision of Hans and Frieda Lang, the grandparents of Lang-Mekra North America's Managing Director, Sabine Lang. The heartbeat of Lang-Mekra is this family, and its life is lived in its extension, from the organization of bi-annual company family events to the provision of comprehensive benefits and childcare packages for all employees. At the company-sponsored Palmetto Montessori School of Ridgeway, just 1/2 mile away from the production facility, the future impact of the Lang-Mekra family can be seen and felt - high quality

early childhood education opens worlds of possibility to community and employee children.

When a company begins by valuing its employees in this way, everyone benefits. Lang-Mekra North America's "family" produces the world's highest quality, most technologically advanced mirror systems for its growing list of customers. Lang-Mekra has achieved ISO 9000:2000, ISO 14001, ISO/TS 16949 and ISO/IEC 17025 certification. In 1999 and 2002 was named South Carolina's Manufacturer of the Year for its outstanding dedication to product quality and, as the company policy states, "Taking the Ideal and Making it Real," in all areas of the operation.

Internationally Speaking....



June 25, 2008 was a great day in the history of AQA International's global business. AQA International executive management along with many local and regional officials participated in the opening ceremony for the AQA International Asia Pacific Center. John Xuan, President of AQA AP, took center stage for the festivities. The ceremony opened two new buildings for AQA

AP operations. Building 1, a 21,000 square foot office space, houses the management system certification business and Building 2, a 40,000 office and laboratory space, will house the product conformity assessment and inspection business. AQA AP is growing rapidly and it's pleasing to have such successful operations in the Asia Pacific region. If you have suppliers in this region and would like AQA to assist you with supplier development or management please contact Chuck Howell (chowell@aqausa.com).

Did You Know?

ISO 9001:2008 is being submitted for voting as a Final Draft International Standard and, subject to formal approval by the ISO membership, the publication of the revised version should be in the October-November 2008 time frame.

The proposed ISO 9001:2008 does not introduce additional requirements compared to the last edition in 2000 and does not change the intent of ISO 9001:2000.

For more information please visit the [ISO Website](#).



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Who to Contact at AQA International

If you are wondering who to contact about your certification or services we offer please feel free to call **800-281-4384**.

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Accessible, Understandable Registration



Technical Tip....

New Accreditation Rules for AQA

A new standard has been issued that applies to all management system certification bodies (CB's). The standard is ISO/IEC 17021, "Conformity assessment—Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems". ISO/IEC 17021:2006 was published on September 15, 2006 with CB address of all requirements by September 15, 2008. AQA has addressed all requirements and is currently awaiting our new accreditation to ISO/IEC 17021:2006.

The intent of this new standard was to consolidate several certification body rules documents and address current industry issues.

What are the significant changes from the previous rules?

1. Guiding principals for CB's have been defined as: impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality, responsiveness to complaints
2. Increased requirements regarding CB and audit team competence
3. Initial certification requires a two-stage audit process. The stage 1 audit reviews documentation and determines readiness for the certification or stage 2 audit. At least part of the stage 1 audit is recommended be carried out at client's premises
4. Recertification audits may need a stage 1 audit if there have been significant changes. Nonconformities identified during recertification audits must have correction and corrective actions implemented prior to expiration of certification
5. Additional requirements addressing CB impartiality include:
A CB shall not outsource audits to a management system consultancy organization
A CB shall not provide internal audits to its certified clients.
Personnel records shall include any relevant consultancy services
Potential clients to provide information concerning any management system consultancy received

How do changes affect AQA certified clients ?

Nearly all of the changes are transparent to certified clients. In fact, AQA had addressed most of the changes prior to the issue of ISO/IEC 17021:2006. One impact to certified clients is that planning and scheduling of recertification audits will have to allow enough time to implement correction and corrective actions prior to expiration of certification

Training

Come join us in Columbia, SC for public training courses geared to meet your needs. Flyers and registration forms will be sent out bi-weekly with the course details and requirements.

On-site training is also available for all listed public courses. If this interests you, please contact Lisa Shaw at lshaw@aqausa.com for a quotation.



Month	Date	Class	Days	Cost per Person
July	22-23	EMS Internal Auditor	2	\$595
August	14	Effective Management Review Meetings	1	\$200
	18-22	RAB-QSA ISO Lead Auditor	5	\$1600
	29	Lean Practices Informational Forum	1	\$200
September	3-5	AS 9100 Internal Auditor	3	\$1000
	11	New Standards Overview (ISO 9000:2008, ISO 22000, ISO 27001, ISO 13485)	1	\$200
	TBD	Informational Internal Process Auditing	1	\$200
October	8-9	ISO Internal Auditor	2	\$595
	13-17	RAB-QSA EMS Lead Auditor	5	\$1600
	27-28	EMS Internal Auditor	2	\$595
November	3-7	RAB-QSA TS Lead Auditor	5	\$1600
	17-19	TS Internal Auditor & Core Tools	3	\$795
	TBD	Problem Solving Skills	1	\$200
December	TBD	ISO 13485 Internal Auditing	2	\$695
	TBD	RAB-QSA ISO 13485 Lead Auditor	5	\$1600
	TBD	Finding ROI in Your Management System	1	\$200