



## 5 TIPS TO IMPROVE A VIRTUAL INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal audits are a key, often required, component of a quality management system. They provide an objective mechanism to ensure your program policies and procedures are performed consistently and correctly. If the program is accredited, the audit may also check compliance with the standards.

The audit is conducted by an independent individual with the required skills to meet the objectives.

*When face-to-face meetings are limited, or impossible, how can you make the most of a virtual audit?*

### **TIP 1: Find the right expertise.**

Experience always contributes to an efficient and effective audit, but it is more important in a virtual environment. An experienced auditor will facilitate a process that meets objectives and provides valuable information to the program's staff and leadership.

### **TIP 2: Spend more time planning the agenda.**

Planning the agenda becomes more important when virtual meetings are your only option. Planning ensures the right staff are available to address questions resulting from the desk review and demonstrate key processes. A well-planned agenda also combines similar topics, or those assigned to the same staff, into virtual sessions to eliminate redundancy.

### **TIP 3: Schedule shorter sessions over multiple days.**

Over-taxing the auditor and program staff with day-long virtual meetings leads to fatigue. Instead, divide the virtual audit into two-hour sessions over multiple days or a full week. This approach also allows the auditor to combine similar topics.

### **TIP 4: Set expectations for use of video and screen sharing.**

Video sharing helps to facilitate better dialogue and keeps the participants engaged, but not everyone is a fan. Set the expectation for video and screen sharing in the audit planning process and communicate it clearly in the agenda and pre-meeting communications.

### **TIP 5: Don't assume everyone knows how to use your meeting platform.**

It feels like we are all experts at using the various online meeting platforms, but don't make that assumption. It can be helpful to add 15 – 20 minutes to the first audit meeting to troubleshoot technology issues, walk through any questions, and make sure you can facilitate the meeting effectively. Having a back-up plan if (or when) your meeting connection falters, and communicating it to the participants in advance, can avoid some stressful moments.