

Getting Your Organization Ready for Remote Auditing

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Every year, the accounting profession takes another evolutionary step to meet the changing demands of our technologically advancing world. The current health crisis has highlighted the importance of up-to-date technology to help perform work efficiently and effectively from any location. Indeed, within one generation of auditors, we have gone from paper audits to the capability to conduct audits remotely from start to finish. One of the major initiatives of the accounting profession (as exemplified by the [NASBA](#) and [AICPA](#)) is to evolve our profession, including the way that a CPA's skills and competencies are advancing to meet the oncoming demands.

Your organization may have started to consider the steps to prepare for more remote auditing capabilities (see my prior article, [“What to Expect from Remote Auditing”](#)). During the past year, some clients have provided us with read-only access to their financial systems which allows us to minimize additional requests. In addition, when we had this access, our teams were able to move the location of a day of audit work from onsite to remote work from our office. Remote auditing has benefits for you as the client by improving efficiency with fewer disruptions. If you were not part of these experiences in the past year, you might be asking what you can do have your organization participate.

Here are some general reminders and ideas to help with the transition:

- Being prepared for the remote audit is critical to a successful audit (and to take advantage of the remote auditing capabilities). Review the audit request list and thoroughly vet the documents and other information prior to handing it over to your auditor. This can shave off time that the audit team will need to be onsite and reduces additional questions and requests.
- As part of the preparation for your audit, it is important to communicate with your lead auditor about the specific audit requests that are readily available electronically (or can easily be scanned). We understand that there are some items that would need to be audited in person. If the documentation can be easily moved and reviewed, by the auditor offsite, consider having the auditor pick up the audit documentation on their way to our office.
- Be sure to work out a schedule for status update communications with your lead auditor. Depending on the kind of audit required (i.e. financial statement, test of controls, state or federal compliance, etc.), the frequency of communication can vary, so discuss with your audit team the frequency, method and people who should be involved. Regular calls, online meetings or emails can help you stay on top of outstanding items, know what work has been completed to date, and understand what to expect next.
- You can still expect to participate in interviews with your auditors about controls, fraud, and others. This can be achieved with pre-established days and times for the audit team to come onsite or remotely such as an online video meeting.
- Typically a remote audit experience will allow for less disruptions of your business operations by the auditors. For example, a scheduled phone call can replace an auditor visit to update our understanding of internal controls. In addition, sending electronic documents or having paper copies available for an audit team member to pick up in advance allows the review process to occur offsite and will provide more efficient and focused questions when we are on site.

While it may seem that the audit procedures themselves are easier due to us not being on site as often, we are still working just as diligently (just at a distance) to provide the best quality services while staying up-to-date on changing compliance and reporting requirements. The advantage of remote auditing is that it helps the audit to be more efficient and organized in this changing world. As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, the profession is working to evolve our services in order to bring better quality and more meaningful knowledge to your organization. Please reach out to any member of our

team to inquire about what remote auditing opportunities would work best for your organization.

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