

The Audit Phase

A two-day, in-person audit that checks what the Kick-off and Questionnaire captured against what is actually happening on site, including in the areas most facilities never get around to looking at.

Why This Matters

Documentation and interviews can only go so far. The Audit is where the picture gets tested directly, on the plant floor, during both normal operation and the moments that normal operation does not usually expose. Because the Kick-off and Questionnaire have already narrowed down where the risk likely sits, the Audit is targeted rather than a generic walk-through.

What to Expect

The Audit runs over two days, deliberately structured to cover two different states of the facility, since operational hygiene risk does not only show up during a normal shift. Across both days, it follows the complete production flow, from goods receiving, through storage, to production and filling. I carry a running checklist throughout, filled in as we go rather than reconstructed from memory afterward.

Preparing for the Audit

Ahead of the audit, you receive a preparation document from me. It explains how the audit will run, including how samples are taken, roughly how many samples to expect, and which growth media are likely needed.

Having the right people present matters as much as the audit itself. From maintenance, someone who can open pipes, pumps, and filters. From Quality Assurance, someone who can take the samples, using transport swabs, and then plate them promptly once all samples are collected, so they can be evaluated without unnecessary delay.

The Two Days

Day 1 — A Standard Working Day

A full walkthrough of the entire facility, across the whole process chain, in detail: goods receiving, storage, production, and filling, with everything in between. This is the facility as it actually operates day to day, not a staged walkthrough. Ideally, it also shows how machine operators and other staff engage with hygiene in practice, not just how procedures describe it.

By the end of Day 1, we agree on which areas will be opened on Day 2, so the right preparations can be made. Depending on what needs opening, this can also mean having machine and equipment operators on hand to operate the relevant equipment.

Day 2 — A Saturday or a Night Shift

Access to areas and conditions that a standard working day does not expose: spaces normally closed outside production hours, and microbiological sampling carried out where it is most representative. This is often where the findings a standard walkthrough would miss actually surface. Which growth media get used with which samples is often decided on the spot, based on what the audit turns up. Prepared forms are filled in directly during the audit for exactly this purpose.

What You Get

An Updated List of Findings and Proposals

The audit adds directly to the running list of findings and proposed solutions that started in the Questionnaire phase, since this is where things like CIP rinsing options and actual cleaning practice become visible for the first time. That list is a living document, growing throughout the project. The audit also generates the input for your sampling plan and operational hygiene plan, but those documents themselves, together with the Process Landscape and the Final Report, are delivered as one package once the Evaluation phase is complete.

Where an engagement is structured around an Extended Kick-off instead of a separate Audit phase, the on-site audit still produces its own Audit Report at that stage. Which applies to your engagement is confirmed during scoping.

Next Steps

The findings from the Audit feed into the Evaluation phase, where they are scored into the Operational Hygiene Index itself. That is also where the full set of documents gets put together: the sampling plan, the operational hygiene plan, the Process Landscape, and the Final Report, delivered to you as one package.

Book a call to discuss your facility and how the Audit would be scoped for it: zeeg.me/grosseronald.

