

Concept and Types of Environmental Audit

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Abstract:

At its core, an environmental audit evaluates a company's environmental performance. Environmental audits can be done on specific procedures and operational areas to assess their effectiveness and compliance with environmental rules and regulations. Environmental audits are in place to ensure companies do what they can to preserve the environment. Additionally, these audits aim to control a company's environmental practices and ensure compliance with the different regulations that may apply to them.

Introduction:

An **environmental audit** is a systematic and objective process used to assess an organization's activities, processes, and systems to determine their impact on the environment. It evaluates whether environmental policies, laws, standards, and internal procedures are being properly followed and whether environmental risks are effectively managed.

In simple terms, an environmental audit checks how well an organization is protecting the environment and complying with environmental regulations.

An **environmental audit** is a type of evaluation intended to identify environmental compliance and management system implementation gaps, along with related corrective actions. In this way they perform an analogous (similar) function to financial audits. There are generally two different types of environmental audits: compliance audits and management systems audits. Compliance audits tend to be the primary type in the US or within US-based multinational.

Keywords: *Environmental Audit, organization, processes, compliance, management*

Objectives of the Research Study:

1. To study and understood the concept of Environmental Audit.
2. To study of types of Environmental Audit.

Research Methodology:

The primary source of data collection in this research paper is the secondary data. The available information on **Environmental Audit** has been extensively used to complete the

research paper. All the available Journals, Related books, Web, Articles, Publish and unpublished information and Papers provided necessary information to the finalize the research paper.

Definition:

1. “**Environmental audit** is a systematic, documented, periodic, and objective evaluation of how well environmental organization, management, and equipment are performing in safeguarding the environment”
2. “An **environmental audit** is an independent examination of an organization’s environmental performance to ensure compliance with environmental laws and to identify opportunities for improvement”.

Types of Environmental Audit

1. Compliance Audit

This audit checks whether an organization is complying with environmental laws, regulations, standards, and permit conditions.

Example: Compliance with pollution control laws, waste disposal rules, and emission standards.

2. Environmental Management System (EMS) Audit

This audit evaluates the effectiveness of an organization’s Environmental Management System, such as ISO 14001, to ensure environmental policies and procedures are properly implemented.

3. Performance (or Operational) Audit

This audit assesses the environmental performance of an organization by measuring resource use, pollution levels, and efficiency of environmental controls.

Energy efficiency, water usage, waste reduction ect.

4. Functional Audit

This audit focuses on specific environmental functions or activities, such as waste management, air pollution control, or water treatment systems.

5. Site Audit

A site-specific audit conducted before purchasing, selling, or developing land to identify environmental risks and liabilities.

6. Due Diligence Audit

Conducted during mergers, acquisitions, or investments to assess potential environmental liabilities and risks.

7. Product or Life-Cycle Audit

Evaluates the environmental impact of a product throughout its life cycle—from raw material extraction to disposal.

8. Risk Audit

Identifies environmental risks and evaluates the effectiveness of controls in preventing environmental accidents and hazards.

Conclusion:

Environmental audits aim to accomplish numerous goals. From a broader point of view, these audits assess a company's environmental impact. It can show managerial teams what they can do to improve environmental sustainability, prove which environmental processes positively affect productivity and efficiency, and find pinpoint risks before they manifest themselves.

However, the main goal of environmental audits is to ensure compliance with environmental laws. Different territories and jurisdictions have their own environmental regulations, rules, and requirements that all companies need to follow. Failure to comply with these rules and regulations can result in severe consequences such as hefty fines and more, depending on the jurisdiction.

Environmental audits are crucial in standardizing these compliance measures across the organization. Through environmental audits, companies can understand where training is needed and whether they have the right control systems in place. They can also determine whether the company has adequate streams of communication in regard to environmental compliance.

For ISO 14001 certification, companies must go through checks conducted by an independent third party. However, before the third-party inspection, companies can perform internal audits to gauge where the company is and whether they can qualify for the certification during the inspection.

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