

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) has emphasized that annual organic inspections must go on, though certifying agencies have been asked to take a more creative approach to inspections. OneCert plans to continue annual inspections while taking steps to keep food, producers, and inspectors safe by using a combination of delayed inspections, records audits, and shortened on-site inspections.

For most operations, we will be proceeding with organic inspections that are divided into two sections. The two sections are the Remote Records Audit and the On-Site Inspection. The steps involved to complete each section are:

1. Remote Records Audit

- An inspector contacts you to request your records
- You submit your records within the requested time frame (typically 2 days).
- The inspector reviews your submitted records and completes the required audits
- The inspector schedules a phone call or video conference to discuss your records, get clarification, and ask for additional records as needed
- An Exit Interview is completed and signed by both parties

In cases where it is not possible to conduct records audits remotely, OneCert may allow the records audit to take place on site if the client and inspector mutually agree, and additional safety measures are taken to minimize spread of the Covid-19 virus. This may include practices like isolating records in a box for at least 48 hours prior to the inspector's arrival and preparing an isolated space for the inspector to review records (e.g. a folding table outside).

2. On-Site Inspection

- A shortened on-site inspection will follow the records audit when it is safe to do so
 - If possible, the on-site portion may quickly follow the records audit
 - For others, the on-site inspection may be postponed until it is safer to do so
- Both clients and inspectors will be required to:
 - Sign agreements prior to the on-site inspection & submit them to OneCert
 - Abide by any area restrictions and health guidance
 - Wear masks and any other required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Maintain at least six feet of separation
- The inspector will focus on portions of your operation that can only be verified on site, such as:
 - Tour of fields and/or facilities, warehouses and bins, and storage segregation
 - Equipment, cleaners and sanitizers, and pest control
 - Confirming records reviewed during prior records audit
 - Buffers, risks from adjacent land use, NRBC observations, field plan accuracy
 - Visual verification of inventory audited during records audit
 - Follow up on any issues of concern identified from the records audit
- The onsite inspection will also conclude with an Exit Interview, signed by both parties

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE?

- Keep an eye out for and respond promptly to any requests received during normal business hours
- Treat requests and scheduling for remote record audits as seriously as you would an on-site inspection
- Make your records inspection-ready. Please:
 - Scan or take photos of hardcopy records so they may be sent electronically, upon request
 - If you can only send records by mail, make sure you keep the originals and only send copies
- Be sure to notify OneCert if you get sick or anything changes!
- Periodically check the [OneCert Blog](#) for updates and other helpful articles.
- Contact OneCert with any questions