

RACG Member Onboarding Guide

Purpose

FSC group certification makes it easier for small businesses to become FSC certified. Group certification enables group members to share some of the costs related to certification, and also reduces the workload of group members by placing a significant part of the administrative duties on the group manager (AGC). This document outlines the role and expectations of Member's within the RACG certificate.

Application & Invoice

Upon receipt of your completed application documents, RACG will verify your affiliate membership, and issue an invoice to your company.

Access to RACG Documentation & Training

Once payment is received, AGC will provide the Primary contact with access to our RACG documentation packet and access to our online training portal. The training videos go hand in hand with your documentation set; we recommend completing the documentation as you watch the videos. Once you have completed the videos and documentation, please contact us if you have further questions.

Assigning an Auditor

AGC will assign an auditor to conduct your assessment review. Assessments are typically scheduled 8-12 weeks from receiving your documentation packet. Rush requests can be accommodated but will cost you additional fees.

Assessment

The documentation provided to you, along with training, needs to be completed prior to your assessment. Failure to complete these documents may prevent you from becoming certified quickly. See *FSC Annual Review Preparation* document for what to expect during your assessment. If there are any Major CARs (Corrective Action Requests) issued to you during your assessment, you cannot be added to the certificate until those are resolved.

Post-Assessment

Shortly after the assessment, your auditor will provide you with a draft assessment report. Review this for any errors. You will also receive a final assessment report shortly after. If there are any errors or concerns, please reply and bring them to our attention. Otherwise, if you approve the report simply let us know by reply email. You must approve the report to proceed to the certification stage. Once we have your approval, we will notify our certifier to add you to the RACG group certificate. Our certifier usually adds you within 2-3 business days.

Certification

Please note that you are not certified and cannot make FSC claims or sales until you receive your certificate code from us. We will provide that to you as soon as our certifier notifies us that you are live on the FSC database. This process usually takes 2-3 business days.

You will also receive applicable FSC trademark information once you are officially certified.

Following Years

Members are required to participate in an annual review. At the end of each calendar year, AGC will notify you of your target month for the following calendar year audit. Each year you will receive a renewal email from us, approximately 120 days prior to your targeted annual review month. The internal review process, in terms of internal reviews, will be similar.

If there are revisions to FSC standards or policies, AGC will provide updated documentation templates and guidance.

External Audits

The RACG program, just like your company, has to go through an annual audit. This means every year, the CB randomly selects a few members for a comparative audit to our internal review. This means, some years, you will be audited twice. Once by our team, and once by the CB auditor. They are collecting their own data to compare against our findings, to make sure the RACG certificate is performing well. This requires more of your time if selected, but there is no additional cost. The scope of your certificate (SFI, for example), the number of members in the group, and how well we collectively did during our last audit, will all impact how many members are externally audited every year. You could be randomly selected every year, every ten years, or something in between. We do our best to minimize and make sure these external audits are spread out as much as possible but as you know, but it is a necessary and required part of participating in our group certificate.

CVAs (CAR Verification Audits)

If your organization receives a Major CAR (Corrective Action Request), it is required by FSC that a CVA be completed within 90 days. RACG does not charge for your 1st CVA, but any additional CVAs will incur a charge.

Notifications

You will receive notifications from us throughout the year, including but not limited to FSC standards updates, group password changes, etc. Please be sure to whitelist us to ensure you receive all of our emails.

Member Expectations

It is a requirement in the FSC standard that companies are responsive to Group Managers, CBs, and FSC (should they ever reach out). Be sure to assign a Primary contact who can respond in a timely manner.

Each year AGC coordinates hundreds of locations and bundles members in proximity, creating Target Months. These target months are relayed to companies before the start of the year. Bundling audits together is one of the main ways we save you money. Failure to respond to renewal requests may cause you to miss out on the bundled audit, which means you may have to pay additional fees for our auditors to travel to your location.

The best way to avoid additional fees is to make sure you have an assigned Primary contact, and a backup contact if necessary. Any changes to your company's contacts should be relayed to RACG and AGC as soon as possible.