

How to Conduct a Remote Audit

Discover five best practices in Remote Collaboration



ABOUT REMOTE AUDITS

For pharmaceutical, manufacturing, food safety, and various other industries, regular audits and inspections are critical for maintaining safety, quality, and compliance. Whether it be to prepare for an external audit by a regulatory body, inspect a supplier's process, or ensure the safety of a facility, audits depend on an inspector's ability to travel to and examine a location, facility, or environment.

During COVID, as world travel and in-person meetings shut down, industries that rely on audits had to improvise quickly. While some companies deployed standard videoconferencing in place of in-person audits, others utilized 360° technology to give the inspector the same context and freedom to look around as if they were physically present. While remote audits and virtual inspections became a temporary solution to keep businesses moving through the uncertainty of COVID, many industries have realized the cost and time-saving benefits of a remote or "hybrid" audit protocol. In fact, the Parenteral Drug Association (PDA) research revealed that 62% of respondents said that they are fundamentally shifting how they perform audits.

Remote audits performed using 360° technology are as close to the "real thing" as possible, reducing any doubts and ensuring quality from afar. However, there are still some critical steps to consider when performing a remote audit.

STEP 1: CHOOSE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

Traditional videoconferencing platforms successfully replace face-to-face meetings but lack the ability to facilitate a site-specific meeting. A true remote audit must be as close to in-person as possible if the same safety and quality standards are to be maintained. Leveraging 360° capture, remote collaboration technology gives auditors the context of the entire space, providing a layer of assurance needed to ensure quality, safety, and compliance. When considering the right platform for the job, it is crucial to ensure the following components:

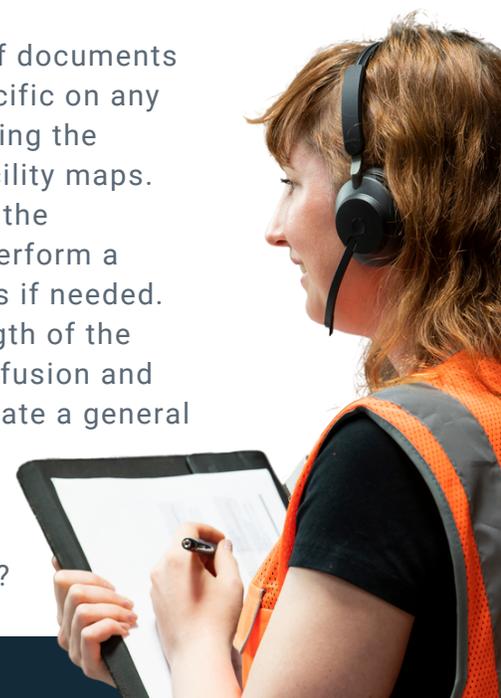
- **Real-Time Video and Audio.** Pre-recorded video does not suffice for remote audits. An inspector must be able to examine body language to assess nervousness or confidence and interact with people on location.
- **Collaboration.** It is essential to find a technology that enables seamless collaboration between auditors and on-site personnel. Avatour's 360° platform provides the ability to see and hear on-site or remote participants as well as view a particular document, file, or photo without interrupting the tour.
- **360° View.** To maintain transparency and trust, a 360° virtual inspection platform gives viewers the freedom to choose what they are looking at, rather than relying on a static POV dictated by the session host. The power of the full picture ensures that inspectors can be as thorough as they need to be.
- **High-Resolution.** It is frustrating and counterproductive to sort through pixelated images and lagging video. Another important factor for remote inspections is a high resolution capability to ensure an understanding of the full context of a remote environment.



STEP 2: PREPARE FOR THE REMOTE AUDIT

The key to a successful remote audit is to prepare thoroughly. While virtual inspections are a proactive substitute for in-person visits, they require extra preparation to run smoothly. Check out our Virtual Inspection Preparedness Checklist for a complete list or consider the items below:

- Identify the goal of the inspection. What are you trying to achieve? What are the “must haves” and “nice to haves?”
- Identify SOPs and documentation. Prepare and share a list of documents required at least 2-3 weeks prior to the remote audit. Be specific on any documents that must be reviewed beforehand or present during the inspection, including questionnaires, checklists, SOPs, or facility maps.
- Consider internet access. It is critical to proactively validate the connection quality of the facility. Check if wifi is available, perform a bandwidth test if possible, and consider LTE wireless options if needed.
- Set the schedule. Be sure to determine the schedule and length of the inspection before joining a remote session. To eliminate confusion and downtime, plan who is leading the remote inspection and create a general outline.
- Consider data and recording. Understand the privacy protocols with your particular inspection. Is recording allowed? How is the data being recorded, stored, and shared?



STEP 3: DOUBLE CHECK

Since preparation is key to a successful remote audit, reconfirm details and plans within a few days of the given event. Review the confidentiality information, ensure all NDAs and proper paperwork have been completed, and run through the schedule one more time.

STEP 4: DURING THE AUDIT

Begin the audit by reviewing the purpose and scope of the meeting since attendees may be joining a remote session from around the world. Reference the communication plan one more time to ensure everybody is on the same page, and no lingering questions can detract from the protocol. Other helpful tips include:



- Request a copy of their opening presentation for your records.
- Stick to the schedule but allow time for flexibility so that attendees can be as thorough as needed.
- Be transparent – share observations as you go and clarify anything needed before closing out the session.
- Take detailed notes – with a platform like Avatour, you can pull up documents or checklists and take photos during the meeting.



STEP 5: CLOSE OUT

Transparency is paramount to maintaining trust before, during, and after a remote audit. As the session draws to a close, take an extra moment to review what was covered and any relevant observations. Communicate the process for reporting and any follow-up actions required.

IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion, even as the world opens up and travel resumes, industries have realized the significant benefits of utilizing remote presence technology to substitute for audits and inspections. By planning ahead and selecting the right technology, professionals save money and time on travel, prevent auditor burnout, and assess compliance or safety status while in the comfort of their own homes.

To learn more about Avatour's 360° platform or to receive a personalized demonstration of our technology, [click here](#).

ABOUT AVATOUR

The Avatour platform gives users the freedom to choose their point of view when it comes to inspections, tours, and training.

With the Avatour platform, remote participants can interact in real time with people who are there in person. The innovative 360° technology saves time by allowing for meetings to occur between sites without requiring travel.

