



RESPONSIBLE
JEWELLERY
COUNCIL

RJC MEMBER CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

V1.0 FEBRUARY 2025

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ENQUIRIES, FEEDBACK OR COMPLAINTS

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Our vision is a responsible worldwide supply chain that promotes trust in the global jewellery and watch industry.

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is a not-for-profit standard-setting organisation founded in 2005. The RJC plays a crucial role in promoting responsible practices and ethical standards within the jewellery and watch industry, bringing together member companies of all sizes, from mining to retail. Through the RJC Code of Practices (COP), the RJC Chain of Custody (COC) and the RJC Laboratory Grown Materials Standard (LGMS), hereinafter also collectively referred to as the RJC standards, and through third-party certification and collaborative initiatives, the RJC aims to build trust, transparency and sustainability across the entire jewellery and watch supply chain, ultimately benefiting consumers, communities and the environment.

The RJC's assurance system works to ensure a robust and credible evaluation process that supports members to implement and maintain the RJC standards as a pathway to addressing sustainability best practices, responsible sourcing and supply chain due diligence.

This is a version-controlled document and the RJC reserves the right to revise it based on implementation experience and emerging good practice. The official language of the RJC is English. Translations of various relevant RJC documents are available in a range of languages and are published on the [RJC website](#), as applicable. In the case of inconsistency between versions, reference shall default to the official language version.

DISCLAIMER

No guarantee, warranty or representation is made as to the accuracy or completeness of this document and other documents or information sources referenced in it. Use of this document is not intended to, nor does it, replace, contravene or otherwise alter the requirements of any applicable national, state or local governmental statutes, laws, regulations, ordinances or other requirements.

While this document should not be regarded as a complete and authoritative statement on any of the topics covered by it, the requirements enclosed herein are obligatory for members preparing and undergoing RJC audit and certification. Use of this document is neither intended to, nor does it, create, establish or recognise any legally enforceable obligations or rights against the RJC and/or its members or signatories.

Member companies that make RJC-related claims are each responsible for their own compliance with applicable law, at all times, including laws and regulations related to labelling, advertisement, consumer protection and competition or antitrust laws. RJC does not accept liability for any violations of applicable law or any infringement of third-party rights (each a breach) by other organisations, even where such a breach arises in relation to, or in reliance on, any RJC standard, document or other material, recommendation or directive issued by or on behalf of RJC. RJC gives no undertaking, representation or warranty that compliance with an RJC standard, document or other material, recommendation or directive issued by or on behalf of RJC will result in compliance with any applicable law or will prevent any breach from occurring.

The Responsible Jewellery Council is the trading name of the Council for Responsible Jewellery Practices Ltd, which is registered in England and Wales with company number 05449042.

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1. Introduction



1.1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The RJC Member Certification Handbook applies to all RJC members. It outlines essential audit and certification requirements, instruction and guidance to help members understand and prepare for an RJC independent third-party audit, including:

- how members should carry out self-assessments and prepare for audit.
- the process for RJC members achieving RJC certification.

1.2. STATUS AND EFFECTIVE DATE

The RJC Member Certification Handbook (version 1.0 February 2025) was approved by the RJC Board on 29 January 2025 and published on 19 February 2025. This version supersedes all the relevant audit and certification requirements previously detailed in the RJC Assessment Manual and is effective from 1 July 2025 for:

- any RJC audits conducted against any RJC standards as of 1 July 2025, except COP 2019 mid-term reviews, COC 2017 surveillance audits, extensions to scope or provenance claim bolt-on audits conducted under a pre-existing COP/COC certificate. Any audits conducted as part of a pre-existing certificate shall follow the requirements in Assessment Manual version 1.3 December 2020.
- any certificates issued as of 1 July 2025, regardless of whether the audit took place before or after 1 July 2025. The certificates shall be issued by the audit firms as of this date. Any updates to pre-existing COP 2019/COC 2017 certificates following any associated mid-term reviews, surveillance audits, extensions to scope, etc., shall be completed by the RJC, until these certificates expire.

1. Introduction

1.3. KEY CHANGES

- Elimination of one-year COP certificates and COP transition audits.
- Implementation and verification of corrections for all nonconformities and corrective actions for major nonconformities, before certificate issue.
- Recommendation for semi-announced audits under specific limited conditions.
- Audit invalidation.
- Implementation of one mandatory COP/LGMS surveillance audit per certification cycle, at 12-18 months from certificate start date.
- Certificate issue and management, complaints and appeals, completed by the audit firms.
- Initial certification audit to take place within one and a half years of joining, to support achieving certification within two years.
- Six-month timeframe before the certificate expiry date to complete the audit.
- Mandatory submission of the member's self-assessment workbook one month before the audit.
- A new, separate mandatory documentary review stage for initial certification audits (absorbed within the audit planning and preparation time), for the audit firm to assess the member's preparedness for the audit and to communicate any areas of concern that can be addressed before the next stage of the audit.
- Remote audit elements as regular assessment tools and force majeure, subject to eligibility criteria.
- Three months to address critical breaches, the same as major nonconformities.
- Introduction of a three-month grace period after the certificate expiry date, subject to conditions.
- Certificate to be issued by the audit firm within 10 working days of receipt of the member's signed audit report declaration, subject to conditions.
- A provisional audit date to be booked at the closing meeting of the current audit, for the subsequent mandatory audit.
- RJC administrative suspension & termination of membership (overdue fees & audits, lack of response to RJC request of information, documents or action e.g. Annual Relevant Sales (ARS), misuse of RJC logo etc.).

1.4. KEY TERMS

- '(RJC) members' refers to companies who have joined the RJC as commercial members and are seeking certification against the RJC standards.
- '(RJC) audit firms' refers to the independent third-party certification bodies that have applied for and obtained approval to conduct RJC evaluation activities and manage RJC certification.
- '(RJC) auditor(s)' refers to the individual auditors under their control who have been approved to conduct RJC audits.
- '(RJC) audits' refers to evaluation activities including documentation review, interviews, observation, sampling and audits against the RJC standards' requirements, unless otherwise specified.

1. Introduction

1.5. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS¹

The following documents provide normative and/or supporting information to assist members with the implementation of the requirements in this handbook:

- RJC standards, associated guidance, member self-assessment tools.
- [RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors](#).

Further supporting documents, appendices, specialist toolkits and references to assist with the implementation of the requirements in this document can be found on the [RJC website](#) and on the [Member Portal](#), while common terms and acronyms can be found in the [glossary](#); see also Appendix 1, Supporting Documents).



¹ The RJC may periodically update, revise or develop any of these documents, for example to reflect emerging best practice. In all cases, amended documents supersede any previous versions unless otherwise specified. Please see <http://www.responsiblejewellery.com> for the latest version of the RJC documents.

2. Roles and responsibilities



2.1. THE RJC

The RJC is responsible for designing the RJC standards and overseeing the implementation of the certification processes, including conducting additional quality review of audit reports. The RJC shall not act as auditors, undertake audits of members in its own right or issue certificates.

RJC roles and responsibilities:

- Develop, regularly review and update RJC standards and guidance to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose, and communicate such developments to members and auditors.
- Set requirements for audit firms and their auditors to provide, and for members to undergo, RJC auditing and certification.
- Define and oversee implementation of this document via the RJC management team and auditors.
- Offer members and auditors relevant training and support.
- Administer and oversee rules around claims associated with RJC membership status.
- Support and oversee the quality, integrity and credibility of certification processes.
- Host relevant information about members and their certification status on the RJC website.
- Administer the RJC Complaints Mechanism and carry out disciplinary proceedings where required.
- Monitor, evaluate and publicly report on the impacts of RJC certification.
- Engage industry and other stakeholders to build awareness of the value of RJC certification.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.2. THE RJC MEMBERS

RJC members are responsible for ensuring their business practices conform to the RJC standards. An RJC member's roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Comply with the Member Certification Handbook.
- Operate relevant parts of its business, within its defined RJC certification scope, in a way that meets the requirements of the RJC standards.
- Implement the necessary policies and procedures and dedicate resources to ensuring ongoing conformity with these requirements over time.
- Communicate and train personnel about the RJC standards and how to meet them.
- Undertake a self-assessment utilising a tool of its choice to verify its level of conformity.
- Engage an RJC audit firm to carry out its RJC audits within the applicable timeframes.
- Give auditors full access to facilities, personnel and any information and records they need to assess conformity with the RJC standards.
- Ensure RJC auditors are aware of any health, safety, security or other requirements on-site.
- Identify root causes, implement corrections and corrective actions, as appropriate.
- Strive for continual improvement and implementation of best practices.
- Promote responsible business practices within its supply chain.

2.3. THE RJC AUDIT FIRMS AND AUDITORS

RJC audit firms are responsible for independently auditing and verifying whether a member's processes and underpinning management systems conform to the RJC standards, and managing certification, including the certification decision. Note that the auditor's legal relationship is with the member that has engaged them for the audit, not with the RJC. The auditors performing third-party RJC audits for a member or its associated audit firm cannot advise or assist in that member's self-assessment, or in the development of member processes that are required by an RJC standard, as this would be a conflict of interest.

RJC audit firms' and auditors' roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Achieve and maintain approval to conduct RJC audits and issue and manage member certificates.
- Comply with the RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors.
- Conduct independent RJC audits in a timely manner and verify the member's level of conformity with the relevant RJC standard(s), including the member's progress in implementing any corrective actions.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- Verify information included in the member's self-assessment, including the certification scope.
- Identify and grade nonconformities and maintain records for all relevant aspects and outcomes of the RJC audit and certification process.
- Prepare audit reports and share them with the member and the RJC.
- Notify the RJC when submission and implementation of corrections and corrective actions are not completed within the allocated timelines.
- Where a member has demonstrated the relevant level of conformity, make the certificate decision and issue the certificate.
- Implement systems to ensure that surveillance audits and recertifications are scheduled and conducted in a timely manner, or otherwise notify the member and the RJC of any lack of capacity or ability to do so.



3. RJC standards and audits



3.1. THE RJC STANDARDS

The RJC has developed standards that promote responsible business practices throughout the jewellery and watch supply chain, for the materials in RJC scope, against which commercial members shall undergo independent third-party audits by RJC auditors, to achieve a three-year certification.

The RJC standards set the requirements against which members are audited. The standards are supported by definitions and rules in the normative documents, such as the RJC standards' guidance, glossary and appendices.

The applicability of the RJC standard provisions may vary according to the business activities undertaken by the member and its place in the supply chain (see relevant standards and guidance).

3. RJC standards and audits

TABLE 1. RJC STANDARDS

RJC CODE OF PRACTICES (COP) RJC LABORATORY GROWN MATERIALS STANDARD (LGMS)

The RJC Code of Practices (COP) and Laboratory Grown Materials Standard (LGMS), and associated audits and certifications, are mandatory for all the RJC commercial members that handle materials in scope.

The standards define the responsible ethical, human rights, social and environmental practices that all certified RJC members must adhere to, within the jewellery and watch industry.

Members are expected to undergo their initial certification audit against the requirements of the COP/LGMS within one and a half years of joining and achieve certification against the same within two years of joining the RJC, to demonstrate responsible business practices.

Members are certified as a whole and for all materials in the RJC COP/LGMS scope, rather than by entity/facility and/or material. Once certification against the RJC mandatory standard(s) is achieved, maintaining it is required to retain RJC membership. See [RJC membership](#) for more information.

RJC CHAIN OF CUSTODY (COC)

The RJC Chain of Custody (COC) and associated audit and certification, available for precious metals only, are voluntary for RJC commercial members and therefore not a requirement of RJC membership.

The standard defines the requirements for creating a chain of custody of precious metals that are responsibly sourced, produced, processed (fully segregated and traceable) and traded through supply chains, and that are third-party assured at every stage.

Only RJC members (or entities under the control of an RJC member) that are either already COP-certified or undergoing a combined COP/COC audit to achieve simultaneous certification may be certified against the COC standard.

3.2. THE RJC AUDITS

Your audit firm will develop an audit programme for the full certification cycle consisting of a certification audit (that may include a separate documentary review, see 3.2.1, The initial certification audit) and one mandatory surveillance audit between 12 and 18 months from the certificate start date, including timely scheduling of these audits.

The RJC audits are classed as:

- mandatory audits (initial certification, surveillance and recertification).
- special audits (scope change, provenance claim bolt-on, follow-up) that can be stand-alone or included in any of the mandatory audits, depending on the next scheduled audit.

All audit types include a built-in follow-up stage to verify corrections for all nonconformities and corrective actions for critical breaches and/or major nonconformities (if applicable). This stage may be completed either via desktop or on-site review, depending on the need to corroborate evidence on-site and is different from a special follow-up audit.

Note that an RJC certification audit is not a legal compliance audit.

INTRODUCTION	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	RJC STANDARDS AND AUDITS	MEMBER'S CERTIFICATION JOURNEY	DURING THE CERTIFICATION CYCLE
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3. RJC standards and audits

TABLE 2. RJC AUDIT TYPES

MANDATORY AUDIT TYPE	RJC STANDARD	WHEN IT HAPPENS	WHY IT'S NEEDED
a) Initial certification audit	COP/ LGMS	Within 18 months of becoming a member, unless the member is a rejoiner (see 3.2.3, RJC Rejoining Companies').	To achieve certification within two years of joining the RJC and maintain RJC membership (mandatory for all commercial members).
	COC, if applicable	At the same time as, or after, a COP audit, but not before. Certification cycle and/or expiry date shall be aligned with COP.	To add value to businesses and brands (voluntary for RJC members).
b) Surveillance audit	COP/ LGMS	12–18 months after the certificate start date.	To ensure ongoing conformity with key RJC standard provisions. To review progress against a corrective action plan, as applicable. Surveillance audits may be conducted remotely (see 4.5, Step 5 – Surveillance audit).
	COC		
c) Recertification audit	COP/ LGMS COC, if applicable	Within six months before the certificate expiry date.	To renew certification. Please note that ongoing recertification against the COP/LGMS is mandatory for all commercial members to maintain RJC membership.
SPECIAL AUDIT TYPE	RJC STANDARD	WHEN IT HAPPENS	WHY IT'S NEEDED
d) Scope change	COP/ LGMS	As required.	To enable a change to the certification scope, such as the addition or removal of an entity/facility or to add materials in scope outside a scheduled audit such as surveillance or recertification.
	COC		
e) Provenance claim bolt-on	COP/ LGMS	As required.	To enable verification and certification of a new or changing provenance claim.
f) Follow-up (short notice)	COP/ LGMS	As required.	To conduct additional verification outside a scheduled audit such as surveillance or recertification. This audit type may be triggered by the RJC Complaints Mechanism or disciplinary proceedings.
	COC		

3. RJC standards and audits

3.2.1. THE INITIAL CERTIFICATION AUDIT

Your initial certification audit will consist of two stages, both of which must be completed within a maximum of six months:

TABLE 3. INITIAL CERTIFICATION AUDIT

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

The documentary review can take place either remotely or on-site, prior to the audit (within the time allocated by the audit firm to planning and preparation).

During the documentary review your auditor will:

- review your documents, including any external RJC-recognised certificates (see 4.1.6.5(b), Do you hold valid external RJC-recognised certificates? and Appendix 4, RJC-Recognised Frameworks) and any provenance claim(s) you (intend to) make.
- confirm that there are no new elements that may impact the certification scope or adjust it, as need be.
- discuss with you to determine your understanding of the requirements of the RJC standard(s) and your preparedness for audit, including the level of documentary implementation of the standard(s), and any site-specific conditions.
- review the allocation of resources and agree the audit details with you.

You will receive documented conclusions following this stage, including any areas of concern that could result in a nonconformity during audit. The interval between documentary review and audit will be determined by the audit firm to allow you to resolve such areas of concern, while not exceeding the six-month timeline for completion.

Documentary review may also be used as part of surveillance, recertification audits and special audits, in situations where there have been significant changes to your business, subject to the audit firm's assessment of the situation.

AUDIT

The audit will take place after the documentary review, depending on your readiness for audit.

The purpose of the audit is to evaluate whether your business, systems and processes (or an entity/facility under your control) conform to RJC requirements as set out in the RJC standards, based on a series of evaluation activities such as documentation review, interviews, observation, sampling, etc.

The audit shall take place either on-site or (partially) remotely, subject to the eligibility criteria as per Appendix 9, Remote Audit Protocol.

The auditor shall analyse all information and evidence gathered to review the audit findings and agree on the audit conclusions.

3.2.2. AUDITS WITH SEMI-ANNOUNCED FORMAT

Audits with semi-announced format are audits that are conducted on-site (remote audits are not permitted in this case), within an audit 'window' of one month, during which the auditor shall arrive unannounced on-site. Your audit firm will notify you one month before the start of the audit window. Once your audit firm notifies you of the start of the one-month audit window, you must provide acknowledgement of this audit window, and confirmation that the entity/facility is aware and will accommodate this audit, to your audit firm. You may nominate up to three days during the audit window that would not be convenient for the audit.

3. RJC standards and audits

Any of your mandatory or special audits (except initial certification) may be conducted in a semi-announced format, if:

- a) for COP/LGMS, major nonconformities or critical breaches were raised against the COP/LGMS provision 6 Human Rights and the provisions in the section titled Labour rights and working conditions (even if they were corrected before certificate issue) and there is a concern that the working conditions observed at the site may not be truly representative if the member is given notice of the audit.
- b) the nature of the previous audit finding(s) necessitates further investigation to assess the full extent of the issue or the effective implementation of the corrective actions.
- c) there is evidence of falsification or withholding of data at your end.
- d) there is worker testimony indicating potential critical breaches that require further investigation.
- e) there is any other compelling reason the lead auditor can present for needing to conduct an audit with less notice.

Your audit firm will inform you of whether your next mandatory audit will be semi-announced when issuing your certificate, or when confirming continuity of a current certificate, as applicable, with a brief explanation for the reasons and an indication of which entities/facilities are to be audited in this way.

3.2.3. RJC REJOINING COMPANIES

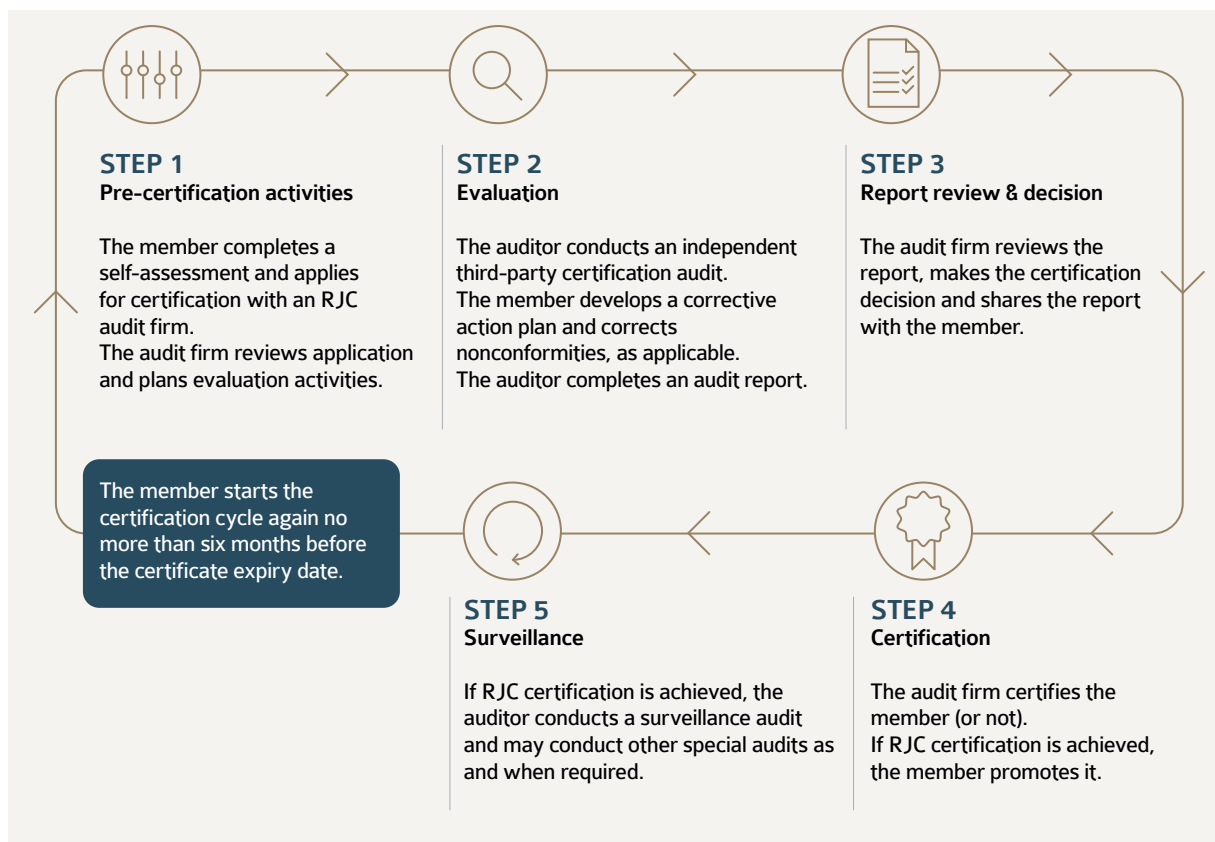
If you are rejoining the RJC, the following shall apply to you:

- a) For companies that wish to rejoin the RJC within a stand-down period of two years from a previous RJC membership termination:
 - Your company (while not yet an RJC member) shall first undergo an RJC audit by an RJC auditor against the relevant mandatory RJC standard(s). The audit firm shall submit your audit report (including certification decision) to the RJC before you can re-apply for RJC membership.
 - If the audit firm can grant you certification, the RJC will accept and process your membership application.
 - Once RJC membership has been approved, your audit firm shall issue your certificate with the date of membership approval.
- b) For companies that have recently rejoined the RJC after the two-year stand-down period from a previous RJC membership termination:
 - Your company (recently approved as member) shall undergo an RJC audit by an RJC auditor against the relevant mandatory RJC standard(s) within six months of rejoining the RJC.
 - Your company shall achieve certification within 12 months of rejoining the RJC or forfeit membership.

4. Members' certification journey

The RJC audit and certification process is broadly made up of five steps (see Figure 1, below), which are further broken down over the following sections to specify requirements, instructions and guidance for members.

FIGURE 1: STEPS IN THE RJC AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS

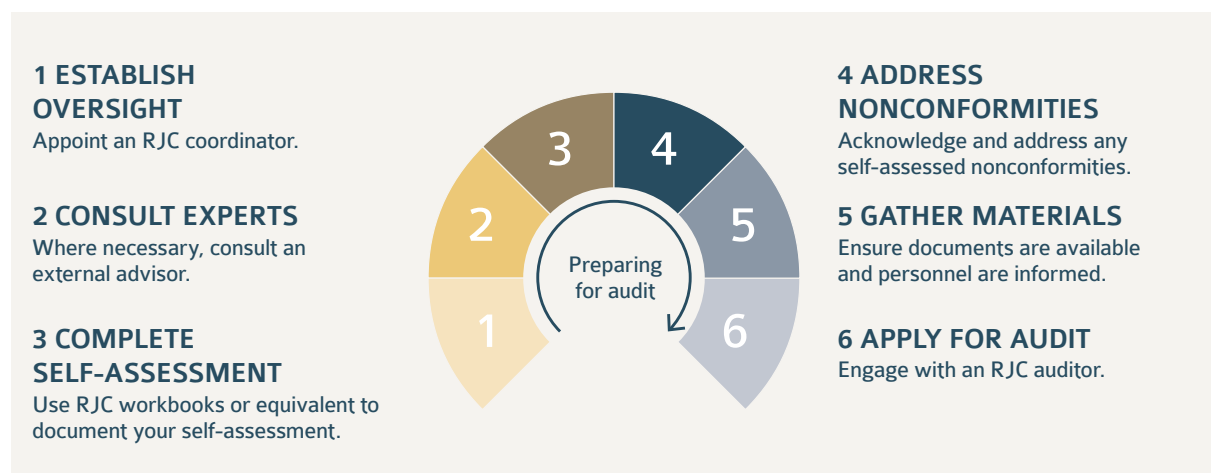


4. Members' certification journey

4.1. STEP 1 – PRE-CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

Prepare for your RJC audit by completing the following six milestones:

FIGURE 2. SIX MILESTONES TO PREPARING FOR AUDIT



4.1.1. ESTABLISH OVERSIGHT

We recommend that you designate a staff member to act as an RJC coordinator to oversee the activities below:

- Manage the completion of your self-assessment.
- Act as a central point of contact and support for corporate documentation and any corrections and corrective actions taken before the audit.
- Engage an RJC audit firm after completing a self-assessment.
- Liaise with and support the audit firm to identify and access additional information, contacts, scheduling and logistics, as required (see 4.1.6.5(g) Last preparations before audit).
- Keep the RJC informed of progress, any updates/changes within your business (see 4.1.6.4, Changes Affecting Membership and Certification Scope) or information throughout your membership, as required.

4. Members' certification journey

4.1.2. CONSULT EXPERTS

It is entirely up to you whether you wish to engage an external expert such as a consultant/advisor to support you with your audit preparation activities, including your self-assessment workbook. You are welcome to employ external help, but in all cases, please note that:

- you should consider the extent of support you need and the role that you would like the consultant/advisor to play.
- any external consultants/advisors involved in your self-assessment or in the development of your RJC-required processes and systems cannot be part of the audit team as this represents a conflict of interest.
- consultants/advisors can only be present during an RJC audit in an observer capacity – they shall refrain from answering questions on your behalf.
- consultants/advisors shall not be present during worker interviews.
- details of any consultants/advisors used or present during the audit shall be included in your audit report.

4.1.3. COMPLETE YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is the cornerstone of preparing for an audit. It gives you insight into your current level of conformity so that you can identify and address any gaps (nonconformities) in advance, such as the following (for full details see document Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors, 14.20, Table 8, Conformity grading):

TABLE 4. CONFORMITY GRADING (SUMMARY)

MINOR NONCONFORMITY

Your business practices do not wholly conform to the relevant standard provision, due to an isolated lapse in performance, discipline or control, which does not lead to a major nonconformity.

In addition, COP/LGMS minor nonconformities do not indicate a breakdown of the systems that underpin conformity, nor result in an imminent significant risk to employees, the community or the environment.

MAJOR NONCONFORMITY

Your business practices do not conform to the relevant standard provision (either as a total absence of implementation, a group of related, repeated or persistent minor nonconformities, or an escalated minor nonconformity). In addition, for COP/LGMS, major nonconformities indicate an imminent significant risk to employees, the community or the environment (such as risks to life, limb or function); livelihood (wages); access to education; biodiversity; and reputation (of the member or the RJC), as well as risk of environmental damage, risk of RJC logo misuse or miscommunication about certified member status. Situations that impact the integrity of the COC or could allow non-eligible material to enter the COC supply chain are graded as COC major nonconformities.

CRITICAL BREACH

A major nonconformity raised against any COP/LGMS critical provision (see Appendix 2, Critical Provisions) or a critical nonconformity raised against any of the COC provisions for deliberate falsification of information, systemic failure of the COC management system, or total lack of controls needed to manage risks to the chain of custody.

4. Members' certification journey

Completing a self-assessment will help you to understand the documents and records that your auditor may want to see and the employees they may want to speak to, setting your business up for a smooth and efficient audit. Completing a self-assessment will also allow you to accurately define and document your RJC certification scope so that you can submit the right scope information to your auditor.

The RJC provides self-assessment workbooks and toolkits to help you gather relevant objective evidence and evaluate your compliance with the RJC standards. These tools guide you with prompts and questions and help you assess your conformity level for each applicable provision. You are of course welcome to use a self-assessment tool of your choosing, if it covers all the RJC standard provisions and includes the (provenance) claim(s) that you (intend to) make. In any case, you shall follow the RJC methodology and include all required information from the RJC workbook, to review your business practices and identify any nonconformities.

Access the latest documents under your member account in the [Member Portal](#), library section. Additional specialist toolkits can be accessed at [RJC toolkits and templates](#) (see also Appendix 1, Supporting Documents).

If your business is complex or extends across multiple countries, you may decide to complete more than one self-assessment workbook as part of your overall self-assessment. When making your decision, you may want to consider:

- your business's overall organisational structure.
- how your processes and management system are designed and implemented.
- whether your business crosses regulatory frameworks and jurisdictions.
- the size and nature of your business.
- the activities, complexity and technology used in your processes.
- your product range.
- the geography and location of your business.

We recommend completing the minimum number of self-assessment workbooks needed to get a representative view of your entities/facilities and a suitable grading of conformity. Options include, for example:

- one workbook that covers all your business.
- one workbook that covers your manufacturing facilities, and another that covers your retail business.
- separate workbooks that each cover one of your major retail brands.

Make sure you send your completed or updated self-assessment to the auditor to review, including any (provenance) claim(s) you (intend to) make when applying for certification or no later than one month before the documentary review stage or audit, as applicable.

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4.1.4. ADDRESS NONCONFORMITIES IDENTIFIED DURING YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Use the time available during self-assessment and audit firm engagement (as applicable) to acknowledge and, where appropriate, address the nonconformities you have self-identified.

It is important that you take action to address any nonconformities well in advance of your independent audit, so you have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that your business practices perform in a way that conforms with the relevant RJC standard(s) (see 4.1.5.1, Gathering Documentary Evidence).

Please note that if you have used multiple self-assessment workbooks, you must review the findings across all of these to evaluate whether any nonconformities identified are common across a number of entities/facilities as this may highlight systemic issues that could lead to a critical breach or major nonconformity.

Your auditors will want to know what you are doing to correct any nonconformity identified during self-assessment. You may use either the RJC corrective action plan template (see Appendix 5, Corrective Action Plan Template, available in multiple languages) or your own equivalent, ensuring that all required information and documentation is included for all identified nonconformities (minor, major or critical), as outlined below:

- a) Corrections (immediate action eliminating the identified nonconformity), including supporting evidence.
- b) A root cause analysis for the identified nonconformities (an understanding of the underlying cause of the actual or anticipated nonconformity so that the proposed corrective action would be deemed effective in addressing the issue).
- c) Corrective actions to eliminate the root cause and prevent future recurrence, including supporting evidence, as applicable.
- d) The means, resources and timeframe set for implementing each corrective action in the plan.

In addition, corrective action plans should also include preventive actions intended and/or implemented to eliminate the causes of potential nonconformities and avoid unintended consequences.

Pay particular attention to:

- the potential for critical breaches and major nonconformities. These must be fully addressed before applying for a certification audit. Any identified critical breaches during your audit impact your membership and may lead to further disciplinary actions (refer to 5.3, Table 11(b), and 5.4(a) for details). No certificate can be issued until critical breaches and major nonconformities are addressed.
- minor nonconformities. You need to have corrections in place and make the minor nonconformities the focus of an internal corrective action plan before your audit.

When establishing a corrective action plan to address any findings, consider whether the enclosed actions are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART):

- a) **Specific.** Is the corrective action clear and unambiguous? Does it address the underlying cause of the nonconformity?
- b) **Measurable.** Can the action's implementation be monitored and measured?
- c) **Achievable.** Does the action have clearly assigned responsibilities and resources?

4. Members' certification journey

- d) **Realistic.** Is the action realistic and fit for purpose, given the nature of the nonconformity? Have the means and capacity (personnel, infrastructure, funding, etc.) to implement the corrective action been assigned?
- e) **Timely.** Is the timeframe for completing the action three months or less? Actions involving capital works or approvals may require more time. In these cases, you should set progress milestones within the certification period and establish interim short-term corrective measures to mitigate the effects of the nonconformity.

4.1.5. GATHER MATERIALS

To ensure an efficient and effective audit, gather any records and documents that the auditor is likely to want to see and make sure that all your staff are ready and able to support the audit process.

4.1.5.1. GATHER DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

In all cases, you must keep records in accordance with applicable law. For RJC certification purposes, any existing historical records and documentary evidence must be made available for review as and when your auditors ask for them, as per the following:

- For an initial certification audit, the auditor will ask for records and other documents for the previous 12 months.
- For a surveillance audit, the auditor will ask for records and other documents for at least the period since the previous (re)certification audit.
- For a recertification audit, the auditor will ask for records and other documents for at least the previous 36 months for those records not reviewed at the surveillance audit, or for the period since the surveillance audit, for those records that were reviewed at surveillance.
- In some cases, this may not be sufficient to provide accurate and useful evidence, and the auditor will need to see older documents.
- For any materials, components or products that you purchased and handled up to 36 months prior to your initial COC certification audit and that you wish to include in the audit scope, the auditor shall verify whether you can demonstrate that these have been handled and processed in accordance with the requirements of the COC standard. They can then be sold as COC materials once certification is achieved.

Note that your auditor cannot take copies of any of these documents without your consent, but they must be provided with documentation for review, to assess your conformity.

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TABLE 5. OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE

WHAT IS OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE?

Objective evidence is any verifiable information, record, observation or statement of fact gathered by the auditor during an audit.

Objective evidence is qualitative or quantitative and includes:

- a) documentation (hard or soft copy): written policies and procedures for implementing the RJC standard(s), forms and records generated from implementing practices and processes or verified statements.
- b) Observations: information gathered by the auditor while observing activities and practices, which can be used as objective evidence.
- c) Testimonials: information gathered from employee interviews, which can be verified by reviewing records, observing activities or interviewing others.

The process of collecting objective evidence requires some level of sampling – for example, reviewing a representative sample of documents and records, interviewing a representative sample of personnel or observing a representative sample of key functions.

EXAMPLES OF OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE

- Organisational charts outlining structure, responsibilities and authorities.
- Written materials describing company policies, processes and products.
- Verified statements of fact.
- Legal permits, licences or other authorisations and related documents and correspondence.
- Reviews of previous assessments.
- Audit reports and certifications from external RJC-recognised frameworks.
- Communications with interested parties, including neighbours and other stakeholders, particularly for, but not limited to, mines or processing plants operating as entities/facilities under a mining member's scope.
- Risk assessment registers.
- Photographic evidence.
- Oral reports of grievances from stakeholders, particularly for, but not limited to, mines or processing plants operating as entities/facilities under a mining member's scope.
- Other objective means of documentation.

4.1.5.2. INFORM AND TRAIN STAFF

Make sure your staff – including employees and contractors – know that an independent audit will take place, and help familiarise them with the process by, for example, sharing communication materials or providing training (see 4.2.1, How RJC Audits are Conducted).

Preparing staff includes ensuring that they are familiar with your policies and procedures and are aware of the documents that are likely to be used to demonstrate conformity during your audit, including all relevant policies and procedures and the records generated from implementing these (see a list of these documents in Appendix 6, Examples of Records and Documentary Evidence). Further examples are given in RJC self-assessment workbooks. Note that pre-audit coaching of staff is not acceptable, and preparations shall not include 'rehearsing' staff in what to say if interviewed by auditors.

4. Members' certification journey

4.1.6. APPLY FOR RJC CERTIFICATION

You can make contact with audit firms of your choice to initiate audit booking while you are working on your self-assessment or once you are ready to be audited, provided you factor in auditor availability and allow sufficient time to book and undergo your RJC audit before your audit and/or certification deadline. You can find a list of RJC audit firms and their contact details at [RJC auditors](#). We recommend you contact more than one audit firm so that you can get a good sense of auditors' availability and commercial terms.

Discuss and confirm details of your certification and audit scope, including the logistics involved in carrying out the audit, access to documentation and the desired audit date. If you need to be audited against more than one RJC standard within a similar timeframe, you may wish to arrange simultaneous audits to reduce duplication of effort and minimise costs.

You may wish to consider asking your auditors to sign confidentiality agreements to protect your confidential or commercially sensitive information during their review of your business.

4.1.6.1. MANDATORY INFORMATION TO SEND YOUR AUDITOR: CHECKLIST

Once you have a certification agreement with your audit firm, make sure you send it the following mandatory documents and/or information. If you have used the same audit firm before, you may send the audit firm any updates from your previous application, as applicable (e.g. changes to the certification scope and live corrective action plans), as opposed to sending the entire set of documents again. Note that the information below can be recorded through the RJC self-assessment workbook for the auditor to review:

- a) Contact details for key staff including your authorised representative for communicating with the audit firm and the RJC.
- b) The RJC standard(s) against which you wish to be audited and certified. Note that you can schedule a combined COP and COC audit. However, if you are scheduling a separate COC audit, you must first achieve COP certification before scheduling the COC audit. COP and LGMS audits must always be combined.
- c) The legal name and address of your company.
- d) Your RJC membership forum (i.e. mining, refining, retail, etc.), as assigned by the RJC on membership approval, as per [RJC applications guidance](#).
- e) Any relevant legal obligations.
- f) The certification scope, namely a written summary of significant aspects of your company's processes, services, operations and business activities to be certified, that you own or control, and that contribute to the jewellery and watch supply chain, whether or not these are situated at your entities/facilities (see Section 4.1.6.3, Set and Document Your Certification Scope).
- g) Identification of outsourced processes that your company uses that will affect conformity with the RJC requirements.
- h) Organisational charts outlining your company's structure (organogram including all entities/facilities and share percentages), responsibilities and authorities, human and technical resources, functions and relationships. The structure organogram should be certified by a notary or independent qualified accountant.
- i) The activities or functions to be audited and the availability of key personnel for interview, wherever possible.

4. Members' certification journey

- j) Information about each entity/facility within the certification scope, including the headquarters, such as:
- name.
 - address.
 - whether a virtual business and, if so, whether any processes are executed in a physical environment.
 - type, infrastructure, facilities and equipment (such as retail store, workshop, etc.).
 - working hours and shifts, associated activities and any downtime periods.
 - number of employees and contractors (for COP/LGMS); if it is impractical to record this per entity/facility (e.g. if your company is a large retailer with an international network of shops), you can document number of employees and contractors at a country level and in total.
 - nature of activity, namely processes conducted and RJC materials in scope. If your company owns or controls multiple entities/facilities doing the same type of activity, you can group their descriptions here.
- k) Any on-site contractors and details of their activities.
- l) If the application is for COC, any outsourced contractors, details of outsourced activities and the risk level.
- m) Any claims that you are making or intend to make, including provenance claims.
- n) The full unredacted, original reports of previous RJC audits and corrective action plans and associated documentation (where performed by another audit firm).
- o) Information about any changes to the certification scope anticipated in the next three years such as expansions, acquisitions, divestments, etc. (see 4.1.6.4, Changes Affecting Membership and Certification Scope).



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4.1.6.2. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO SEND YOUR AUDITOR: CHECKLIST

Send your audit firm of choice the following supplementary documents and/or information, if available. If you have used the same audit firm before, you may send it any updates from your previous application, as applicable (e.g. changes to the certification scope and live corrective action plans), as opposed to the entire set of documents again.

- a) A completed RJC self-assessment workbook, or any other equivalent tool, if it is already available but no older than six months, and details of any self-assessed nonconformities and how these are being addressed.
- b) Whether you wish for the audit to be combined (with another standard), integrated or joint.²
- c) Whether your company has any external certificates that are recognised by the RJC (see 4.1.6.5(b), Do you hold valid external RJC-recognised certificates?).
- d) Whether you will require the auditor to sign a confidentiality agreement. Note that this will not apply to information that it is necessary to share with the RJC, including critical breaches.
- e) Details of any contractors (other than those covered in 4.1.6.1(k) and (l)), business partners or other related companies out of your company's control, to help put the certification scope in context. This includes identifying where members are part of a broader corporate group.
- f) Any available reports from local regulators and required corrective actions and plans.
- g) Relevant organisational performance data (e.g. key performance indicator data).
- h) Whether consultancy relating to compliance with the RJC standard(s) has been provided and, if so, by whom.
- i) Reports or briefings on relevant issues, for example:
 - a list of interested parties, including neighbours and other stakeholders and any concerns.
 - a risk profile outlining ethical, environmental and workplace health and safety issues.

Your audit firm of choice will review your application and supporting documents and decide whether to accept it or reject it, depending on the audit firm's means, competence and capability.

If the audit firm declines your application, it needs to inform you of the same as soon as possible, but no later than 15 working days from receipt of your application, so that you have sufficient time to engage with a different audit firm and comply with your RJC audit and/or certification deadline.

Send your completed or updated self-assessment workbook to the auditor to review, including any (provenance) claim(s) you (intend to) make, when applying for certification or no later than one month before the documentary review stage or audit, as applicable. The self-assessment workbook must not be older than six months.

² 'Combined audit' refers to one single audit where the company is evaluated against two or more standards/schemes. If requirements from multiple standards/schemes have been integrated into a single, cohesive system within a company, then this is considered an integrated audit. A joint audit is conducted when two or more audit firms collaborate to audit a single company together.

4. Members' certification journey

4.1.6.3. SET AND DOCUMENT YOUR CERTIFICATION SCOPE

Clearly and accurately identify, document and propose your RJC certification scope to your audit firm of choice during the application phase. Your certification scope will be reviewed by auditors and documented in the audit report and certificate, with the latter being published on the RJC website.

TABLE 6. CERTIFICATION SCOPE

COP/LGMS CERTIFICATION SCOPE

The RJC certification scope refers to the extent of your business to which the relevant RJC standard(s) apply and for which a certificate is issued.

Each member's certification scope will be different, depending on the standard in question as well as the type and structure of the member's business.

For the mandatory standards, the certification scope matches your membership scope, as approved by the RJC at application approval stage, provided any subsequent changes to your business have been communicated to the RJC to enable your membership scope to be kept up to date.

Should there be any changes within your business that have not been communicated, follow 4.1.6.4, Changes Affecting Membership and Certification Scope, and inform the RJC and your audit firm as soon as possible, in case of any stakeholder enquiries.

Based on the above, the RJC will conduct due diligence on your new entity in a timely manner and update your membership scope ahead of your audit. Failure to do so may result in delays in the audit firm processing your audit report and issuing the certificate, since not all your entities/facilities will have been added to your membership scope, which will in turn impact your certification scope.

COC CERTIFICATION SCOPE

A COC certification scope does not have to cover all parts of your business, nor does it necessarily have to match your membership scope and the COP certification scope.

Note that certification against the COC is available only to those RJC members, or entities under the control of an RJC member, that are already certified against the COP or are audited in a combined audit to achieve simultaneous certification.

The COC certification scope includes:

- a) all entities/facilities that your company owns or controls and intends to use to extract, process, manufacture and/or trade COC material; and
- b) all outsourcing contractors that you (intend to) use to process and/or manufacture COC material. Note that member-owned or affiliated entities providing warehousing, logistics and transport are considered service providers and subject to risk assessment, as opposed to inclusion in the COC certification scope.
- c) the types of COC material (gold, silver or platinum group metals (PGMs)) that you wish to handle as COC; and
- d) any eligible material declarations that you intend to make and, if so, for which type of eligible material (see the COC standard for details on eligible material types).

4. Members' certification journey

a) RJC membership and certification scope: key terms

The RJC membership (and COP/LGMS certification) scope for commercial members includes all the following that are owned/controlled by the member, and which actively contribute to the precious metal, diamond and coloured gemstone (in RJC scope) jewellery and watch supply chain:

- Entities (individual legal business or similar); and/or
- Facilities (site or premises that are operated by an entity, including retail stores, trading offices, manufacturing sites, etc.); and
- Business activities (including tasks, roles, functions or services, noting that business activities may or may not take place at a member's entity/facility and may be in separate locations).

Control means having the beneficial ownership of 50% or more of the issued share capital of a company or the power to direct or cause the direction of the management of the company (including by setting workplace standards and enforcing their application; see [RJC glossary](#) for more information).

The following activities are considered to actively contribute to the precious metal, diamond and coloured gemstone jewellery and watch supply chain and fall within the RJC membership scope:

- Exploration and mining.
- Laboratory-grown materials producers.
- Diamond and coloured gemstone trading, cutting and polishing.
- Precious metal refining, trading and hedging.
- Jewellery and watch manufacturing and wholesaling.
- Jewellery and watch retailing.
- Service industries, including grading, assaying, appraising, secure transport providers, sales platforms and others.

By means of including all its entities and facilities that contribute to the jewellery and watch supply chain, each applicant company is required to (and is responsible for so doing) clearly and accurately identify, propose and document its own RJC membership scope for review and approval by the RJC at the application stage, as well as communicating any subsequent changes to its business to the RJC to enable its membership scope to be kept up to date.

If a mine produces several different mineral products, it must be included in the membership scope if precious metals, diamonds or coloured gemstones make up a significant* saleable element in the mineral concentrate or process by-products. If the mine's contribution to these is minimal* relative to the mine's total production, it may be appropriate to exclude it from the membership scope. Inclusion of multi-commodity sites will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

* Typically, a threshold of 10% by value is applied.

4. Members' certification journey

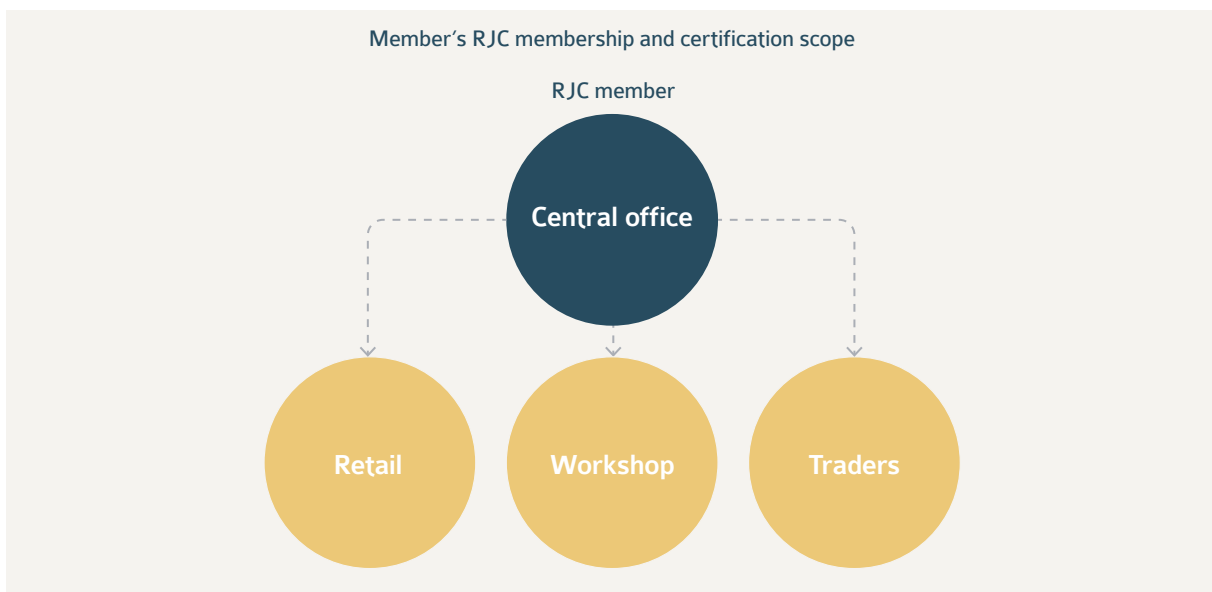
The RJC shall reject attempts to register just one company out of a group as a member, and require the parent company of a group to become the RJC member and seek RJC certification in its own name. In exceptional circumstances and at the RJC's sole discretion, on a case-by-case basis, the RJC may allow individual memberships for companies that are part of a group, for example where the central office/holding group and the majority of its entities do not contribute to the jewellery and watch supply chain, as an exclusion from membership scope. For more details, see [RJC applications guidance](#). For any queries on the RJC membership scope, please contact the RJC at membership@responsiblejewellery.com.

Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the RJC through the RJC Complaints Mechanism if they believe anything has been omitted, or misrepresented in, a member's membership scope, and the relevant audit firm for any issues related to the member's certification scope

b) Examples of membership and certification scope

Every company is different and so it will have a distinct membership and certification scope, reflecting the diversity in size and structure among members. See the examples below of different business structures and how they may impact this scope for the RJC mandatory standards. For more examples, see the Commercial Membership Application Guidance on the RJC [website](#).

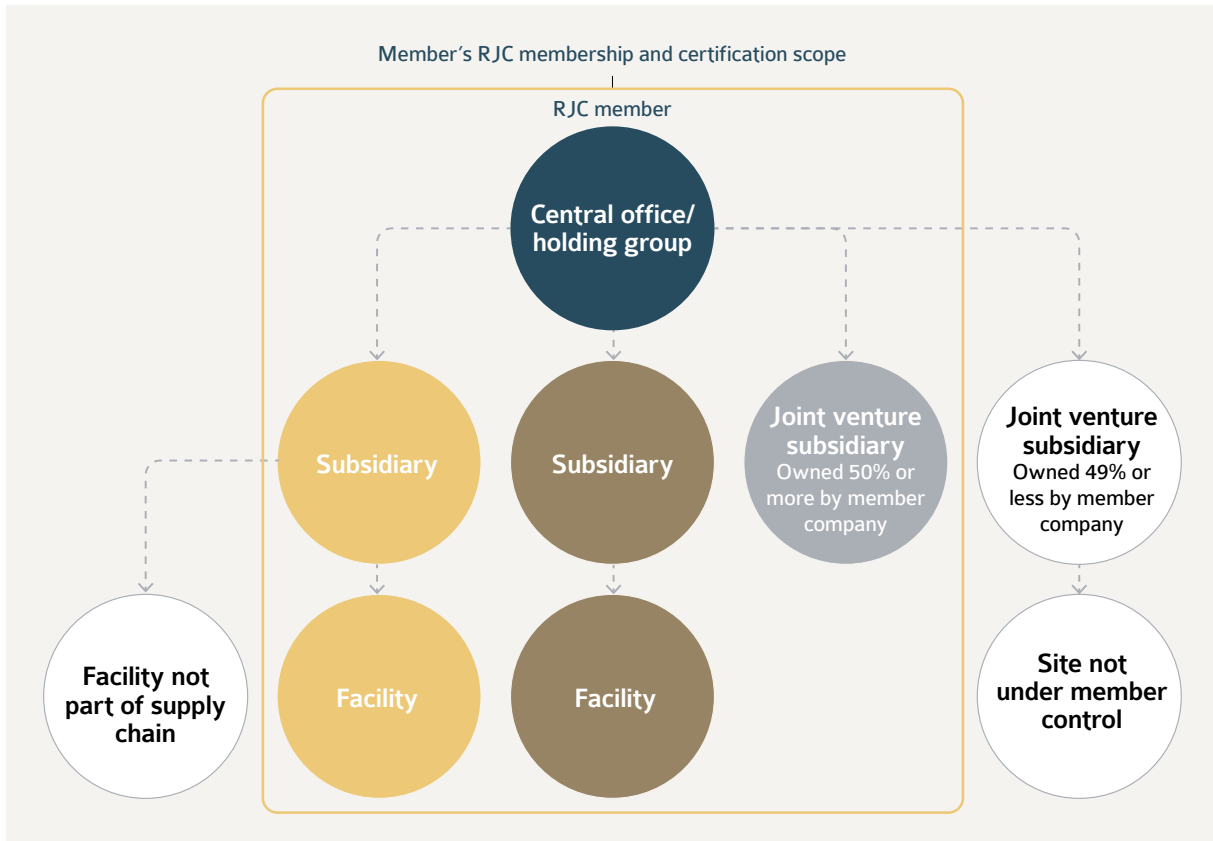
FIGURE 3. A SIMPLE STRUCTURE TYPICAL OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANIES



In Figure 3, the member's business has a simple structure. All the business activities are owned or controlled by the member and all contribute to the precious metal, diamond and coloured gemstone jewellery and watch supply chain. Here the entire business falls within the RJC membership and certification scope.

4. Members' certification journey

FIGURE 4. A MULTILAYERED, COMPLEX STRUCTURE TYPICAL OF A LARGE COMPANY



In Figure 4, the member's business is more complex and includes several subsidiaries and facilities, some of which are not under the member's control and some of which do not contribute to the precious metal, diamond and coloured gemstone jewellery and watch supply chain. In this example, the membership and certification scope is a subset of the whole business.

Members in the mining sector

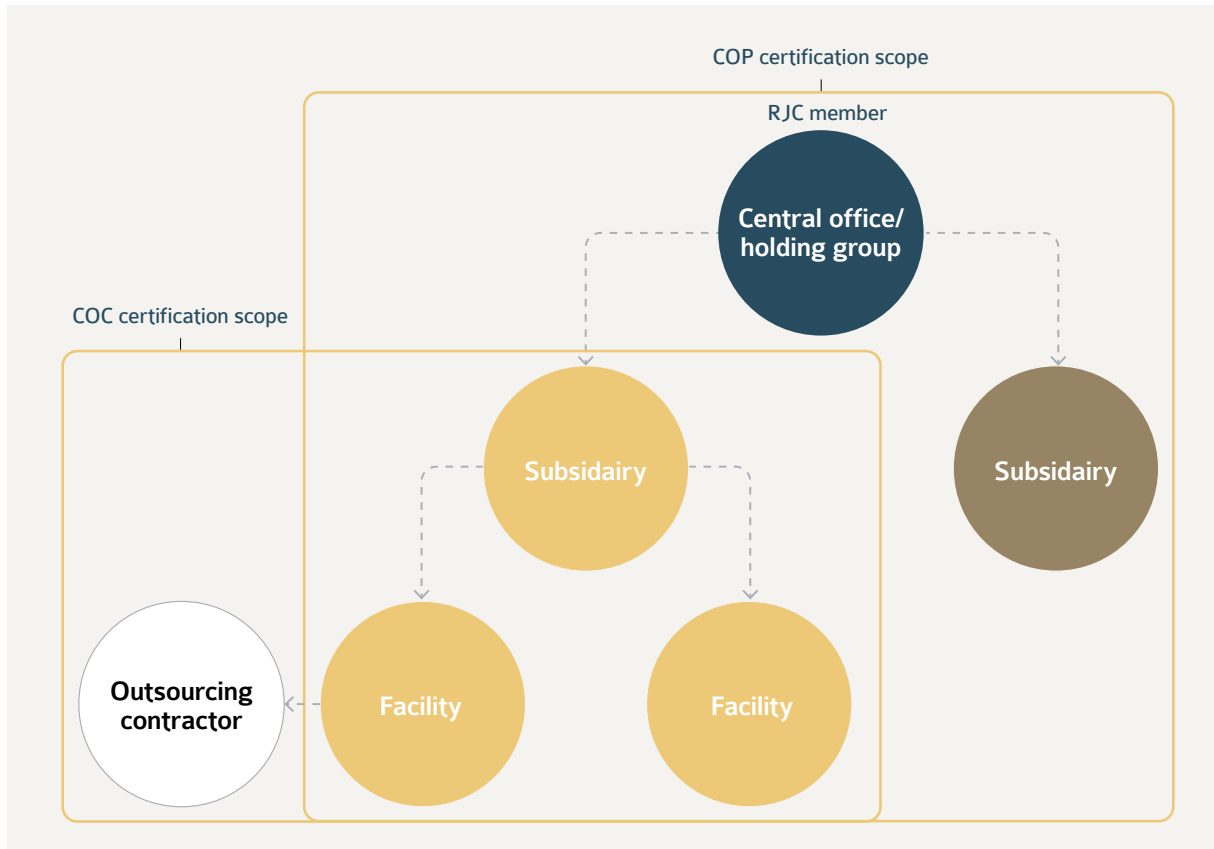
Several COP provisions apply directly to the early stages of mine development. For RJC commercial members in the mining sector, the certification scope shall include exploration activities, or any other business practices aimed at developing future mining facilities. These practices will be evaluated by an auditor through desktop reviews or site visits as appropriate (for more information see 4.1.6.5(e), Early mining activities (COP only)).

COC certification scope

COC certification may be granted to members as a whole or to individual entities under a member's control in the COC pipeline. It also does not need to cover all of a member's precious metals sourcing or sales but can be specifically limited to some or all of the materials in scope for the COC standard, as the member wishes. A member can choose to seek COC certification for only some of the mines or factories under its control. In Figure 5, the company seeking COC certification is a subsidiary of the RJC member, so the COP and COC certification scope are different.

4. Members' certification journey

FIGURE 5. COP VERSUS COC CERTIFICATION SCOPE FOR AN ENTITY AND ITS PARENT MEMBER



4.1.6.4. CHANGES AFFECTING MEMBERSHIP AND CERTIFICATION SCOPE

Inform the RJC and your audit firm of any changes within your business such as, but not limited to, the following, as soon as possible but no later than six months from change occurring:

- An organisational restructure, including change to your company's legal name.
- Divestments, acquisitions or changes to the equity share.
- New or altered activities, products and processes, including provenance claims (see COP 2024 provision 14.3 for specific timelines on provenance claims).
- New or removed entity/facility.
- New locations or different distribution of entities/facilities.
- Loss of external RJC-recognised certification.
- External influences, such as changes in the statutory environment, regulations or other stakeholder expectations and commitments.

4. Members' certification journey

Depending on the change, either:

- submit a change request form and supporting documentation to the RJC to add a new entity to your scope (subject to RJC due diligence); and/or
- update your details via the Member Portal to add a new facility or amend any other details to existing entities/facilities; and
- update your self-assessment workbook ahead of any mandatory audit to ensure such changes are captured in a timely manner and share it with your audit firm; and
- reassess your conformity with the relevant RJC standard(s) in light of the changed certification scope to prepare for the next scheduled audit. The RJC self-assessment workbook, or equivalent, can be used for this purpose.

Any impact to your certification status as a result of the change will be assessed either at the subsequent audit, whatever type it may be, or, if the audit firm decides to bring this audit forward, at the rescheduled audit.

A surveillance audit can also be used to address any changes to provenance claims made.

If you are COC-certified and wish to add new facilities, outsourcing contractors or types of materials to your certification scope – or if you decide you now want to issue eligible material declarations – inform the audit firm, which shall conduct a new certification audit for those elements, as part of either a surveillance audit or recertification.

Note that if you are seeking COC certification for a separate entity under your control (depending on the structure of your business), for which a separate certificate would apply, this is not considered a change affecting certification, but a new and separate application for a new certificate.

4.1.6.5. AUDIT SCOPE, DURATION AND PLAN

Your audit firm will define:

- the audit scope (which entities/facilities and business activities are to be audited within your RJC certification scope, if sampling can be applied).
- the audit duration (the time necessary to audit them), based on requirements in sections 5–10 in the document RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors. The number of audit days (consisting of eight hours each) depends on factors such as the size and complexity of your company, your supply chain and location, any on-site contractors, any changes in scope, use of complicated claims, your level of preparation for the audit, the number of people to interview, any external RJC-recognised certificates you hold, etc.
- whether any elements of your audit can be conducted remotely (see Appendix 9, Remote Audit Protocol).
- the audit plan. Discuss and agree the audit plan at least 10 working days before the audit starts. This process will give you time to prepare and, if necessary, suggest changes to minimise disruption to your business. Note that while you can ask to change the time or date of specific activities, you cannot request a change to the audit scope set by the audit firm.

4. Members' certification journey

a) Combining audits

LGMS audits shall always be combined with COP audits (provided the COP version is COP 2024 or later). If you are already certified to COP 2019 and LGMS is applicable to your business you must book a combined COP 2024/LGMS audit within the relevant implementation period for LGMS (see [RJC frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#)), even if this means an early recertification against COP. A combined COP/LGMS audit may need up to an additional 25% of audit time, compared to a COP audit.

If you start dealing in materials subject to either COP or LGMS while already certified to the other standard (provided the COP version is COP 2024 or later), your company will be audited against those specific new requirements at the same time as a surveillance audit for your existing certification, unless you wish to recertify early. The expiry date of the new certificate shall coincide with that of the existing certificate for the other mandatory standard, even if the total length of the new certificate may be shorter than three years.

COP and COC audits can be combined (with a reduction of up to 25% for the COC audit time), or not. In any case, the expiry date of the COC certificate shall coincide with that of the COP certificate.

You may ask your audit firm to plan your RJC audit so that it coincides with other audits for external RJC-recognised standards or for company protocols such as the De Beers Best Practice Principles and the Signet Responsible Sourcing Protocol.

b) Do you hold valid external RJC-recognised certificates?

Your auditor may accept as proof of conformity for some RJC standard(s) provisions any external RJC-recognised certificates that you may hold (see Appendix 4, RJC-Recognised Frameworks and [RJC harmonisation](#)), if:

- the last audit date is during the last 12 months;
- there are no open major or critical nonconformities or high risks;
- there is a corrective action plan for any minor nonconformities, to be implemented within the next 12 months; and
- the non-RJC certification scope applies to your company's RJC certification scope and the specific entity/facility being audited.

FIGURE 6. GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE AUDIT TIME*



* Depending on your readiness for audit and the extent of any on-site/remote portion of the audit.

** May accommodate a separate documentary review, if applicable.

4. Members' certification journey

c) Sampling for multi-site members

For a COP/LGMS audit, the audit firm may not visit all the entities/facilities within your certification scope and can take a sample of the same (as per below). For some types of member activity, it may also be possible to undertake a fully remote or partially remote audit, depending on eligibility criteria (see Appendix 9, Remote Audit Protocol).

For a COC certification audit, all the entities/facilities that fall within your COC certification scope will be audited, whereas for a COC surveillance audit, sampling may be applied. Member-owned warehousing, logistics and transport are considered services and subject to risk assessment and are not part of the COC certification and audit scope. Note that a fully remote audit is not permitted for COC certification audits.

TABLE 7. MULTI-SITE MEMBERS

WHAT IS A MULTI-SITE MEMBER?

A multi-site company member has an identified central office that controls or oversees a network of owned or joint-venture sites, either as a single legal entity or more, where all of its entities/facilities, either permanent or temporary, have a legal or contractual link with the central office and are subject to common management. Examples include:

- mining companies with a combination of mines and concentration/processing plants, offices and sales operations.
Note that all mines and concentration/processing plants operating as entities/facilities under a mining member should be audited across the three-year certification cycle.
- manufacturing companies with a network of factories.
- retailers with multiple outlet stores (or any other company that has multiple branches).
- companies with a mix of manufacturing sites and retail outlets.
- service companies with multiple sites (e.g. a transport provider with multiple depots).
- companies operating with franchises.

HOW IS A MULTI-SITE MEMBER AUDITED?

If you are a multi-site company member, your audit may be limited to the central office and a representative sample of entities/facilities under your certification scope, if they don't fundamentally differ in activity or management system. Sampling criteria include the following:

- The different entities/facilities largely comprise retail or other low-risk outlets; or
- Most of the activities undertaken, equipment used and products made and sold at each entity/facility are substantially the same; and
- The risk profiles for the entities/facilities and operating conditions are similar in nature; and
- The activities, equipment and products are governed by common management systems, under the direction of the central office.

For more details see RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors, 8.3.2, Table 6, Minimum number of entities/facilities to visit (excluding the central office) for RJC audits.

Multi-site members shall have a maximum of six months from the opening meeting to undergo and complete their audit.

4. Members' certification journey

d) Members with virtual entities/facilities

If you have virtual entities/facilities (virtual locations where you perform work or provide a service using an online environment allowing persons from different physical locations to execute processes), then an on-site audit might not be possible.

However, any processes that are executed in a physical environment (owned by you or third parties), e.g. warehousing, physical testing laboratories, logistics, installation or repairs to physical products, where your virtual company has ownership of the materials handled, may need on-site auditing, unless the physical location is already RJC-certified under its own or another member's certification scope.

e) Early mining activities (COP only)

If you have early mining activities, see the RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors, 8.5(a), Table 7, Criteria for including activities from mining exploration to pre-commissioned stages in a COP audit scope, regarding incorporating them into your audit scope.

f) COC outsourced contractors

During a COC audit, your auditor will need to audit your risk assessment of the outsourced contractor(s) and on-site assessment and whether the outsourced contractor(s) are compliant with the relevant COC provision.

- All your high-risk outsourced contractors³ shall be audited.
- Your medium-risk outsourced contractors⁴ shall be subject to sampling and can be audited remotely.
- Your audit firm shall verify that the correct risk rating has been applied to your low-risk outsourced contractors⁵ and may decide to audit them.
- When an outsourced contractor provides a number of activities with a range of associated risks, the risk level assigned (see above) to that outsourced contractor shall always be highest risk.
- If your auditor considers that you have mis-classified the risk level of an outsourced contractor, they shall refer to the COC guidance section on provision COC 2024 3.1/COC 2017 5.1 (Outsourcing Contractors and Service Companies), to clarify and revisit your process for classifying the risk level of outsourced contractors.
- Member retail/distribution/logistics shall be treated as low-risk outsourced contractors/service providers for the member to conduct its own risk assessment and management.
- For shared outsourced contractors (i.e. where the same facility is used by two or more RJC members), if you can share an audit report conducted by an RJC auditor that is less than 12 months old and demonstrates full conformity, this can be used as evidence of conformity and substitute for an additional on-site audit.

3 High-risk outsourced contractors are classified as those that change the physical properties of the material or product, and a list of the typical activities covered are detailed in the COC guidance document. Outsourced contractors who do not change the physical properties of the product are not high risk.

NOTE: The physical properties of a metal are its intrinsic characteristics. At room temperature and standard atmospheric pressure, a dimensional change or a form change does not materially affect the physical properties of such material. However, the possibility that non-COC materials may be added to or mixed with segregated COC materials presents a high risk of changes to the physical properties of the material or product.

4 Medium-risk outsourced contractors are classified as those that add to or adapt the physical properties of the material or product, through activities such as plating, stone setting or similar.

5 Low-risk outsourced contractors are classified as those that do not change, adapt or add to the physical properties of the material or product through activities such as polishing, engraving and hallmarking.

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g) Last preparations before audit

- Confirm availability of interviewees and access to documents.
- Invite senior management to attend opening and closing meetings.
- Arrange for guides to be available during on-site visits.
- Confirm any health and safety requirements for visitors.
- Make office facilities (including space and meeting rooms) available to conduct interviews and review information.
- Arrange appropriate technology facilities for any remote activities.
- Arrange for any personal protective equipment the auditors may need when visiting entities/facilities.
- Allocate time for inductions and introductions.
- Advise all staff of the audit arrangements.

4.2. STEP 2 – EVALUATION

Managing your staff's expectations about an independent audit is important to ensure a smooth audit process. In some jurisdictions, you may be legally required to inform your employees of a forthcoming audit. Even where it is not a legal requirement, the RJC recommends that employees be told about the audit and the possibility of being interviewed, as well as about the interviews being confidential and that their comments will not be passed on to the manager.

4.2.1. HOW RJC AUDITS ARE CONDUCTED

Key points of information about how an independent audit is conducted and what managers, workers and contractors should expect from the process are listed below. For more information about how RJC audits work, see the RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors, Step 2, Evaluation; and Appendix 6, Examples of Records and Documentary Evidence.

Conformity is determined based on the extent to which your processes and management systems meet each applicable RJC standard provision and prevent risk to employees, the community or the environment. It should be noted that audits may be conducted on-site, remotely or through a mix of the two, subject to eligibility criteria (see Appendix 9, Remote Audit Protocol), in order to ensure the most efficient and effective approach to obtaining the necessary information.

a) Objectives

An auditor's objective is to review your processes and systems and their implementation to determine whether they conform to the relevant RJC standard(s). Auditors are not there to audit individual behaviour or performance.

b) Audit team

The audit may be carried out by one or more individual RJC auditors (of whom at least one is a lead auditor) and the audit team may include topic/local experts, observers, translators and facilitators. Before the audit, you may refuse an auditor or request a change, if you perceive a conflict of interest. The audit firm must consider any such requests and evidence that you provide to support this, but may refuse the change if no such conflict of interest is established. Similarly, you may ask for an auditor's CV or background information.

4. Members' certification journey

c) Observers

The presence of any observers during an audit activity shall be agreed with your audit firm prior to the conduct of the audit. Observers shall not influence or interfere in the audit process or outcome of the audit. Observers can be company staff, consultants, RJC personnel, witnessing oversight or accreditation body personnel, regulators or other justified persons.

d) Opening and closing meetings

Your auditor will hold a formal opening meeting with your management and, where appropriate, those responsible for the functions or processes to be audited, with the aim of providing a short explanation of the audit objectives and how the audit activities will be undertaken. Similarly, your auditor will hold a closing meeting, be that the final closing meeting per a multi-site company or the closing meeting per each entity/facility in audit scope, where they will orally present your management team with the audit conclusions and post-audit process. See 4.2.2 for topics discussed during the closing meeting.

e) Activities

Auditors will gather objective evidence by reviewing records, observing facilities, activities and practices and talking to staff (see 4.1.5.1, Gathering Documentary Evidence, for more details). Auditors will identify and grade nonconformities as per Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors, 14.20, Table 8, Conformity grading. A summary is provided in this document at Table 4, Conformity grading (summary).

f) Interviews

Auditors may ask for individual and group interviews. In all cases, these interviews will be conducted in a confidential way: neither management and other company staff, nor any consultants, shall have any involvement in interview selection or be present during the interviews. Translators may be present during interviews and shall be independent of the company and assigned/recruited by the audit firm. You should make available a quiet meeting room, where interviewees will feel comfortable and cannot be overheard for the interviews wherever possible (some may be conducted in an open place).

g) Staff participation

Auditors will choose interviewees based on who is best suited to answer their questions about specific RJC standard provisions. Some interviewees will be identified before the audit starts; some will be identified during the auditor's site inspection. In all cases, participation is to be encouraged but shall be both voluntary and free from interference: auditors cannot force someone to be interviewed; managers cannot stop a willing interviewee from being questioned, nor can they specify who is to be interviewed. Auditors shall note situations where management have interfered in the selection of interviewees and may also note situations where someone has refused to be interviewed.

h) Responses

All interviewees must answer questions truthfully and accurately, based on their own experience (pre-audit coaching is not acceptable), including whether they are unsure of the response. Some interviewees may be asked to describe or show how they carry out their day-to-day duties: this is standard practice for auditors wanting to observe practices to verify testimonial or documented statements.

i) Recordings

Auditors will make notes from their interviews. In some cases, they may want to record the interview by audio or video media, but they can only do so if the interviewee agrees to this type of recording.

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j) Repercussions

Interviewees cannot be reprimanded for their responses if made in good faith. If management identify a factually incorrect response in the audit report, they must communicate the mistake to all concerned (employees, contractors and auditors) and state the correct answer, and provide evidence to verify it.

k) Anonymity

Auditors will never name interviewees in their report to either the RJC or the company being audited. Findings based on objective evidence gathered during interviews will similarly ensure the interviewee's identity remains anonymous unless permission has been given by the interviewee.

4.2.2. AUDIT CLOSING MEETING

Expect your auditor to cover the topics below during the closing meeting:

TABLE 8. CLOSING MEETING TOPICS

TOPICS	DETAILS
Audit findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of audit findings, including any nonconformities, their grading and consequences, will be orally presented by the auditor in such a manner that they are understood. Note that 'understood' does not necessarily mean that the nonconformities have been accepted by you. At this stage, findings are preliminary as details and/or grading may change subject to audit report writing and technical review after the audit, especially if you are a multi-site member and the same finding has been identified across more than one of your entities/facilities (see the Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors, 14.22, on groups of related, repeated or persistent minor nonconformities). The auditor will provide and ask you to sign a list of findings, including any nonconformities, in acknowledgement of being informed of and understanding the same. Any changes to this list that occur after the audit (subject to audit report writing and technical review after the audit) will be communicated to you via an updated list of findings, for which you will be asked to sign acknowledgement of receipt. While the auditor may signpost the likely root causes when identifying a nonconformity, it is important that you conduct a root cause analysis and define a corrective action plan that will meet your business objectives and ensure conformity with the RJC standard(s).
Critical breach process, if applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the auditor identifies one or more critical breaches, your existing certificate, if applicable, shall be suspended and the RJC shall be notified within a maximum of five working days. The RJC will temporarily suspend your RJC profile page and by extension your membership while the critical breach(es) are under review, with a risk of further disciplinary actions, should you not address the critical breach(es) within the allocated timeframe (see 5.4, Disciplinary Proceedings).
Queries, grievances, complaints and appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions and/or highlight any incorrect factual information. Clear up any misunderstandings, and discuss and resolve, where possible, any diverging opinions regarding the audit findings or conclusions between you and the auditor. <p>Any diverging opinions that are not resolved at the closing meeting will be documented in the Grievance section of the audit report and referred for resolution to the audit firm, which may choose to share them with the RJC. Should these not be resolved after referral to the audit firm, they will be escalated to the RJC, based on the RJC Complaints Mechanism (see 5.5, Complaints and Appeals).</p>

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TOPICS	DETAILS
Post-audit process, including corrections and corrective actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details will be provided on the timeframes for you to submit a corrective action plan and evidence of implementation to the auditor, if required, how these will be verified and the consequences of failing to comply with these timeframes. • Details will be provided on the audit firm's post-audit activities and their order and timeline, i.e. corrective action plan and evidence submission and review, as applicable, report writing, technical review, certification decision and certificate issue.
Audit report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the post-audit process, the auditor will provide you with a complete written report for your audit, containing a detailed account of the areas that were found to be in compliance and a list of findings against the relevant RJC standard(s), for you to review. At that stage you will not be able to challenge any audit findings, but only any incorrect factual information that was not corrected during the closing meeting.
Surveillance/recertification audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and provisionally book a date for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. an on-site follow-up audit if it is already apparent that it will be necessary to verify the implementation and effectiveness of your corrective actions; and/or ii. a surveillance audit (either remote or on-site, depending on format) or a recertification audit to ensure you do not miss your next certification milestone. The auditor will confirm this provisional date with you in a timely manner closer to the date. <p>The surveillance audit is due between 12 and 18 months from the certificate issue date, in the format advised by the auditor (see 4.5 Step 5 – Surveillance).</p>

4.2.3. SUBMIT CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS AND EVIDENCE TO YOUR AUDITOR

You may use either the RJC corrective action plan template (see Appendix 5, Corrective Action Plan Template, available in multiple languages) or your own equivalent, ensuring that all required information and documentation is included for all identified nonconformities (minor, major or critical), as per 4.1.4, Address Nonconformities Identified During Your Self-Assessment.

If you are a multi-site member, you can start working on your corrective actions plan as soon as the audit findings become available at the individual closing meeting of each audited entity/facility, instead of waiting for the overall closing meeting, unless entities/facilities under a multi-site member need to address a systemic failure and align with each other.

Note that for initial and recertification audits, any delays in submission of corrective action plans and evidence (where applicable) by the member may delay the certification decision and consequently may lead to a gap in your certification and lack of continuity.

Within a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of your corrective action plan and round of evidence, where applicable, the auditor will review it and inform you of the result, including of the necessity of an on-site follow-up audit to fully verify the effectiveness of any implemented corrective actions, where applicable.

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TABLE 9. TIMEFRAMES FOR CLOSING NONCONFORMITIES

TYPE OF NONCONFORMITY	WHAT TO SUBMIT TO AUDITOR?	BY WHEN? WHAT HAPPENS IF NO OR INSUFFICIENT SUBMISSION?
a) Any nonconformity	A corrective action plan, including sufficient correction and evidence of the same, root cause analysis, and proposed corrective actions including timeframes for implementation of corrective actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a maximum of one month from identification date.⁶ You will be expected to implement corrective actions as soon as possible if they do not already fall under point b) below. Where critical breaches and/or major nonconformities have also been identified, alongside minor nonconformities, and unless the nonconformities relate to serious harmful situations that need to cease immediately such as child labour, forced labour or similar ongoing harmful conditions, supporting evidence of implementation of corrections may be submitted within three months, together with supporting evidence of corrective action implementation as per 4.2.3(b). • The auditor will verify the implementation of the approved corrective actions for minor nonconformities at your next scheduled mandatory audit (surveillance or certification). • Failure to implement approved corrective actions for minor nonconformities by your next scheduled mandatory audit (surveillance or certification) may escalate them to major nonconformities, and you will need to address them in full.
b) Critical breach/major nonconformity	Sufficient supporting evidence of corrective action implementation to at least regrade as a minor nonconformity with correction in place, as applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a maximum of three months from the identification date, via one or more rounds of evidence submission to the auditor. • The RJC will inform you about the available resources that may be useful for you to address the critical breach. • If you have not submitted evidence addressing the critical breach in full, and while the auditor is reviewing the evidence already submitted, continue with any other outstanding work required to address the critical breach that is not dependent on the work submitted for review. • If a critical breach has been either regraded as a minor nonconformity or addressed within the above timeframes, the audit firm will inform the RJC as soon as possible and the RJC will reinstate your profile page on the RJC website and inform you of the same. • Failure to address a critical breach within a three-month timeframe will lead to further disciplinary actions against you by the RJC (see 5.4, Disciplinary Proceedings).
c) Minor nonconformity	You may wish to also submit evidence of corrective action implementation for minor nonconformities after the audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a maximum of one month from identification, together with the corrective action plan, where the audit outcome contains only minor nonconformities; or • within a maximum of three months from identification, where the audit outcome also contains critical breaches and/or major nonconformities, alongside evidence for the latter.

⁶ The identification date of a nonconformity is in most cases the closing meeting (or the overall final closing meeting for multi-site member companies), or, if identification of findings or (change of) grading occurs later during report writing or technical review, the date when the certification body communicated the same to the member.

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4.2.4. AUDIT INVALIDATION

If an effective and auditor-approved corrective action plan (including sufficient evidence of implementation, where applicable) is not in place within a maximum of six months from the identification of nonconformities, the audit firm will invalidate your audit and inform you of the same, except when an on-site follow-up audit is needed and scheduled but cannot be completed within the six months due to lack of auditor availability.

If the invalidated audit is a mandatory audit type, you shall book and undergo a full certification audit within the next six months to maintain RJC membership (including after an invalidated surveillance as per 5.1, Recertification).

4.3. STEP 3 –TECHNICAL REVIEW OF REPORT AND CERTIFICATION DECISION

Once an effective and auditor-approved plan is in place, the audit firm will complete a technical review of the audit and make a certification decision.

You should expect the entire post-audit process, after the end of the audit and until you receive your final audit report and certification decision for acknowledgement, to take between two and four months, subject to the auditor receiving your corrective action plan and evidence, as per 4.2.3, Submit Corrective Action Plans and Evidence to Your Auditor. The RJC will also receive a copy of your audit report.

This timeframe may be further extended:

- by up to 10 working days, if critical breaches and/or major nonconformities were identified during audit.
- depending on auditor availability, if they need to verify the effectiveness of the corrective actions via an on-site follow-up audit. The RJC will also receive a copy of your audit report.

The audit firm will decide to grant you a certificate if:

- a) any critical breaches or major nonconformities have been fully resolved or regraded as a minor nonconformity within the allocated timelines.
- b) any repeated critical breaches identified against the same critical sub-provision have been fully resolved, unless there has been a significant change in your business, e.g. mergers/acquisitions.
- c) any major nonconformities originating from escalated minor nonconformities have been fully closed.
- d) any minor nonconformities have a verified correction and an auditor-approved corrective action plan in place.
- e) you are an RJC member in good standing with regard to your general membership commitments (e.g. RJC membership fee payment is up to date, you are not subject to ongoing RJC disciplinary proceedings, etc.).
- f) if you are operating in countries where compulsory schooling ends earlier than 15 years of age, you have no workers below the minimum working age of 15 years.
- g) you have met your contractual obligations with your audit firm.

Complete and sign an acceptance declaration of the audit report as an accurate reflection of the RJC audit, within five working days of receipt of the audit report. At this point, you cannot challenge any audit findings, but only any incorrect factual information in the audit report. Certificate issue cannot proceed without a signed member declaration in this regard.

If the audit firm is unable to grant a certificate, expect to be notified of the decision and the reasons, together with the process to appeal this decision with your audit firm.

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4.4. STEP 4 – CERTIFICATE ISSUE

Your certificate will be issued within 10 working days after you have provided the signed declaration, subject to:

- being an RJC member in good standing (e.g. RJC membership fee payment is up to date, you are not subject to ongoing RJC disciplinary proceedings, etc.). If you are not an RJC member in good standing, the certificate shall not be issued until the RJC has confirmed that the membership issue has been settled.
- meeting contractual obligations with your audit firm.
- force majeure.

All certificates shall have a grace period of three months that can be activated after expiry date, provided conditions are met (see 4.4.2, Certificate Grace Period).

You can access your RJC certificate and RJC certified member logos via the Member Portal and your certificate on the RJC website. On achieving certification, follow the RJC logo usage rules at [RJC policies](#).

4.4.1. CERTIFICATE DATES ALIGNMENT

The COP and LGMS certificates' start and expiry dates shall always align, based on combined COP and LGMS audits.

Whether or not the COP and COC audits are conducted as combined, the expiry date of the COC certificate shall coincide with that of the COP certificate, even if the total length of the COC certificate is shorter than three years.



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4.4.2. CERTIFICATE GRACE PERIOD

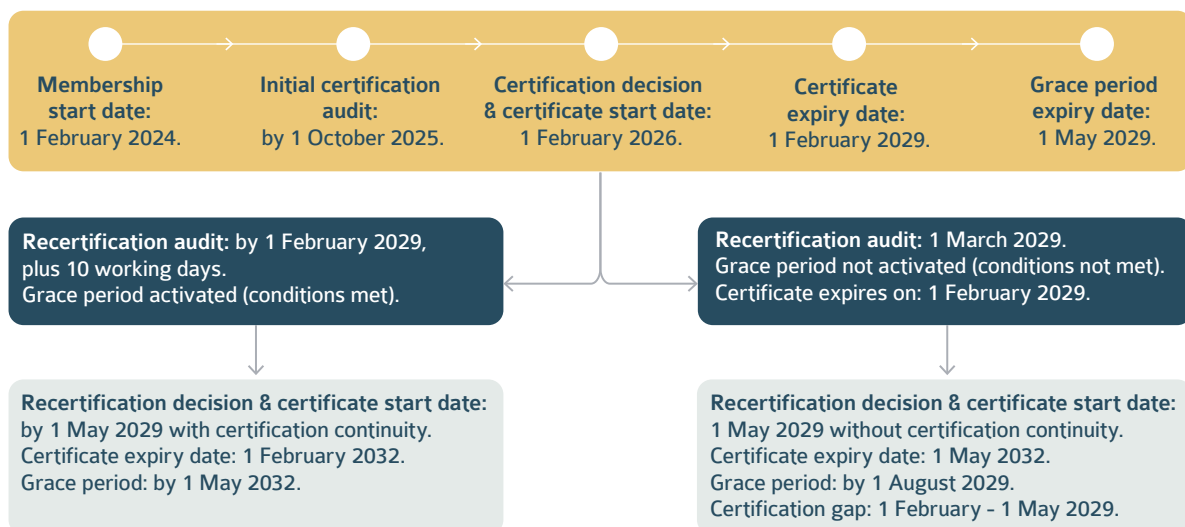
Your certificate will have a three-month grace period after certificate expiry date. The purpose of the grace period is to accommodate the post-audit actions (submission and verification of any corrections and corrective actions) without impacting your certification continuity.

This grace period may be automatically activated only if:

- you undergo your recertification audit before the certificate expiry date, plus a tolerance of a maximum of 10 working days over this deadline. Failure to do so means you will not benefit from the grace period, will lose certification continuity and will have a gap in certification.
- you contacted audit firms to book your audit at least six months prior to the expiry date of your certificate, but no audit firm was able to accommodate an audit before the certificate expiry date, plus a tolerance of a maximum of 10 working days over this deadline, due to lack of auditor availability.
- you are scheduled to undergo a combined audit that involves a non-RJC standard, during the grace period of three months.
- your auditor could not conduct a timely scheduled audit (as per point (a)) due to illness or force majeure.

You need to undergo audit and submit a complete and effective correction plan in a timely manner as per allocated timeframes, to allow sufficient time for your audit firm to verify it and make a certification decision before the end of your grace period, otherwise you may lose certification continuity and have a gap in certification. No extension to certificate can be granted by the audit firm (or the RJC, which has no authority to extend certificates).

FIGURE 7. CERTIFICATE AND GRACE PERIOD EXAMPLE



4. Members' certification journey

4.5. STEP 5 – SURVEILLANCE

Contact your audit firm in a timely manner:

- to confirm the provisional audit date(s) already booked at the previous audit closing meeting or respond to any such request for confirmation from the audit firm within five working days.
- to confirm that there have been no changes since the last audit, or provide an updated member self-assessment workbook capturing any changes since the last audit.

A surveillance audit takes place between 12 and 18 months from the certificate start date, to ensure the member continues to conform to the relevant RJC standard(s) throughout the certification period, regardless of whether there are any minor nonconformities with corrective actions to implement (noting that critical breaches and major nonconformities are subject to effective and verified corrective actions before the certificate is issued). The auditor will audit COP/LGMS provisions in Appendix 3, Criteria for Determining Provisions to be Assessed during COP/LGMS Surveillance Audits. In addition, and if applicable, the auditor will verify any implemented corrective actions for any minor nonconformities identified at the certification audit and verify that any nonconformities previously identified and closed have not reoccurred.

If there have been significant changes to your processes and systems, or the context in which you operate (e.g. changes to legislation), the audit firm might need to conduct a separate documentary review stage as part of the recertification audit.

TABLE 10. SURVEILLANCE AUDIT FORMAT

i. A FULLY REMOTE SURVEILLANCE CAN BE RECOMMENDED IF ALL OF THE BELOW APPLY	ii. A PARTIALLY REMOTE / ON-SITE SURVEILLANCE IS REQUIRED IF ANY OF THE BELOW APPLY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to verify any implemented corrective actions for any minor nonconformities identified at the certification audit, the audit firm does not need to conduct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employee interviews; – on-site document sampling (i.e. wage or working-hour records); – in-person reviews of health and safety or building changes; or – in-person reviews of confidential documents. – Any anticipated changes to the certification scope will not affect current conformity gradings. • Any external RJC-recognised certificates continue to be valid during the certification period and there are strong internal controls that include a review of management systems and corrective actions for nonconformities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to verify any implemented corrective actions for any minor nonconformities identified at the certification audit, the audit firm needs to conduct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employee interviews; or – on-site document sampling (i.e. wage or working-hour records); or – in-person reviews of health and safety or building changes; or – in-person reviews of confidential documents. • The previous mandatory audit was fully remote (see Appendix 9, Remote Audit Protocol). • Known and anticipated changes to certification scope will arise before recertification. • An external RJC-recognised certificate will expire before recertification. • The lead auditor presents a compelling reason for requesting an on-site surveillance audit.

5. During the certification cycle



5.1. RECERTIFICATION

Contact your audit firm of choice in good time and undergo a recertification audit within a maximum of six months before the expiry date of your current certificate, with a tolerance of a maximum of 10 working days over the deadline. The audit will seek to confirm your continued conformity with the requirements of the relevant RJC standard(s) and effectiveness of your processes and systems, and their continued relevance and applicability for the scope of certification.

If there have been significant changes to your processes and systems, or the context in which you operate (e.g. changes to legislation), the audit firm might need to conduct a separate documentary review stage as part of the recertification audit.

If your surveillance audit is invalidated, you need to undergo a recertification audit within the next six months after invalidation, namely within 2.5 years from the certificate start date, shortening the certification duration (see 4.2.4, Audit Invalidation).

5.2. CHANGING AUDIT FIRM

You can change the audit firm during the three-year certification cycle, provided:

- there is no disagreement over certification audit findings or surveillance format between you and your outgoing audit firm.
- there are plausible commercial reasons or auditor scope-related reasons.
- you undergo a full recertification audit at the same time, unless the audit required is a surveillance audit and your outgoing audit firm can no longer cover your activity forum, for example it no longer has appropriate personnel.

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5. During the certification cycle

5.3. REDUCTION, SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFICATE AND IMPACT ON RJC MEMBERSHIP

TABLE 11. REDUCTION, SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION OF CERTIFICATE

ACTION (WHAT)	REASONS (WHEN)	DETAILS (HOW)
<p>a) Extension/ reduction of certificate scope or reduction of certificate duration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a new entity/facility owned/ controlled by the member, and which actively contributes to the precious metal, diamond and coloured gemstone (in RJC scope) jewellery and watch supply chain: • An entity/facility no longer meets the criteria to be included in the certified member's RJC certification (and membership) scope. • An early recertification audit was completed (with more than six months before recertification deadline), either by the member's choice or following an invalidated surveillance audit, shortening the certification duration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will inform the RJC of the addition or removal of any entities/facilities impacting your membership and certification scope and follow the process at 4.1.6.4, Changes Affecting Membership and Certification Scope. • Depending on the result of the RJC due diligence, your RJC membership will be updated accordingly. • The audit firm may conduct a special audit (extension/reduction to scope) as a stand-alone or included in a surveillance or recertification audit, as applicable. • The audit firm shall issue an updated/new certificate. • Your RJC profile page will be updated accordingly.
<p>b) Suspension of certificate (certificate is temporarily invalid)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have not met contractual obligations with your audit firm. • You did not complete a surveillance audit within six months from the surveillance deadline, or the surveillance audit was invalidated (see 4.2.4, Audit Invalidation). • You have voluntarily requested a suspension. • Following a surveillance audit or any type of special audit, when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a critical breach has been identified; or – a major nonconformity has been identified, including misuse of the RJC logo and/or certificate; or – a complete corrective action plan has not been received within three months from identification of findings; or – workers below the minimum working age of 15 years are identified at members operating in countries where compulsory schooling ends earlier than 15 years of age (see COP 2024 provision 19.1(b) (Child Labour)). • The RJC has suspended your RJC membership for any reason. 	<p>Your audit firm will inform you of the reason for suspending your certificate and any actions you need to take to end suspension and will suspend your certificate.</p> <p>Note that if your COP certificate is suspended, your COC certificate will also be suspended.</p> <p>During a certificate suspension, you will not be allowed to use your RJC logos.</p> <p>The certificate and RJC logos will be removed from your RJC profile page and Member Portal.</p> <p>Critical breaches against the COC will lead to suspension of the COC section only on your profile page, which will otherwise remain visible.</p>

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5. During the certification cycle

ACTION (WHAT)	REASONS (WHEN)	DETAILS (HOW)
c) Reinstatement of certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have completed all the necessary actions to resolve the issue that has resulted in the suspension of the certificate. The audit firm has verified and accepted your actions. 	<p>The audit firm will reinstate the suspended certificate, including the COC certificate that was suspended strictly as a result of the COP certificate being suspended, and inform you of the same.</p> <p>The certificate will be reinstated on your RJC profile page and Member Portal and you will have access to and be allowed to use your RJC logos.</p>
d) Withdrawal of certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your certificate is transferred to another audit firm during the three-year certification cycle. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you fail to resolve the issues that have resulted in the certificate suspension in the timeframes allocated within this document. 	<p>Your outgoing audit firm will withdraw the current certificate, and your incoming audit firm will issue a new one.</p> <hr/> <p>Your audit firm will inform you of the expiry of the deadline allocated to resolve the issues that have resulted in the certificate suspension and of the resulting certificate withdrawal.</p> <p>The certificate and RJC logos will be removed from your RJC profile page and Member Portal, if there has been no previous certificate suspension.</p>
e) Termination of certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You cancel your RJC membership, or your membership is terminated by the RJC for any reason. 	<p>Your audit firm will inform you of the termination of certificate and RJC logo usage.</p> <p>Your RJC profile page and Member Portal account will be removed.</p>

Your existing valid certificate may be reduced, suspended, withdrawn or terminated by the audit firm for reasons including, but not limited to, those listed in Table 11, Reduction, suspension, withdrawal or termination of certificate.

5. During the certification cycle

5.4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

Disciplinary proceedings are a collection of administrative processes used to consider whether, and what type of, disciplinary action should be taken against RJC members or RJC audit firms and individual auditors.

Grounds for disciplinary proceedings may be complaints; incidents; known misconduct or breaches of general membership commitments, rules, regulations, policies or standards; judgements of a court of law, or any other legal or administrative regulatory body; any other evidence of members and audit firms bringing the RJC into serious disrepute; or other indicators of poor performance or failure to comply with RJC requirements.

Disciplinary action refers to the action that is taken during or following disciplinary proceedings. Examples of disciplinary action include written warnings, rejection of the audit report and a request for re-audit, suspension or expulsion from the RJC, with removal from the RJC website, as applicable.

The RJC will begin disciplinary proceedings against members if they fall:

- a) into any of the situations listed in article 3.13 of the RJC's Articles of Association, available at [RJC governance](#), including where any critical breaches have been identified against the COP/LGMS by your auditor.

The procedure below is followed:

Grounds for initiating disciplinary proceedings are established by the RJC, which considers temporary suspension of the member's profile page and by extension of RJC membership while the case is under review (for example, during critical breaches, incidents or complaints). An investigation is carried out (either by the RJC or its agents, bound by a confidentiality agreement). In some cases, the investigation (and any associated adverse rulings) may have already taken place under the RJC Complaints Mechanism or as part of the post-audit steps for a critical breach.

The RJC Executive Director reports the findings to the RJC Executive Committee, which votes on whether there is sufficient evidence to justify taking (further) disciplinary action against the accused member. If the vote passes, the RJC Executive Committee instructs the Executive Director to give to the accused member a written statement of objections to its conduct. The accused member may, within 30 days, submit a written response to the objections. The RJC Board of Directors votes on the proposed disciplinary action, subject to conflict of interest rules.

See the full procedure in the Articles of Association, in the section Disciplinary Action against Members and Rights of Appeal.

- b) into any of the administrative situations below:

5. During the certification cycle

TABLE 12. ADMINISTRATIVE SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF RJC MEMBERSHIP

GROUND FORS DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS, DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND DETAILS - SUSPENSION (ADMINISTRATIVE)

- The initial certificate against an RJC mandatory standard or a surveillance/recertification audit, is overdue by six months (including where audit was invalidated).
- Payment of membership fees is overdue; or
- You have not provided Annual Relevant Sales (ARS) information within 15 days of the last day of your invoicing month and following RJC notification, for RJC membership fee calculation; or
- You have voluntarily requested a suspension.
- You have not addressed an identified misuse of RJC logo, certificate and certification claims outside audit, within an RJC set deadline; or
- You have not provided information/ documentation for enhanced due diligence within the RJC set deadline.
- You are a refiner/smelter and you have not responded to the RJC within the set deadline:
 - to submit information on the mine of origin of mined gold received and/or source and type of recycled gold received; or
 - to confirm the publication of a summary audit report.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF MEMBER PROFILE PAGE AND, BY EXTENSION, OF RJC MEMBERSHIP

- However, overdue mandatory audits shall not automatically lead to membership suspension (and potentially subsequent termination of RJC membership) if the delay is due to your company undergoing organisational restructuring or upgrading/ amending entities/facilities.
- If the overdue audit refers only to the COC, your profile page will remain visible but will show only the COP certificate(s), while the relevant COC section will be removed.
- The RJC will notify you and the audit firm of any temporary suspension and the reason for the same and suspend your profile page on the RJC website.
- Temporary suspension of RJC membership will automatically trigger the suspension of any valid certificate(s) you may hold against any of the RJC standard(s).
- A member whose membership is temporarily suspended shall, unless otherwise determined by the RJC Board, remain liable to pay any money outstanding at the date of suspension.
- The RJC will reinstate your profile page and notify you and the audit firm of the same if you have completed all the necessary actions to resolve the issue that has resulted in your membership being suspended within RJC set deadlines. Any certificate suspended strictly as a result of RJC membership suspension will be reinstated.

GROUND FORS DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS, DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND DETAILS - TERMINATION (ADMINISTRATIVE)

- You did not achieve your initial certification, or you did not complete a surveillance or recertification audit, within 12 months of the deadline. At its sole discretion, the RJC may allow you more time to achieve your initial certification or conduct a surveillance or recertification audit, on a case-by-case basis.
- You have not paid your RJC membership fee within three calendar months after the same has become due.
- You have not provided Annual Relevant Sales (ARS) information within 30 days of the last day of your invoicing month and following RJC notification, for RJC membership fee calculation.
- You cancelled your RJC membership.

5. During the certification cycle

ADMINISTRATIVE TERMINATION OF RJC MEMBERSHIP

- Note that if the overdue mandatory audit is completed after 12 months from the audit deadline (where this is allowed by the RJC), your profile page and membership will be reinstated only when your new certificate is issued.
- The RJC will notify you and the audit firm of any termination and the reason for the same and permanently remove your profile page from the RJC website.
- Termination of RJC membership will automatically trigger the termination of any valid certificate(s) you may hold against any RJC standard(s).

5.5. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Any complaints regarding the audit and certification process shall be submitted to your audit firm. Note that any complaint/appeal that could not be resolved through the audit firm's complaints/appeals process shall be referred to the RJC as an escalation point to be addressed as per the RJC's Complaints Mechanism.

The RJC Complaints Mechanism defines how we will respond to such complaints and is available in full at [RJC complaints](#).

Any complaints or appeals regarding your RJC membership shall follow article 3.18 of the RJC's Articles of Association at [RJC governance](#).

The RJC aims to ensure the fair, timely and objective resolution of complaints relating to potential nonconformity with the RJC standards or RJC policies and procedures, including the certification and assurance system where such complaints could not be resolved at audit firm level and were escalated to the RJC.

By taking part in RJC activities, all RJC members and RJC audit firms and auditors agree to submit to the RJC Complaints Mechanism wherever complaints arise, and to be bound by the decisions of the RJC. This does not replace or limit access to judicial remedies.

The RJC also requires the RJC audit firms to have their own complaints mechanisms and dispute resolution procedures, in line with the requirements in this document and other relevant RJC documentation.



5. During the certification cycle

5.6. DATA CONFIDENTIALITY AND LEGAL ADVICE

The RJC is committed to protecting the confidentiality of our members' commercially sensitive information (see [RJC policies](#) and [Privacy Notice](#)).

To that end, the RJC management team:

- only accesses a member's information to process a membership application or as part of the RJC recognition programme of other certifications; reviews an audit report to ensure that audits have been conducted and certificates issued in line with the requirements of this document and the RJC Certification Process Requirements for Certification Bodies and Auditors; carries out an investigation as required under the RJC Complaints Mechanism; or assesses the effectiveness and impact of our work within the jewellery and watch supply chain; and
- keeps commercially sensitive information secure and strictly confidential, never sharing it with any third party (except for the information that is published on the RJC website, or if otherwise agreed with the individual members under the RJC recognition programme).

Note that members that are COC-certified can choose to withhold the identity of outsourcing contractors audited as part of their certification scope from the information published on the RJC website.

Other than as required by legislation, or accreditation requirements, the RJC keeps the details of complaints (and all proceedings of the RJC Complaints Mechanism) and disciplinary proceedings, including critical breaches, confidential. We reserve the right to publicly report anonymously and in aggregate on the complaints received, disciplinary proceedings initiated and how they were resolved, and any identified critical breaches.

We base all our decisions on objective evidence. In some cases, we may seek independent legal advice or involve independent auditors to help in our investigation and decision-making.

5.7. RJC ONGOING SUPPORT AND QUALITY CHECKS

The RJC uses multiple approaches to ensure the quality and integrity of the RJC certification process, such as:

- providing standard processes and terminology for members and auditors to use.
- requiring all members and auditors to identify any potential conflicts of interest.
- publishing practical guidance on implementing RJC standards and certification, including toolkits and templates. They can be accessed via either the RJC website or the Member Portal.
- offering training and advice for members and auditors.
- sending all members automated advance reminders of deadlines for their certification, surveillance and recertification audits.
- conducting additional quality reviews on members' audit reports, on a sampling basis, at any given time, to ensure that audits have been conducted and certificates issued in line with the relevant requirements.
- observing member RJC audits.

INTRODUCTION	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	RJC STANDARDS AND AUDITS	MEMBER'S CERTIFICATION JOURNEY	DURING THE CERTIFICATION CYCLE
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5. During the certification cycle

TABLE 13. USEFUL TIMEFRAMES

Unless otherwise specified, all section references below refer to this document.

TIMEFRAME	ACTIONS
at least 1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> before the audit, the member shall submit its completed/updated self-assessment workbook to the audit firm (4.1.3, 4.1.6.2).
at least 10 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> before the audit, the audit firm shall communicate and agree on the audit plan with the RJC member (4.1.6.5).
5 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the audit firm to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond to a member once contact is initiated (see RJC Certification Process Requirements, 1.1) communicate any identified differences between the RJC membership scope and certification scope to the RJC and the member (see RJC Certification Process Requirements, 3.5(d)). notify the RJC regarding a critical breach or major nonconformity and suspend an existing certificate (4.2.2). for the member to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sign the acceptance declaration on receipt of its audit report (4.3). respond to the audit firm to confirm the provisional audit date(s) already booked at the previous audit closing meeting (4.5).
10 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the audit firm to issue the certificate on receipt of the signed member declaration and subject to conditions (4.4). of tolerance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the audit firm to share the audit report with the RJC if critical breaches and/or major nonconformities have been identified, beyond deadline (4.3), for audit deadline (4.4.2, 5.1).
15 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the audit firm to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> decline a member's application for certification and inform the member of the same, from receipt of the application, if applicable (4.1.6.2). verify a member's corrective action plan and round of evidence (where applicable) and inform the member of the result, from receipt of the same (4.2.3).
1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the member to submit a corrective action plan to the auditor, including evidence of correction(s) (4.2.3, Table 9). for a semi-announced audit window (3.2.2). before the audit, the audit firm shall notify the member of the impending semi-announced audit (3.2.2).
2 to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the post-audit process (4.3).

INTRODUCTION	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	RJC STANDARDS AND AUDITS	MEMBER'S CERTIFICATION JOURNEY	DURING THE CERTIFICATION CYCLE
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5. During the certification cycle

TIMEFRAME	ACTIONS
3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the member to submit evidence of corrective action implementation for critical breaches and major nonconformities. (4.2.3, Table 9). for the certificate grace period (4.4.2) for the member to submit a complete corrective action plan following a surveillance or any type of special audit (5.3, Table 11).
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of validity of a completed/updated self-assessment workbook (4.1.6.2). to complete an audit, from start to finish (3.2, Table 2, 3.2.1, 4.1.6.5(c)). for an effective and auditor-approved corrective action plan to be in place before audit invalidation (4.2.4). to obtain an overdue initial certificate or to undergo any overdue surveillance and recertification audits before suspension of membership (5.1, 5.3, Table 11, 5.4, Table 12). for a rejoiner member to undergo audit, after the two-year stand-down period (3.2.3). for the member to notify the audit firm and the RJC of any changes within its business (4.1.6.4).
up to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> after a corresponding audit, external RJC-recognised certificates may be accepted (4.1.6.5(b)) for a rejoiner member to achieve certification after the two-year stand-down period (3.2.3(b)). after an RJC audit demonstrating full conformity of shared outsourced contractors, for the associated report to be used as evidence of conformity and as a substitute for an additional on-site audit (4.1.6.5(f)). of records to be reviewed during the initial certification audit (4.1.5.1).
12–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for surveillance audits to take place (3.2).
18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the initial certification audit to take place (3.2, Table 2(a)).
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the member to achieve initial certification (3.1, 3.2, Table 2(a)). as a stand-down period for rejoining companies (3.2.3).
2.5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from certificate start date for a recertification audit to be completed, in the case of an invalidated surveillance audit (5.1).
up to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the duration of an RJC certification cycle. of records to be reviewed at a recertification audit, if not reviewed at the surveillance audit (4.1.5.1). of records for any materials, components or products purchased and handled during this time, to be reviewed during the initial COC certification audit, if the member wishes to include them in the audit scope (4.1.5.1).

5. During the certification cycle

5.8. TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The RJC provides a range of online information resources and training to all its members and auditors. This includes guidelines, toolkits, templates, best practice case studies, auditor calibration exercises, FAQs and webinars (see [RJC website](#)).

We also organise regular information sessions/webinars and workshops. And, working in partnership with others, we create opportunities for knowledge exchange through, for example, workshops, seminars, briefings, inter-member support and more.

For specific queries on standards implementation, please contact training@responsiblejewellery.com.

5.9. LABELLING AND MARKETING

In addition to having their certification status published on the RJC website, RJC-certified members and entities are entitled and encouraged to promote their status directly to investors, suppliers, buyers and others, including final consumers.

RJC logos are available for certified members via the Member Portal, and these may be used in members' communications and marketing materials. Members must not use the RJC logo or certification number in a way that makes any misleading statements regarding their certification. Members must not imply that the certification applies to facilities or materials outside the certification scope. Auditors will check the correct use of the RJC logos as part of the mandatory audits. In all cases, members must abide by the RJC's rules for using these logos, as per [RJC policies](#).





RESPONSIBLE
JEWELLERY
COUNCIL

**THE COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY
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