APPENDIX 5

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

The first step in the CAP process is to conduct a root cause analysis for each non-conformance. "Root Cause Analysis" is a method used to identify underlying cause(s) of a non-conformance. It is used to correct or eliminate the cause and prevent the problem from recurring. If a root cause analysis is not conducted, or conducted poorly, there is a risk that time and resources may only address the symptoms of a problem, rather than addressing the real issue.
The most common element of a root cause analysis includes asking "Why a particular non-conformance occurred?" and documenting the answer.
When considering "Why" a particular problem occurred, it might be useful to consider the following potential elements to ensure comprehensive analysis:

- **Knowledge** – Did the problem occur due to lack of awareness or knowledge?
- **Assignment** – Did the problem occur because responsibility was not clearly assigned?
- **Tools** – Did the problem occur because appropriate tools are not available?
- **Training** – Did the problem occur due to lack of proper training?
- **Accountability** – Did the problem occur because little/no accountability, e.g. in typical situation nothing happens when the task is not done?
- **Resources** – Did the problem occur due to insufficient resources?

The corrective action to a root cause often requires the examination of one or more of the above management systems for change or improvement.

Example: Consider the case of a worker observed not wearing hearing protection in a high noise area. It may be easy to conclude that the reason was that hearing protection was not provided. However, upon a more thorough evaluation of the evidence, the auditor may find that the auditee was unfamiliar with the regulation requiring the use of hearing protection, or that the worker was not trained on the need to wear hearing protection, or the auditee lacked an enforcement/ reinforcement process. These are more fundamental or root causes of the observed deficiency.