

Australian Standard®

Quality system guidelines

**Part 9:
Guide to AS/NZS ISO 9001:1994 for
telecommunications call charging
and call billing**

This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee QR/2, Quality of Service. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 22 January 1996 and published on 5 April 1996.

The following interests are represented on Committee QR/2:

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Australia Post
Australian Bankers Association
Australian Bus and Coach Association
Australian Hotels Association
Australian Organization for Quality
Commonwealth Department of Tourism, Australia
Department of Defence, Australia
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New Zealand Association of Certifying Bodies
Quality Society of Australasia
Restaurant and Catering Association of N.S.W.
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AAP Telecommunications
Attorney General's Department, Australia
AUSTEL
Australian Telecommunications User Group (ATUG)
Consumers Telecommunications Network
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**Part 9:
Guide to AS/NZS ISO 9001:1994 for
telecommunications call charging
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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee QR/2 on Quality of Service.

The objective of this Standard is to provide guidelines for quality management systems for telecommunications call charging and call billing. These guidelines are considered relevant to those organizations involved in providing telecommunications services to customers, whether they be carriers, service providers or resellers.

This Standard is the result of a consensus among Australian and New Zealand representatives on the Joint Committee to produce it as an Australian Standard.

The primary reference for this Standard is AS/NZS ISO 9001, *Quality systems—Model for quality assurance in design, development, production, installation and servicing*.

The guidelines in this Standard were developed in consultation with a broad cross-section of the telecommunications industry and telecommunications users. Particular attention was paid to the following:

- (a) The operation of the various types of telecommunications network-based call charging equipment.
- (b) The transfer of call charging data from telecommunications network equipment to billing centres.
- (c) The operation of billing centres, including charge calculation, account production and charging data storage.

The specific requirements of statutory and regulatory authorities (e.g. AUSTEL, National Standards Commission) are not addressed directly in AS/NZS ISO 9001 or in this Standard. However, such requirements, where they are applicable, should be contained in written procedures and therefore should become an integral part of the quality system.

Attention is drawn to AS/NZS ISO 9004.1 *Quality management and quality system elements, Part 1: Guidelines* and AS 3904.2/NZS 9004.2/ISO 9004.2, *Quality management and quality system elements, Part 2: Guidelines for services*. Where this Standard gives guidance on the application of AS/NZS ISO 9001 within the context of the telecommunications industry, AS/NZS ISO 9004.1 describes an extensive list of quality system elements to assist an organization to develop a quality system appropriate to its needs. This is supplemented by AS 3904.2/NZS 9004.2/ISO 9004.2 which relates to services and describes concepts, principles and quality system elements applicable to all forms of service offerings.

The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which it applies. An 'informative' appendix is for information and guidance only.

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD	4
1 SCOPE AND APPLICATION	5
2 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS	5
3 DEFINITIONS	5
4 QUALITY SYSTEM ELEMENTS	7
4.0 General	7
4.1 Management responsibility	9
4.2 Quality system	14
4.3 Contract review	17
4.4 Design control	21
4.5 Document and data control	30
4.6 Purchasing	34
4.7 Control of customer-supplied product	38
4.8 Product identification and traceability	39
4.9 Process control	40
4.10 Inspection and testing	42
4.11 Control of inspection, measuring and test equipment	48
4.12 Inspection and test status	50
4.13 Control of nonconforming product	51
4.14 Corrective and preventive action	53
4.15 Handling, storage, packaging, preservation and delivery	56
4.16 Control of quality records	58
4.17 Internal quality audits	60
4.18 Training	61
4.19 Servicing	62
4.20 Statistical techniques	63
APPENDIX A AN EXAMPLE DOCUMENT APPROVAL, ISSUE AND ALTERATION SCHEME	64

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FOREWORD

Recent years have seen worldwide movement by virtually all sectors of commerce and industry to consideration of the importance of quality management to their business.

Internationally, the initial publication of ISO 9000 (and its companion Standards ISO 9001 and ISO 9002) in 1987 was a major milestone for the fledgling 'quality industry'.

Australia first published standards for suppliers' quality systems in 1975 and, having contributed to the development of the ISO 9000 series of International Standards, adopted them as the AS 3900 series in 1987, shortly after their international publication.

Recent years have also seen sweeping changes in the Australian telecommunications industry, from the divestiture of the PMG to form Telecom in 1976, through the Davidson report in the 1980s to the introduction of competition with the Telecommunications Acts 1989 and 1991 and the formation of AUSTEL as the industry regulator.

These two separate movements are now converging, with the newly competitive telecommunications service supply industry recognizing the worth of quality management to their own business, to their customers and to Australia at large.

In May 1992 AUSTEL issued a discussion paper titled 'Investigations into Standards for Call Charging and Billing Systems'. The subsequent inquiry resulted in its report to the Minister for Transport and Communications in December 1992. The recommendations of that report, particularly recommendations 12 and 17, provided the impetus for the application of quality management Standards to telecommunications call charging and billing.

This document of necessity addresses only a portion of the total activities of any telecommunications carrier or service provider. The principles it outlines, however, can be readily applied to many other facets of the business, and to great effect.

In implementing a quality system for its call charging and billing process, each licensee will need to decide if 'design' is within the scope of the quality system and consequently whether AS/NZS ISO 9001:1994 or AS/NZS ISO 9002:1994 is the appropriate Standard. These guidelines provide guidance to both Standards. It is very unlikely that AS/NZS ISO 9003:1994 would apply to the telecommunications charging and billing industry.

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Australian Standard

Quality system guidelines

Part 9: Guide to AS/NZS ISO 9001:1994 for telecommunications call charging and call billing

1 SCOPE AND APPLICATION This Standard is intended for use by a telecommunications carrier or service provider (licensee), for guidance on quality management standards and their application to telecommunications call charging and call billing process. This recognizes the complexity and diversity of the business of providing telecommunications services, and describes the application of quality management standards to one specific area of that business.

This Standard is also applicable to the monitoring or sampling systems used by the licensee to generate performance indicators for charging accuracy, ensuring that such systems are designed and operated in such a way as to provide consistent and accurate measures of licensee charging accuracy performance.

2 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS The following documents are referred to in this Standard:

AS/NZS ISO

- | | |
|------|--|
| 8402 | Quality management and quality assurance — Vocabulary |
| 9001 | Quality systems — Model for quality assurance in design, development, production, installation and servicing |
| 9002 | Quality systems — Model for quality assurance in production, installation and servicing |

3 DEFINITIONS For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

3.1 Bill — a statement of money owed for goods or services supplied.

3.2 Carrier — a general carrier or mobile carrier (*Ref: Telecommunications Act 1991*).

3.3 Charging and billing process — *call* charging and *call* billing process. Figure 1 illustrates the generic call charging and call billing process. All telecommunications charging and billing process will use essentially these process elements, albeit in slightly differing configurations.

The use of shading in the 'blocks' in Figure 1 is explained as follows:

- (a) *Shaded* — components of the charging and billing process that are within the scope of this Standard.
- (b) *Partially shaded* — components of the charging and billing process that are partially within the scope of this Standard.
- (c) *Non-shaded* — processes that are not within the scope of this Standard.

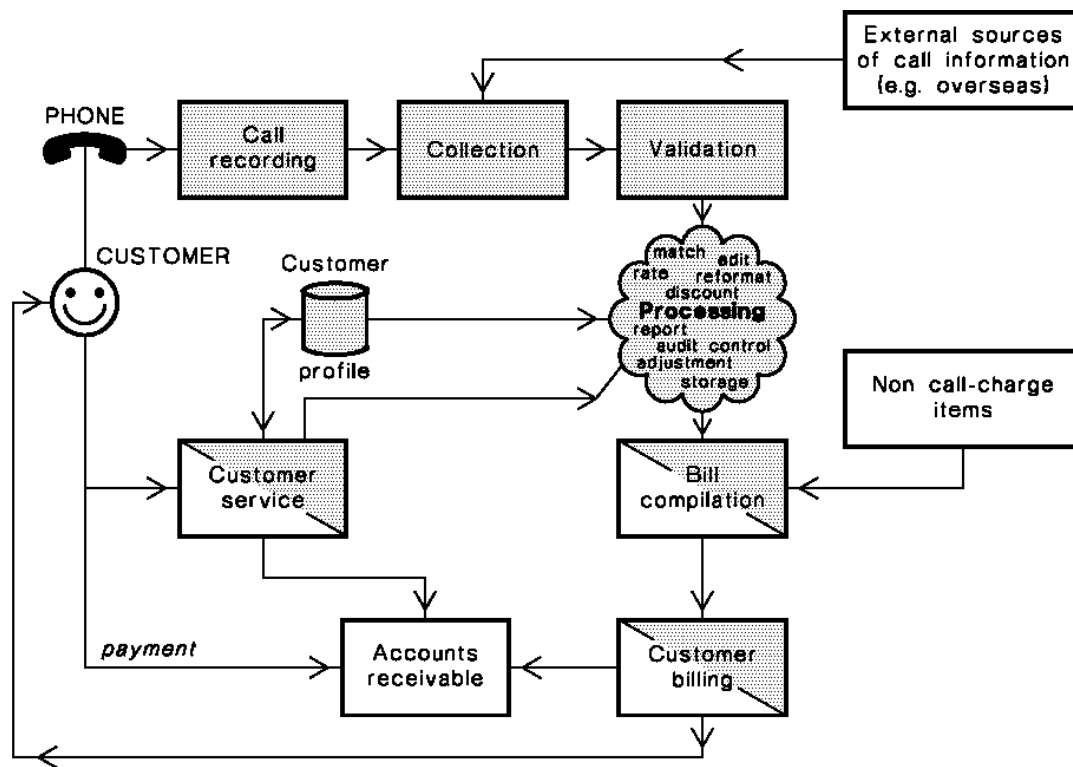


FIGURE 1 GENERIC CALL CHARGING AND CALL BILLING PROCESS

The process components represented by 'blocks' in Figure 1 may be described as follows:

- (i) *Bill compilation* — the assembling of billing records on a customer-by-customer basis.
- (ii) *Call recording* — the process of capturing details of a call.
- (iii) *Collection* — aggregation of call records from a number of sources.
- (iv) *Customer billing* — production and distribution of bills.
- (v) *Customer profile* — the data, uniquely identifiable to a specific customer, which is necessary for call charge processing.
- (vi) *Customer service* — the process of receiving and acting upon information queries and complaints from the customer.
- (vii) *Processing* — the conversion of call records into billing records including, for example, matching, rating and discounting.
- (viii) *Validation* — a check that call details conform to individual criteria prior to further processing.

3.4 Licensee — the holder of a general telecommunications licence or the holder of a mobile telecommunications licence or one eligible to hold a service provider's CLASS licence and may also include any person or organization who bills customers for telecommunications calls.

3.5 Product — the result of activities or processes. A product may be tangible or intangible and includes service, hardware, processed materials, software or a combination thereof.

Quality management is accomplished by managing the processes in the organization. It is necessary to manage a process in two senses —

- (a) the structure and operation of the process itself within which the product or information flows; and
- (b) the quality of the product or information flowing within the structure.

The telecommunications call charging and billing process can be considered as a series of sub-processes, each with various inputs, outputs and interfaces, and requiring different levels of planning and control.

In the guidance supplied in this Standard, these sub-processes are as illustrated in Figure 1. To assist with understanding, and unless otherwise noted in the guidance, the term product is further qualified as either sub-product or end-product throughout this Standard. These terms have the following meanings:

- (i) *Sub-product* — the result or output of a sub-process
- (ii) *End-product* — the result or output of the overall call charging and billing process i.e. call records on a customer bill.

3.6 Supply chain — the path for the progression of materials through various organizations and processes so that a final product is delivered to an end-user. This may be depicted as follows:

Subcontractor → Supplier → Customer,

where the following definitions apply:

- (a) *Subcontractor* — person or organization that provides goods or services to the supplier.
- (b) *Supplier* — see 'Licensee', Clause 3.4.
- (c) *Customer* — company, organization or individual responsible for paying the bill in return for receiving services delivered by a supplier.

4 QUALITY SYSTEM ELEMENTS

4.0 General AS/NZS ISO 9001 specifies and defines twenty separate quality system requirements, often referred to as quality elements, which are as follows:

- 1 Management responsibility
- 2 Quality system
- 3 Contract review
- 4 Design control
- 5 Document and data control
- 6 Purchasing
- 7 Control of customer-supplied product
- 8 Product identification and traceability
- 9 Process control
- 10 Inspection and testing
- 11 Control of inspection, measuring and test equipment
- 12 Inspection and test status
- 13 Control of nonconforming product
- 14 Corrective and preventive action
- 15 Handling, storage, packaging, preservation and delivery
- 16 Control of quality records
- 17 Internal quality audits
- 18 Training
- 19 Servicing
- 20 Statistical techniques

In the remainder of this Clause 4, the clause numbers relate to the listed quality elements; for example, Clause 4.1 relates to quality element 1. The clauses parallel those of AS/NZS ISO 9001 and their content is intended to explain the intent of the corresponding AS/NZS ISO 9001 clauses. The text contained in boxes is a direct extract from Clause 4 of AS/NZS ISO 9001, provided to allow easy reference. (It should be noted that the numbering of 'Notes' within this text does not, therefore, begin at '1'.) Where examples are given as to how the intent may be realized, the examples should not be taken as prescriptive or exhaustive. There are many ways whereby a licensee may achieve the intent of AS/NZS ISO 9001. Each licensee should adopt those approaches that best suit its mode of operation and that comply with the requirements of AS/NZS ISO 9001. In particular, given the technological basis of the telecommunications industry, where documentation is mentioned as part of a requirement, the electronic equivalent (e.g. on-line computer help screens) is acceptable.

4.1 Management responsibility

4.1.1 *Quality policy*

The supplier's management with executive responsibility shall define and document its policy for quality, including objectives for quality and its commitment to quality. The quality policy shall be relevant to the supplier's organizational goals and the expectations and needs of its customers. The supplier shall ensure that this policy is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels in the organization.

Guidance

The quality policy statement should be endorsed and signed by the most senior executive or executives.

It is management's responsibility to ensure that the implications of this policy are communicated to, and understood by, all employees involved in the licensee's charging and billing process.

Management should update the quality policy as appropriate, to meet changes in the licensee's activities or organization, or to accommodate external factors such as changes in legislation, new business opportunities, organization responsibilities or regulatory requirements.

4.1.2 *Organization*

4.1.2.1 *Responsibility and authority*

The responsibility, authority and the interrelation of personnel who manage, perform and verify work affecting quality shall be defined and documented, particularly for personnel who need the organizational freedom and authority to:

- a) initiate action to prevent the occurrence of any nonconformities relating to product, process and quality system;
- b) identify and record any problems relating to the product, process and quality system;
- c) initiate, recommend or provide solutions through designated channels;
- d) verify the implementation of solutions;
- e) control further processing, delivery or installation of nonconforming product until the deficiency or unsatisfactory condition has been corrected.

Guidance

The preparation of an organization chart for the charging and billing process is one way to clearly define the responsibility, authority and communication interfaces in that process. It is recommended that this chart indicates not only the hierarchical structure but also the process structure. This detail may also be described elsewhere in, say, job descriptions or detailed procedures.

4.1.2.2 *Resources*

The supplier shall identify resource requirements and provide adequate resources including the assignment of trained personnel (see 4.18) for management, performance of work and verification activities including internal quality audits.

Guidance

Examples of these resources can include —

- (a) human resources and specialized skills;
- (b) call recording, collection and processing equipment;
- (c) verification equipment; and
- (d) computer hardware and software.

4.1.2.3 *Management representative*

The supplier's management with executive responsibility shall appoint a member of the supplier's own management who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have defined authority for

- a) ensuring that a quality system is established, implemented and maintained in accordance with this International Standard, and
- b) reporting on the performance of the quality system to the supplier's management for review and as a basis for improvement of the quality system.

NOTE 5 The responsibility of a management representative may also include liaison with external bodies on matters relating to the supplier's quality system.

Guidance

The licensee should identify a management representative as having overall responsibility and authority for the quality management of the licensee's charging and billing process as described in Clause 3.3, to ensure consistency of action across different management structures, operations and business units.

The management representative should have the organizational freedom and authority described. The management representative may have other jobs; the freedom referred to above only applies when the representative is acting in a quality assurance capacity for the licensee's charging and billing process.

In addition, each management unit which impacts on the integrity of any element of the charging and billing process (see Figure 1) should have a management representative who, irrespective of any other responsibilities, has defined responsibilities and authority for ensuring that the requirements of the quality system are implemented and maintained within these management units.

4.1.3 *Management review*

The supplier's management with executive responsibility shall review the quality system at defined intervals sufficient to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness in satisfying the requirements of this International Standard and the supplier's stated quality policy and objectives (see 4.1.1). Records of such reviews shall be maintained (see 4.16).

Guidance

Management review is potentially a powerful tool for quality improvement (or consistent 'quality' at reduced cost). To improve efficiency and effectiveness, the following areas could be addressed with regard to management review:

- (a) Will it be used?
- (b) Will there be improved inter-departmental communication?
- (c) Will it provide cost-benefits?
- (d) Will there be improved efficiency?
- (e) Consideration of preventive action required (see Clause 4.14.3).

Management should review (as distinct from audit), the quality system at least once a year; or more frequently if major changes to the quality management system are taking place or are planned.

The records of such reviews should show what, if any, actions were considered necessary and the effectiveness of such actions should be examined during subsequent reviews.

The status and importance of these reviews should be reflected in the representation on the review panel, which should be at the highest appropriate level. It may also include representatives from the management units identified in Clauses 4.1.2.1 and 4.1.2.2 as impacting on the licensee's call charging and billing process, e.g. call recording, collection or processing.

Management reviews may identify the need for major modifications or for additional or changed resources for the quality system, e.g. policy, organizational or process changes, and therefore it is important that those who can effect these changes are present.

4.2 Quality system

4.2.1 General

The supplier shall establish, document and maintain a quality system as a means of ensuring that product conforms to specified requirements. The supplier shall prepare a quality manual covering the requirements of this International Standard. The quality manual shall include or make reference to the quality system procedures and outline the structure of the documentation used in the quality system.

NOTE 6 Guidance on quality manuals is given in ISO 10013.

Guidance

AS/NZS ISO 8402 defines a quality system as ‘organizational structure, procedures, processes and resources needed to implement quality management’.

In practice, documentation is necessary to show that a quality system has been established and is in place, and to show that the licensee intends to achieve quality for its customers.

The documentation may be tiered so that the top tier is the Quality Manual, the next tier comprises procedures, and a third tier consists of work instructions, training documents or similar.

The Quality Manual is the directory of the quality management system, and should include the following:

- (a) The quality policy of the licensee, signed by the senior executive officer.
- (b) The activities of the licensee.
- (c) A concise description of the quality management system.
- (d) An outline of the quality system procedures as they have been adopted and implemented by the licensee.
- (e) Definition of terms as used by the licensee.
- (f) Details of the operational flow of the licensee processes that contribute to the end-product that is delivered to the customer, highlighting the steps at which quality checks should be completed.
- (g) An organizational chart identifying the departments or individuals, or both, who participate in the processes involved in building and delivering the end-product to customers, including the interfaces between processes and departments.

The quality system documentation would describe the purpose of delivering output and benefits to the licensee and to its customers that result from the delivery of quality output. The documentation would also describe to employees in each functional area of the licensee the procedures, processes and results that are necessary in order to achieve the expected quality.

4.2.2 *Quality system procedures*

The supplier shall

- a) prepare documented procedures consistent with the requirements of this International Standard and the supplier's stated quality policy, and
- b) effectively implement the quality system and its documented procedures.

For the purposes of this International Standard, the range and detail of the procedures that form part of the quality system shall be dependent upon the complexity of the work, the methods used, and the skills and training needed by personnel involved in carrying out the activity.

NOTE 7 Documented procedures may make reference to work instructions that define how an activity is performed.

Guidance

Procedures are those activities critical to the maintenance of quality that describe by whom, with what, when, where, how and why an activity is carried out. The procedure should not only identify personnel involved but also identify the functions, edits, and controls performed and used by the personnel in performing their portion of the process. The procedure should identify documentation which each process generates and any reference documents which are needed in the implementation of each functional process.

Training and qualifications may be an effective alternative to extensive procedures.

The licensee could, for example—

- (a) write down operating procedures, and not merely pass them on verbally;
- (b) provide facilities capable of handling the required operations;
- (c) train personnel or hire personnel who have the necessary skills;
- (d) identify supervisory or other personnel who may be asked for clarification of procedures;
- (e) review procedures periodically to ensure that changes in inputs, technology, outputs and similar are accurately reflected; and
- (f) describe input, output and action required.

(For guidance on 'procedures' see Clause 4.9.)

4.2.3 *Quality planning*

The supplier shall define and document how the requirements for quality will be met. Quality planning shall be consistent with all other requirements of a supplier's quality system and shall be documented in a format to suit the supplier's method of operation. The supplier shall give consideration to the following activities, as appropriate, in meeting the specified requirements for products, projects or contracts:

- a) the preparation of quality plans;
- b) the identification and acquisition of any controls, processes, equipment (including inspection and test equipment), fixtures, resources and skills that may be needed to achieve the required quality;
- c) ensuring the compatibility of the design, the production process, installation, servicing, inspection and test procedures and the applicable documentation;
- d) the updating, as necessary, of quality control, inspection and testing techniques, including the development of new instrumentation;
- e) the identification of any measurement requirement involving capability that exceeds the known state of the art, in sufficient time for the needed capability to be developed;
- f) the identification of suitable verification at appropriate stages in the realization of product;
- g) the clarification of standards of acceptability for all features and requirements, including those which contain a subjective element;
- h) the identification and preparation of quality records (see 4.16).

NOTE 8 The quality plans referred to [see 4.2.3 a)] may be in the form of a reference to the appropriate documented procedures that form an integral part of the supplier's quality system.

Guidance

The Standard requires planning to determine how the requirements for quality will be met. A separate quality plan is not necessarily required, and it is quite acceptable for quality planning to form part of the detail of operating procedures.

For the purposes of AS/NZS ISO 9001, Clause 4.2.3 (a), a quality plan is a document, specific to the licensee, which defines quality-related activities. A quality plan should reference relevant procedures, such as in the following examples:

- (a) All new products or services being planned by the licensee should include considerations and processes required to ensure the new products or services conform to the quality system requirements.
- (b) Any changes in the charging and billing process, such as changes to equipment, data flow or processing of data, should include a procedure to verify that all quality assurance steps are maintained.
- (c) Periodic reviews of existing procedures should be completed to ensure they are current with licensee and customer expectations, technology changes, production changes, government or legal requirements and similar.

A quality plan should also include the licensee-specific definition of quality. An effective quality plan will also reduce the need for detailed procedures.

4.3 Contract review

4.3.1 General

The supplier shall establish and maintain documented procedures for contract review and for the coordination of these activities.

Guidance

The licensee should develop a procedure for identifying those aspects of a contract relating to charging and billing. The two main classes of contract used are as follows:

- (a) 'Licensee as supplier', i.e. a contract with a customer.
- (b) 'Licensee as purchaser', i.e. a contract with subcontractors.

There will often be significant variation in complexity in both types. Regardless of the category of contract, a method should be in place to address contract reviews and issues.

As part of such a method, standard contracts might be used for agreements made between a licensee and a customer or supplier for activities considered part of normal business operations. These standard contracts should not be altered unless appropriate reviews have been held with and agreement obtained from the relevant business units.

In instances where the contract is a verbal agreement, such as a request for service, the licensee should have in place a process to verify the agreement to ensure that all parties concur with the terms and information being agreed. In the example of a request for service, the licensee should confirm the customer's details such as billing address, account number, and service and equipment details to ensure the service is provisioned and billed to the correct customer.

NOTE: The terms and conditions of some 'standard' contracts are part of the tariffs lodged with AUSTEL, and are available on request. The process of review and amendment is defined by the *Telecommunications Act 1991*.

4.3.2 *Review*

Before submission of a tender, or the acceptance of a contract or order (statement of requirement), the tender, contract or order shall be reviewed by the supplier to ensure that:

- a) the requirements are adequately defined and documented; where no written statement of requirement is available for an order received by verbal means, the supplier shall ensure that the order requirements are agreed before their acceptance;
- b) any differences between the contract or order requirements and those in the tender are resolved;
- c) the supplier has the capability to meet the contract or order requirements.

Guidance

When the use of a standard contract is not feasible or desirable the licensee should have in place a review process for the relevant business units, with input from the appropriate work groups, to draft a contract or, alternatively, to review and agree to a contract developed by an external party.

4.3.3 *Amendment to a contract*

The supplier shall identify how an amendment to a contract is made and correctly transferred to the functions concerned within the supplier's organization.

Guidance

The procedures for making amendments to contracts should include a change control mechanism to record what the amendment is, who requests it and when it is made. In addition, a method should be in place to ensure that only the latest approved version of a contract is made available to affected parties.