8 Tips For Passing a NAID Certification Audit

By William Rinehart

For several years I was a NAID Certification Auditor in California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona and Hawaii.

The NAID Security Audit is a comprehensive set of standards that have been developed by the NAID Staff and security professionals over several years. It is continually being reviewed to ensure the standards are meaningful and provide the security of materials given over for destruction.   What I have identified here (just based on my experience, nothing scientific) is my list of the top problem areas for operators in passing NAID audits.

Hopefully, these tips help you prepare for and pass future certification audits.

1. **Start the NAID Certification process early**

    Frequently the NAID Certification is desired to qualify for a certain bid to provide services. Since the process has several levels of approval and involves both on-site inspection and approval by the NAID Certification Board, you should plan on a 3-4 month process.

2. **Ask questions before the audit.**

    By asking questions in advance of the audit you will be much better prepared.

The NAID staff is always available to answer questions or explain any aspect of the NAID audit with which you need assistance. Obviously, you want to use this resource after carefully reading the survey and in time to help you prepare for the audit.

3. **Have your staff involved during pre-audit and audit**

   The audit covers many different areas of your operations. In some cases, one person can deal with all the issues. However, many time disciplines such as HR, Transportation, Operations and Security must be involved. It best to involve them during the pre-audit phase so they can provide proper support.

4. **Have personnel files organized**

   Providing personnel files that are unorganized makes it very difficult and is waste of time for the NAID auditor to locate information. Personnel files can particularly be a challenge. One approach is to have a "NAID" section in each personnel file that contains the confidentiality, drug testing and background reports the auditor needs to examine.

5. **Know how to operate your security systems**

   NAID has specific requirements for video retention and your ability to recover data. Make sure to have a qualified person available to recover data from your CCTV system and understands your alarms. Frequently applicants are unfamiliar on how to operate the equipment (mostly to recover the data from stored video files) which can lead to delays and incomplete reports. If you do not know how to operate the system, have appropriate support available.

6. **Have all required business records available**

   The audit requires several documents to be available for review by the auditor such as business license, certificates of insurance, security alarm bills, sign in-out logs and vehicle records. Review the audit document carefully and make a check list to ensure you have all the documents available.

7. **Communicate changes your business location or equipment in advance of the audit**

   It is important that you notify NAID when you have moved or changed equipment. This information is crucial to auditors. Personnel changes however are common and can be explained to the auditor during the audit process.

8. **Involve your vendors in the certification process**

   Some of the NAID Certification requirements are met by third party vendors. For example, Alarms, CCTV and Background Screening all have specific requirements that in most cases are provided by a third-party vendor.

   Review the requirements with these third-party vendors in advance and use their expertise during the audit if necessary.

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