



“ I’m doing work  
that makes a  
difference ”

says Lead Nadcap Auditor  
Donald Bauer

## Donald Bauer

**D**onald Bauer, Lead Nadcap Auditor, has worked for the Performance Review Institute (PRI) for over five years. Here he tells of how he came to work for PRI, his typical day as an auditor, and what it is that keeps him coming back for more.

If you’re considering working for PRI as a Nadcap auditor you may meet Donald Bauer. As well as being an independent auditor, he helps to train new ones.

He has worked with us since June 2017, following more than 40 years in the metal processing industry where he gained extensive experience of various types of finishing including anodizing, electroplating and paint, with a strong track record in process engineering, process planning, lab management and labour management.

Donald applied to PRI after retiring from full-time work because he wanted a flexible, rewarding part-time role that would give him flexibility to work when it suits him and an opportunity for international travel – something he’d never done before. He lives in New Nebraska, USA and since joining us he has worked all over the US and Canada and Western Europe, visiting more than a dozen countries.

### Travel and variety

Typically, he conducts about 120 audit days per year. He says, “If you enjoy traveling, and your family circumstances allow you to do it regularly, working as an auditor for PRI is a great option for a semi-retirement career.”

“I like the idea that I am completely in charge of my audits once they have been assigned. I set the audit days, arrange my travel, and work directly with the auditee. PRI Staff Engineers are available if needed, and PRI’s scheduling staff are efficient and easy to work with, so timetabling conflicts can be avoided.”

Travel isn’t the only attraction. Donald likes meeting new people and says he’s been struck by the fact that, wherever he goes, everyone in the industry is working towards the same goals of quality and safety.

Another aspect of the job that he particularly enjoys is the variety. It gives him opportunities to learn about the different business sectors serving the aerospace industry and he says no two audits are the same. He likes the challenge of performing audits on procedures, specifications and compliance requirements, in businesses with their own distinct ways of working towards a common end.

## Typical day

The work may be varied, but the first day of an audit follows a similar pattern because Donald has developed a plan that works both for him and the business being audited.

He starts bright and early in the hotel with a final review of the audit scope and documentation. He goes to the auditee's premises, aiming to start around 8:15am with a meeting to agree the requirements and scope of the audit, as well as practical aspects like when and how to manage breaks and lunch around the factory's schedule.

Ideally, Donald has a working lunch, enabling a finish around 4pm. With initial meetings out the way he usually focuses on job audits on day one, because he prefers to get these done before turning his attention to processes and documentation. Afterwards, it's back to the hotel, usually a long walk and then a thorough review of the day and a check of the entries he's made about what he has seen. Subsequent days follow a similar pattern.

A typical audit takes several days and places demands on auditees but those who prepare thoroughly find the process much easier. He says, "It's important not to rush through the pre-audit. We can tell when a business hasn't put in enough effort. My advice is to read each checklist question three times to make sure you understand it and pay especially close attention to the compliance requirements, including those in the Audit Handbook CP."

## Rewarding

It's demanding for auditors too. But Donald says it's worth it. "I feel I'm doing work that makes a difference. Often auditees tell me the Nadcap audits have made their manufacturing operations better overall and it's rewarding to be thanked for having helped with that.

"The travel, in particular, can be physically tiring but independent auditors have the freedom to minimise that in whatever ways suit us.

"You can make the audit itself a convivial one by establishing a respectful working relationship and accepting that you don't know everything, so there's a free flow of information to support an audit that is looking for compliance, not problems. We're offering a fresh pair of eyes to look critically at the business and its operations, so stay friendly and relaxed and any issues will present themselves.

"The auditee will be more accepting of any non-conformance reports (NCRs) if the auditor can explain the issue clearly and back that up with solid evidence."

For information on how to become an auditor for the Performance Review Institute please visit:  
[contractwithpri.com](http://contractwithpri.com)