

Guidance Note on Audit of Inventories *

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* Issued in November, 1994.

Handbook of Auditing Pronouncements-II

The following is the text of the Guidance Note on *Audit of Inventories*, issued by the Auditing Practices Committee (APC) of the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. This Guidance Note should be read in conjunction with the Statements on Standard Auditing Practices (SAPs)¹ issued by the Institute.

1. Para 2.1 of the “Preface to the Statements on Standard Auditing Practices²” issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India states that the “main function of the APC is to review the existing auditing practices in India and to develop Statements on Standard Auditing Practices (SAPs) so that these may be issued by the Council of the Institute.” Para 2.4 of the Preface states that the “APC will issue Guidance Notes on the issues arising from the SAPs wherever necessary.”

2. The Auditing Practices Committee has also taken up the task of reviewing the Statements on auditing matters issued prior to the formation of the Committee. It is intended to issue, in due course of time, Engagement Standards or Guidance Notes, as appropriate, on the matters covered by such Statements which would then stand withdrawn. Accordingly, with the issuance of this Guidance Note on Audit of Inventories, Chapter 5 of the *Statement on Auditing Practices*, titled “Inventories”, shall stand withdrawn. In due course of time, the entire *Statement on Auditing Practices* shall be withdrawn.³

Introduction

3. Inventories are tangible property held for sale in the ordinary course of business, or in the process of production for such sale, or for consumption in the production of goods or services for sale, including maintenance supplies and consumable stores and spare parts meant for replacement in the normal course.⁴ Inventories normally comprise raw materials including components, work-in-process, finished goods including by-products, maintenance supplies, stores and spare parts, and loose tools.⁵

** Now known as the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (AASB).

¹ Now known as Engagement Standards.

² The said Preface has been withdrawn pursuant to issuance of the Revised “Preface to Standards on Quality Control, Auditing, Review, Other Assurance and Related Service”, by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. The Revised Preface is effective from April 1, 2008. The text of the revised Preface is reproduced in the Vol. I.A of this Handbook.

³ Since the Statement was withdrawn in March, 2005, the entire paragraph is redundant.

⁴ Servicing equipment, stand-by equipment and specialised spares of machinery (which are in the nature of ‘insurance spares’) are normally capitalised.

⁵ The audit procedures, relating to shares debentures and other securities held as stock-in-trade (i.e., for sale in the ordinary course of business) are similar to those followed for audit of investments. Accordingly, this Guidance Note does not apply in respect of audit of shares, debentures and other securities held as stock-in-trade.

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4. Inventories normally constitute a significant portion of the total assets, particularly in the case of manufacturing and trading entities as well as some service rendering entities. Audit of inventories, therefore, assumes special importance.

5. The following features of inventories have an impact on the related audit procedures:

- (i) By their very nature, inventories normally turn over rapidly.
- (ii) Inventories are susceptible to obsolescence and spoilage. Further, some of the items of inventory may be slow-moving while others may follow a seasonal pattern of movement.
- (iii) Inventories are normally movable in nature, although there may be some instances of immovable inventories also, e.g., in the case of an entity dealing in real-estate.
- (iv) All the items of inventory may not be located at one place but may be held at different locations such as factories and warehouses, or with third parties such as selling agents.
- (v) The individual items of inventory may not be significant in value, but taken together, they normally constitute a significant proportion of total assets and current assets of manufacturing, trading and certain service entities.
- (vi) Physical condition (e.g., stage of completion of work-in-process in certain industries) and existence of certain items of inventories may be difficult to determine.
- (vii) Valuation of inventories may involve varying degrees of estimation, including expert opinions, e.g., in the case of jewelry.

Internal Control Evaluation

6. The auditor should study and evaluate the system of internal control relating to inventories, to determine the nature, timing and extent of his other audit procedures. He should particularly review the following aspects of internal control relating to inventories⁶:

- (a) The control procedures should provide for segregation of such functions whose combination may permit the commitment or concealment of fraud or error; for example, persons undertaking the physical verification of

⁶ The extent of review of controls would depend upon the facts and circumstances of each case. Reference may be made in this regard to the "Internal Control Questionnaire", issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India in 1976 which contains, *inter alia*, an illustrative discussion on internal controls in relation to inventories.

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stocks should be different from those responsible for store-keeping in respect of those stocks.

- (b) The stores procedures should provide for the use of pre-numbered standardized forms.
- (c) There should be a system of cross-checking the data generated by different operating departments.

7. The auditor should also review specific controls over receipts, issues, physical inventories, and inventory records.

Verification

8. As in the case of other assets, the responsibility for properly determining the quantity and value of inventories rests with the management of the entity. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the management of the entity to ensure that the inventories included in the financial information are physically in existence and represent all inventories owned by the entity. The management satisfies this responsibility by carrying out appropriate procedures which will normally include verification of all items of inventory at least once in every financial year. This responsibility is not reduced even where the auditor attends any physical count of inventories in order to obtain audit evidence.

9. In any auditing situation, the auditor employs appropriate procedures to obtain reasonable assurance about various assertions (Standard on Auditing (SA) 500, Audit Evidence). In carrying out an audit of inventories, the auditor is particularly concerned with obtaining sufficient appropriate audit evidence to corroborate the management's assertions regarding the following:

- Existence - that all recorded inventories exist as at the year-end.
- Ownership - that all inventories owned by the entity are recorded and that all recorded inventories are owned by the entity.
- Valuation - that the stated basis of valuation of inventories is appropriate and properly applied, and that the condition of inventories is recognised in their valuation.

Verification of inventories may be carried out by employing the following procedures:

- (a) examination of records;
- (b) attendance at stock-taking;
- (c) obtaining confirmations from third parties;

- (d) examination of valuation and disclosure; and
- (e) analytical review procedures.

The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures to be performed is, however, a matter of professional judgement of the auditor.

Examination of Records

10. The entities usually maintain detailed stock records in the form of stores/stock ledgers showing in respect of each major item, the receipts, issues and balances. The extent of examination of these records by an auditor with reference to the relevant basic documents (e.g., goods received notes, inspection reports, material issue notes, bin cards, etc.) depends upon the facts and circumstances of each case.

11. The auditor may come across cases where the entity does not maintain detailed stock records other than the basic records relating to purchases and sales. In such situations, the auditor would have to suitably extend the extent of application of the audit procedures discussed in paragraphs 12-22 and 30.

Attendance at Stock-taking

12. Physical verification of inventories is the responsibility of the management of the entity. However, where the inventories are material and the auditor is placing reliance upon the physical count by the management, it may be appropriate for the auditor to attend the stock-taking. The extent of auditor's attendance at stock-taking would depend upon his assessment of the efficacy of relevant internal control procedures, and the results of his examination of the stock records maintained by the entity and of the analytical review procedures.

13. The procedures concerning the auditor's attendance at stock-taking depend upon the method of stock-taking followed by the entity.

14. There are two principal methods of stock-taking: periodic stocktaking and continuous stock-taking. Under the first method, physical verification of inventories is carried out at a single point of time, usually at the year-end or at a selected date before or shortly after the year-end. Under the second method, physical verification is carried out throughout the year, with different items of inventory being physically verified at different points of time. However, the verification programme is normally so designed that each material item is physically verified at least once in a year and more often in appropriate cases. The continuous stock-taking method is effective when a perpetual inventory system of record-keeping is also in existence. Some entities use continuous stock-taking methods for certain stocks and carry out a full count of other stocks at a selected date.

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15. The auditor is expected to examine the adequacy of the methods and procedures of physical verification followed by the entity. Before commencement of verification, the management should issue appropriate instructions to stock-taking personnel. Such instructions should cover all phases of physical verification and preferably be in writing. It would be useful if the instructions are formulated by the entity in consultation with the auditor. The auditor should examine these instructions to assess their efficacy. An illustrative set of instructions which may be useful in most cases is given in **Appendix I** to this Guidance Note.

16. Where the auditor is present at the time of stock-taking, he should observe the procedure of physical verification adopted by the stock-taking personnel to ensure that the instructions issued in this behalf are being actually followed. The auditor should also perform test-counts to satisfy himself about the effectiveness of the count procedures. In carrying out the test counts, the auditor should give particular consideration to those stocks which have a high value either individually or as a category of stocks. Proper attention should also be paid to the physical condition of inventories.

17. Ideally, there should be no movement of stocks when the physical verification is being carried out. On occasions, however, it may be necessary for the entity to continue the production, receiving, or dispatch operations during physical verification. In such circumstances, it is essential that the entity has the procedures to identify and record such movements. The auditor should review the procedures adopted by the entity to account for the movement of inventories from one location to another within the entity during stock-taking (e.g., issues from stores to production departments).

18. The auditor should also examine whether the entity has instituted appropriate cut-off procedures to ensure that –

- (a) goods purchased but not received have been included in the inventories and the liability has been provided for;
- (b) goods sold but not despatched have been excluded from the inventories and credit has been taken for the sales.

The auditor may examine a sample of documents evidencing the movement of stocks into and out of stores, including documents pertaining to periods shortly before and shortly after the cut-off date, and check whether the stocks represented by those documents were included or excluded, as appropriate, during the stock-taking.

19. The auditor should review the original physical verification sheets and trace selected items including the more valuable ones into the final

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inventories. He should also compare the final inventories with stock records and other corroborative evidence, e.g., stock statements submitted to banks.

20. The auditor should examine whether the discrepancies noticed on physical verification have been investigated and properly accounted for.

21. Where continuous stock-taking methods are being used by the entity, the auditor should, in addition to performing the audit procedures discussed in paragraphs 16-20 above, pay greater attention to ascertaining whether the management:

- (a) maintains adequate stock records that are kept up-to-date;
- (b) has satisfactory procedures for physical verification of inventories, so that in the normal circumstances the programme of physical verification will cover all material items of inventories at least once during the year; and
- (c) investigates and corrects all material differences between the book records and the physical counts.

22. The auditor should determine whether the procedures for identifying defective, damaged, obsolete, excess and slow-moving items of inventory are well-designed and operate properly.

Confirmations from Third Parties

23. Where significant stocks of the entity are held by third parties, the auditor should examine that the third parties are not such with whom it is not proper that the stocks of the entity are held. The auditor should also directly obtain from the third parties written confirmation of the stocks held. Arrangements should be made with the entity for sending requests for confirmation to such third parties. A proforma letter of request for confirmation to be used in such cases is given in **Appendix II** to this Guidance Note. Similarly, the auditor should also obtain confirmation from such third parties for whom the entity is holding significant amount of stocks. **Appendix-III** to this Guidance Note gives a proforma letter of request for confirmation to be used for this purpose.

Examination of Valuation and Disclosure

24. The auditor's objective concerning valuation is to obtain evidence that the amount at which inventories have been valued is computed on an appropriate basis.

25. The auditor should satisfy himself that the valuation of inventories is in accordance with the normally accepted accounting principles and is on the

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same basis as in the preceding year. The generally accepted accounting principles⁷ involved in the valuation of most types of inventories are dealt with in Accounting Standard (AS) 2, "Valuation of Inventories", issued by the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

26. The auditor should examine the methods of applying the basis of inventory valuation. Thus, with regard to determination of cost, the auditor should examine, *inter alia*, the stock sheets, records of physical verification, invoices, costing records and other relevant documents and also examine and test the treatment of overhead expenses as a part of cost of inventories.

27. Wherever feasible, and particularly where only a single or a few major products are produced, the auditor may call for a reconciliation of the total cost of production for the year as determined by the cost records with the total expenses as per the financial books and review this reconciliation. Where standard costs are used or where overheads are charged at standard rates or percentages, he may examine the variances from actuals and, where these are significant, ensure that appropriate adjustment is made to the inventories.

28. The auditor should examine the evidence supporting the assessment of net realizable value. In this regard, the auditor should particularly examine whether appropriate allowance has been made for defective, damaged and obsolete and slow-moving inventories in determining the net realizable value.

29. The auditor should satisfy himself that the inventories have been disclosed properly in the financial statements. Where the relevant statute lays down any disclosure requirements in this behalf, the auditor should examine whether the same have been complied with.

Analytical Review Procedures

30. In addition to the audit procedures discussed above, the following analytical review procedures may often be helpful as a means of obtaining audit evidence regarding the various assertions relating to inventories:

- (i) reconciliation of quantities of opening stocks, purchases, production, sales and closing stocks;
- (ii) comparison of closing stock quantities and amounts with those of the previous year;
- (iii) comparison of the relationship of current year stock quantities and

⁷ It may be mentioned that the Manufacturing and Other Companies (Auditor's Report) Order, 1988 uses the words "normally accepted accounting principles".

amounts with the current year sales and purchases, with the corresponding figures for the previous year;

- (iv) comparison of the composition of the closing stock (e.g., raw materials as a percentage of total stocks, work-in-process as a percentage of total stocks) with the corresponding figures for the previous year;
- (v) comparison of current year gross profit ratio with the gross profit ratio for the previous year;
- (vi) comparison of actual stock, purchase and sales figures with the corresponding budgeted figures, if available;
- (vii) comparison of yield with the corresponding figure for the previous year;
- (viii) comparison of significant ratios relating to inventories with the similar ratios for other firms in the same industry, if available;
- (ix) comparison of significant ratios relating to inventories with the industry norms, if available.

It may be clarified that the foregoing is only an illustrative list of analytical review procedures which an auditor may employ in carrying out audit of inventories. The exact nature of analytical review procedures to be applied in a specific situation is a matter of professional judgement of the auditor.

Special Considerations in Case of Work-In-Process

31. In general, the audit procedures regarding work-in-process are similar to those used for raw materials and finished goods. However, the auditor has to carefully assess the stage of completion of the work-in-process for assessing the appropriateness of its valuation. For this purpose, the auditor may examine the production/costing records (e.g., cost sheets), hold discussions with the personnel concerned, and obtain expert opinion, where necessary.

32. In certain cases, due to the nature of the product and the manufacturing process involved, physical verification of work-in-process may be impracticable. In such cases, the auditor should lay greater emphasis on ascertaining whether the system, from which the work-in-process is ascertained, is reliable. It may also be useful for the auditor to examine the subsequent records of production/sales.

Management Representations

33. The auditor should obtain from the management of the entity, a written statement describing in detail, the location of inventories, methods and procedures of physical verification and valuation of inventories. While such a representation letter serves as a formal acknowledgment of the

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management's responsibilities with regard to inventories, it does not relieve the auditor of his responsibility for performing audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to form the basis for the expression of his opinion on the financial information. A sample management representation letter regarding inventories is given in **Appendix IV** to this Guidance Note. It may be mentioned that the representations made in the letter can alternatively be included in a composite representation letter usually issued by the management to the auditor.

Documentation

34. The auditor should maintain adequate working papers regarding audit of inventories. He should maintain on his audit file a summary of each inventory as also the details regarding the extent of his verification. The management representation letter concerning inventories should also be maintained on the audit file.

Appendix I

Illustrative Set of Instructions to be Issued by the Client to its Staff Responsible for Stock-Taking

(Ref. Paragraph 15)

This Appendix contains an illustrative set of instructions which may be issued by the client to the staff responsible for stock-taking. The Appendix also lists special instructions in respect of stocks held by others and work-in process.

The annual physical examination of inventories of the entity is to be carried out on 31st March. The work will commence at 8.00 A.M. on 31st March, and there will be no movement of inventories during their physical examination.

1. Mr. AB will be in overall charge of the physical counting.
2. Messrs....., Auditors, will depute their staff to observe the work performed by us. It should be remembered that they are not responsible for any part of the stock-taking.
3. You are responsible for the physical counting of all stocks in (state here the exact area for which the person is responsible e.g., Block B of Godown No. 2, or in the open yard on south of factory, etc.). You are not concerned with similar items of stock which may be stored at other locations.

How to proceed with the work

4. At 8 A.M. you should present yourself in the office of Mr. AB where you will be handed over a bunch of inventory tags. You should ensure that you have in your possession a sufficient number for your needs. You should also have in your possession a pen, blank papers, a measuring tape, (state here any other instrument which is required for measurement, counting, weighing etc.). Please ensure that for all items in your area for which weighing or measuring is required, the necessary apparatus is available.

Procedure for tagging

5.1 You should place a tag on each pile, box, bin, etc., which is counted by you after recording the quantity, description, part number, condition of the stocks to the extent known (e.g., damaged stocks), etc., on the tag. You should proceed in proper order so as to ensure that no items are omitted. When the work of counting is completed you should hand over the remaining tags including soiled and damaged tags to Mr. PQ.

5.2 All items are required to be measured, weighed or counted in order to ascertain the exact quantity on hand. However, in respect of small items of in

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significant value, such as bolts, nuts (state here any other items which are known to be of small value), the quantities on hand may be estimated without actual counting etc. In the latter case, please state "estimated" on the tag.

5.3 Please ensure that proper identification is made by part number, description, etc., and that in the case of work-in-process, the last operation performed is clearly specified in accordance with the schedule attached to this Memorandum. No movement of any stock from one location to another should take place during the period of stock checking.

5.4 Where bin cards are kept on the bins or job tickets are attached to items in process, you should not merely copy the quantities shown on those documents to the tag without verification. All alterations made on the tags should be initialled and quantities should be recorded in ink.

5.5 Mr. PQ is responsible for the control over tags in use. For this purpose, he should prepare a schedule in the attached Form.

5.6 After obtaining the permission of the auditors⁸, instructions will be issued for the removal of the tags and a suitable person should be sent around in each department to detach the detachable portion of the tags, leaving the counterpart in the proper position. When they are collected, all such tags should be brought back to a central location, placed in serial order and tallied with the schedule prepared by Mr. PQ. After this has been done, the tags will be released to the Accounts Department which is concerned with the preparation of the inventory. Later on, when the inventory has been prepared, a check should be possible to see whether all the tags have been listed.

5.7 After the work of counting has been completed, Mr. AB, who is in overall charge of stock-taking, will make a visit to each area in order to ascertain that all bins, boxes, etc., bear a tag and make a check of the quantities shown therein. At this point, the auditors will carry out further observation and make such test checks as they consider necessary.

5.8 The counterparts of the tags should be left on the relevant bins or piles for a period of at least one month and the quantity shown on the counterparts of the tag should be used as the opening balance of the bin card for the subsequent period.

Procedure for preparing stock sheets

6.1 Separate listings under the following broad heads should be prepared:

- (i) Raw materials, including components

⁸ It is presumed that the auditors or their representatives are present at the time of stock-taking.

- (ii) Work-in-process
- (iii) Finished goods, including by-products
- (iv) Maintenance supplies and stores and spare parts
- (v) Loose tools

Defective, damaged, obsolete, excess or slow-moving stocks should be listed separately under each of the above categories.

6.2 It should be examined that the stock cards, bin cards, tags or other stock records are posted up-to-date so that items can be traced and verified in these records, simultaneously with the physical checking of stocks.

6.3 A list of excesses and shortages should be drawn up at the time of physical stock-taking.

6.4 Stocks belonging to third parties and remaining in custody of the entity should be separately identified from the entity's own stock. A separate listing should be prepared for all such items of stocks.

6.5 Defective, damaged, obsolete, excess or slow-moving stocks should be kept separate from other items.

6.6 Counters and checkers should sign or initial the stock sheets for the work done by them.

Stocks held by others

7.1 The following steps be taken for stocks belonging to the entity but held by others:

- (i) A separate listing for such stocks be prepared.
- (ii) A letter should be sent to such persons to confirm the stocks held by them directly to the auditor.
- (iii) An authority to inspect stocks held by third parties should be given to the auditor where the same is considered necessary by the auditor.
- (iv) An independent record for such goods be kept by the entity.

7.2 The above steps should also be taken for stocks given on loan or received on loan.

Work-in-Process

8.1 With regard to work-in-process, the following instructions be given to the staff members concerned:

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- (i) A separate listing for work-in-process be prepared.
- (ii) The internal records kept by the entity be written up-to-date.
- (iii) If the amount of work-in-process is determinable from production records, the same be kept up-to-date.
- (iv) A list of opening work-in-process be kept ready at the time of stock-taking.

Appendix II

Illustrative Letter of Confirmation of Inventories Held by Others

[Ref. Paragraph 23]

(Letterhead of Entity)

[Date]

[Name and address of holder of inventories]

Dear Sir,

For audit purposes, kindly furnish directly to our auditors (name and address of the auditors) details concerning our inventories held by you for [state here the purpose of holding of inventories by the third party] as of the close of business on

According to our records, you held the following inventories as of that date:

Description	Quantity
.....
.....

In case you identify certain items of inventories as defective or damaged, the details thereof may be furnished separately, indicating the quantities and giving a general description of the condition of such items. Also, please confirm that our inventories held by you are free of any charge or encumbrance.

A stamped envelope addressed to our auditors is enclosed for your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

(Signature of responsible official of the entity)

Appendix III

**Illustrative Letter of Confirmation – Inventories
Held by the Entity on Behalf of Others**

[Ref. Paragraph 23]

[Letterhead of Entity]

[Date]

[Name and address of owner of inventories]

Dear Sir,

For audit purposes, kindly furnish directly to our auditors (name and address of the auditors) details concerning your inventories held by us for [state here the purpose of holding of inventories by the entity as of the close of business on _____].

According to our records, we held the following inventories as of that date:

Description	Quantity
.....
.....

A stamped envelope addressed to our auditors is enclosed for your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

(Signature of responsible official of the entity)

Appendix IV

Representation Letter for Inventories

[Ref. Paragraph 33]

The following is a sample representation letter for inventories. It might be used to supplement the general letter of representation or included therein. The letter should be modified where appropriate.

[Letterhead of Entity]

[Date]

[Name and Address of the Auditor]

Dear Sir,

In connection with your audit of the financial statements of X limited as of....., 19..., and for the year then ended, we make, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations concerning inventories.

1. Inventories at the year-end consisted of the following:

Raw Materials (including components)	Rs. _____
Work-in-Process	Rs. _____
Finished Goods (including by-products)	Rs. _____
Maintenance supplies and Stores and Spare Parts	Rs. _____
Loose Tools	Rs. _____
Others (specify each major head separately)	Rs. _____
Total	Rs. _____

2. All quantities were determined by actual physical count or weight or measurement that was taken under our supervision and in accordance with written instructions, on (date/dates of physical verification), except as follows:⁹

⁹ Where physical verification of inventories is carried out at a date other than the closing date, this paragraph may be modified as below:

Inventories recorded in the books as at.....(date of balance sheet) aggregating to Rs. are based upon the physical inventories taken as at (date of physical verification) by actual count weight or measurement. The material discrepancies noticed on physical verification of stocks as compared to book records have been properly dealt with in the books of account and subsequent transactions recorded in the accounts fairly reflect the changes in the inventories up to (balance sheet date).

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.....

.....

3. Except as set out below, all goods included in the inventory are the property of the entity and are not subject to any charge, and none of the goods are held as consignee for others or as bailee:

.....

.....

4. All inventories owned by the entity, wherever located, have been recorded, including goods sent on consignment.

5. Inventories do not include goods sold to customers for which delivery is yet to be made.

6. Inventories have been valued on the following basis/bases:

Raw Materials (including components)

Work-in-Process

Finished Goods (including by-products)

Maintenance supplies and Stores and Spare Parts

Loose Tools

Others (specify each major head separately)

(In describing the basis/bases of valuation, the method of ascertaining the cost (e.g. FIFO, Average Cost or LIFO) should also be stated. Similarly, the extent to which overheads have been included in the cost should also be stated.)

7. The following provisions have been made in respect of excess, slow moving, damaged, or obsolete inventories and these, in our view, are adequate.

.....

.....

8. No item of inventories has a net realizable value in the ordinary course of business which is less than the amount at which it is included in inventories.

9. The basis/bases of valuation is/are the same as that/those used in the previous year, except as set out below:

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Class of Inventory	Basis of valuation		Effect of change in Basis of Valuation
	This year	Last year	
.....
.....

Yours faithfully,

(Signature of responsible official of the entity)

Clarification***

Auditor's Duties where Inventories are Stated to be "As Valued and Certified by the Management" in Financial Statements

(Refer Paragraph 33)

It has been observed that in some cases, inventories are described in the financial statements as "Stocks (as valued and certified by the management)". The use of such an expression may lead the users of the financial statements to believe that the auditor merely relies on the management's certificate without carrying out any other appropriate audit procedures to satisfy himself about the existence and valuation of inventories.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India has issued a Guidance Note on Audit of Inventories, which recommends the procedures to be followed by the auditors in conducting the audit of inventories. Para 33 of the Guidance Note, *inter alia*, recommends as below:

"The auditor should obtain from the management of the entity, a written statement describing in detail the location of inventories, methods and procedures of physical verification and valuation of inventories. While such a representation letter serves as a formal acknowledgment of the management's responsibilities with regard to inventories, it does not relieve the auditor of his responsibility for performing audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to form the basis for the expression of his opinion on the financial information."

In view of the above, the Council of the Institute hereby clarifies that despite the expression "as valued and certified by the management", the duties and responsibilities of the auditors with regard to audit of inventories are not diminished. Thus, in order that the auditor's role with regard to inventories is properly appreciated by the users of the financial statements, the auditor may advise his clients to omit the words "as valued and certified by the management", when describing inventories in the financial statements.

*** Published in September, 1999 issue of "The Chartered Accountant", p.66.