

Certification Standards

Implementation and Management of Certification Standards

Development

To define detail, scope and purpose.

Development

This information can be used to develop food safety and quality programs that meet the requirements of modern Regulatory, Customer and Industry Standards:

- We take the time to explain the expectations and requirements of food safety and quality compliance as these relate to your food safety and quality programs.
- You may choose to use our Premium Resources to build, enhance or upgrade your food safety and quality program.
- We encourage you to share this webpage with any food compliance associates and peers you believe may benefit from our commitment to providing our users with user-friendly information and resources to achieve a superior Food Compliance Culture.
- We welcome your suggestions for additions of general or specific content through the haccp.com Contact Page.

Key Definitions for Certification Standards

- Accreditation Body: The authority that formally recognises a Certification Body as competent to provide certification to a particular standard.
- Authorised Representative: The person nominated by the food business to liaise with the Certification Body for onsite and offsite interactions.
- Certification Audit: The audit through which a Certification Body assesses a food business against the requirements of a certification standard to determine whether certification can be granted.
- Certification Body: The entity providing certification to the food business is referred to as the Certification Body. The term Certification Body also includes auditors and other representatives of the Certification Body.
- Client: A business or entity requiring the food business to gain certification is referred to as the client.
- Client Manager: The person designated by the Certification Body as the main contact for a food business during the certification process.
- Corrective Action Request or CAR: A Corrective Action Request is a non-conformance raised as an outcome of an auditing process. This is a notification of an identified system deficiency that needs to be rectified as a condition of certification. A CAR may also be called an NCR or Non-Conformance Request.
- Food Business: A business entity requiring certification is referred to as a food business. This may include businesses that are not strictly food businesses but may supply products or services to food businesses.
- Gap Audit: A Gap Audit is a tool through which the food business is assessed to the required standard before the actual Certification Audit.
- Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI): An industry initiative that benchmarks food safety certification schemes against a set of requirements.
- Non-conformance: A non-conformance is where the food business is assessed by the Certification Body as not being in adherence to the requirements of the standard.
- Recertification Audit: A scheduled audit undertaken to renew certification at the end of a certification cycle.
- Standard: A standard means the certification standard required by the food business.
- Standard Owner: The Standard Owner is the entity that manages the standard against which a Food Business is audited.
- Surveillance Audit: A scheduled audit undertaken during a certification cycle to confirm that the food business continues to meet the requirements of the standard.

About Certification Standards

Certification is recognition provided to a business by an accredited Certification Body (or authorised agency) that the food business has been assessed as complying with the requirements of a particular certification standard. Certification may be required by customers or regulators, or it may be a tool by which you benchmark your business in the global food marketplace. Whatever the reason, gaining and maintaining certification is a substantial investment and should be considered carefully before you begin. haccp.com is designed to help food businesses, their associates, and clients understand the food industry certification process, with resources that certified businesses can use to better manage their investment in certification.

Certification to industry standards was once seen as a measure of best practice. Today, many customers require certification as a condition of supply, so it is often essential for competing in modern food markets.

The foundation of certification is adherence to relevant Food Industry Legislation and Guidelines, supported by reputable standards such as Codex HACCP, ISO 9001, ISO 22000, BRCGS Food Safety, SQF, IFS Food, FSSC 22000, GLOBALG.A.P., and Customer Standards. Together these provide robust management systems through which a food business can achieve excellence within its sector. Many food businesses must also certify to specific standards that define vendor requirements as a prerequisite for supplying large retail or food service groups.

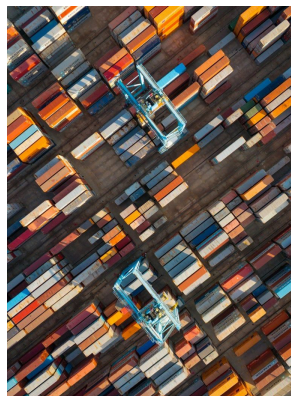
Quality management has evolved to sit alongside food safety as a major component of contemporary food industry certification. The emphasis has shifted to ensuring that food produced, manufactured, and supplied is not only safe to eat but also consistently of good quality.

Why is Certification Important?

Certification to accepted industry standards provides:

- **Peace of Mind:** Business owners, stakeholders, and management can be confident that the food business is following the compliance routines needed to deliver sustainable product safety and quality;
- **Continuous Improvement:** Continuous improvement is a contemporary business ethos that creates opportunities to grow and manage your brands and your capability to provide products and services of consistent safety and quality;
- **Risk Reduction:** Serious non-compliance identified by clients and customers can have far-reaching financial consequences and damage a business's reputation. Failure of management systems can jeopardise not only your ability to supply clients but also industry confidence; and
- **Improved Quality and Safety:** By focusing on the requirements of relevant standards, your business will identify improvement opportunities that strengthen its systems and support future growth.

Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)



GFSI recognition helps suppliers to retailers and food service groups meet consistent expectations across global supply chains.

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is an industry initiative that benchmarks food safety certification schemes against a set of requirements. GFSI does not certify businesses. A scheme that meets the benchmarking requirements becomes GFSI-recognised, and many retailers and food service groups accept certification to a recognised scheme as evidence that a supplier's food safety system has been independently assessed to a consistent level.

Schemes recognised by GFSI include BRCGS Food Safety, SQF, IFS Food, FSSC 22000, and GLOBALG.A.P. Standards such as ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 are not GFSI-recognised schemes in their own right, although FSSC 22000 is built on ISO 22000.

GFSI recognition is reviewed as benchmarking requirements change, so confirm the current status of any scheme with its owner before relying on it.

Certification Process

The following steps are generally considered elements of a typical food business certification process:

- Certification Decision;
- Certification Body Selection;
- Certification Application;
- Gap Analysis or Gap Audit;
- Gap Analysis Application;
- Certification Audit;
- Corrective Action Request Closeout;
- Certification Granted; and
- Surveillance and Recertification Audits.

Any certification process should be flexible enough to meet the requirements of anticipated outcomes but rigid enough to maintain the integrity of the audited standard in ensuring safe, good quality foodstuffs.

Certification Decision

The food business decides to apply for a particular certification, for example Codex HACCP, ISO 9001, ISO 22000, BRCGS Food Safety, SQF, IFS Food, FSSC 22000, GLOBALG.A.P. or Customer Standards, or a group of certifications. The decision may be an internal requirement of the food business or a request from one of its clients as a form of guarantee for the products or services supplied to them.

Certification Body Selection

The food business may choose any Certification Body to certify it to the required standard, provided that the Certification Body is accredited to deliver certification to that standard. This choice supports impartiality, and requirements from the food business's clients to use a specific Certification Body are generally viewed as unacceptable. More than one Certification Body may be used by one food business, but not for the same

certification standard. For example, a food business may have HACCP certified by one Certification Body and ISO 9001 certified by another.

The scope of the certification standard chosen may relate only to a selection of products or processes rather than the entire business operation. Some standards, however, require the entire scope of the business operation at a particular site to be audited.

Certification Bodies are accredited by an Accreditation Body to provide certification services to recognised standards. The accreditation requirements depend on the type of certification, and commonly include ISO/IEC 17065 (certification of products, processes and services) or ISO/IEC 17021-1 (audit and certification of management systems). These provide a foundation of competence, consistency, and impartiality for certification services.

Certification Application



The application process generally includes contractual agreements covering the scope, purpose, and fees of certification.

The food business applies to the Certification Body for the required certification. This process generally includes contractual agreements covering service scope and purpose, applicable fees, and other information, which may also include interactions between the food business's client and the Certification Body.

The application process may include an onsite advisory visit from the Certification Body to discuss the food business's specific requirements. Most Certification Bodies require the food business to nominate an Authorised Representative, usually the person who liaises with the Certification Body for onsite and offsite interactions. The food business is also designated a Client Manager, who is often the contact person representing the Certification Body.

Gap Analysis or Gap Audit



A Gap Analysis checks the food business against the standard and records observations before the certification audit.

A Gap Analysis is a tool through which the food business is assessed to the required standard. It is generally conducted as a resource for the food business to identify areas needing improvement before the Certification Audit. A Gap Analysis is intended as more of a consultation than an audit, so non-conformances are not raised, rated, and issued as Corrective Action Requests (CARs). Only observations should be noted. Where a Gap Analysis is conducted and no non-conformance to the relevant standard is identified, some Certification Bodies may upgrade the Gap Analysis to a Certification Audit where circumstances permit.

A Gap Analysis may be optional, depending on the Certification Body the food business is using. In that case, the next step is generally the Certification Audit.

Gap Analysis Application

The food business uses the information from the Gap Analysis to improve its management systems, procedures, and practices where improvement opportunities have been identified. This work may or may not involve a consultant with specialist technical skills in the required areas.

Certification Audit



A Certification Audit assesses how the food business manages the requirements of the standard on site.

A Certification Audit is the point at which the food business is assessed to the required standard or standards and receives an indication of how well it manages the relevant requirements. An auditor or audit team from the Certification Body generally visits the site to conduct a thorough audit. Any observed non-conformance is rated and notified to the food business, usually through a Corrective Action Request or CAR. The CAR is raised by the Certification Body to identify the severity of the non-conformance, and the food business participates in the CAR process by nominating what it will do to bring the non-conformance back within the standard's requirements.

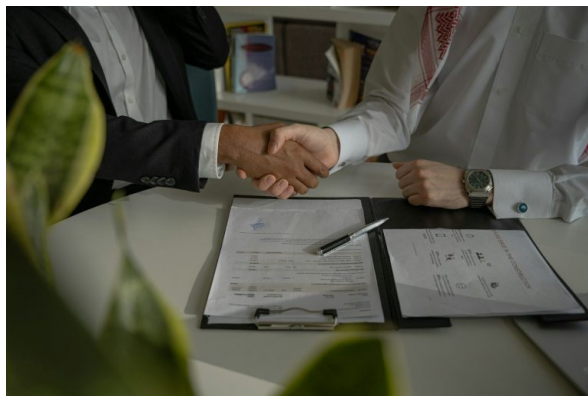
CARs must be closed out by the food business within specified timeframes, which vary with the severity of the non-conformance and are advised by the Certification Body. Several CARs can be raised in one audit. Some certification standards have their own requirements for CARs, and these must be followed to ensure consistency in the certification process.

If the Certification Audit does not identify any non-conformance, the food business may be granted certification to the applicable standard or standards, and the Corrective Action Request Closeout step is skipped.

Corrective Action Request Closeout

Where the food business has been issued a CAR, it must be closed out adequately and within the specified timeframe, as assessed by the Certification Body. This generally involves the Certification Body reviewing evidence of the actions taken, or visiting the food business again to verify them.

Certification Granted



Certification is granted once the Certification Body is satisfied that the standard is well managed and applied.

Once the Certification Body is satisfied that the applicable standards are well managed and applied within the food business, it grants certification, which generally takes the form of a certificate. Under any relevant terms and conditions, the food business may then promote the fact that it has been certified to the relevant standards.

The certificate details the scope and currency of the certification. Details of certification are generally made publicly available on the Certification Body's web pages, and often on the web pages of the relevant Accreditation Body or Standard Owner.

Surveillance and Recertification Audits

Surveillance and Recertification Audits are scheduled as a component of any certification contract. Their frequency and scheduling generally depend on the operational scope and purpose of the food business and the requirements of the specific standard, and certification is commonly renewed on an annual or multi-year cycle. These audits provide a foundation on which the certified food business can optimise continuous improvement opportunities and control risk.

The Certification Body or Standard Owner may be able to request additional audits as a contractual component. This is commonly done where a critical or major non-conformance has been identified outside regularly scheduled audits, or where trended customer complaints reveal a concern about confirmed or potential mismanagement of the requirements of the applicable standard or standards.

Certificate Status, Suspension and Withdrawal

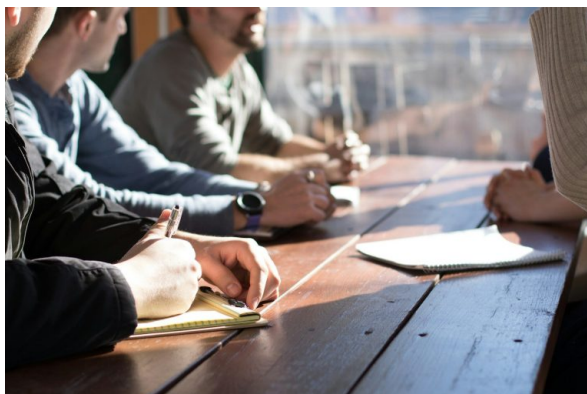
Certification is not permanent. A certificate shows the standard, scope, and period for which certification is valid, and it remains valid only while the food business continues to meet the requirements of the standard. Key points include:

- **Suspension:** The Certification Body may suspend a certificate where serious non-conformance is identified, CARs are not closed within the required timeframe, or the food business does not allow a scheduled audit;
- **Withdrawal:** Certification may be withdrawn where the conditions of a suspension are not met, where the food business ceases to meet the requirements of the standard, or where the certification contract is breached;
- **Unannounced audits:** Some standards require or allow audits without prior notice, so the food business should be ready for an audit at any time; and
- **Changes to scope:** Changes to products, processes, or site layout can affect the scope of certification and should be discussed with the Certification Body.

While a certificate is suspended or withdrawn, the food business should not promote its certification and should

notify affected customers as required by its contracts. Requirements differ between standards, so confirm them in the standard and your certification agreement.

Preparing for Certification



Preparation for certification involves management, team members, and a clear understanding of the standard.

Preparation for a certification audit is an ongoing process, not a last-minute activity. Preparation commonly includes:

- Confirming management commitment and the resources needed for certification;
- Reading the standard and confirming the scope of certification;
- Completing a Gap Analysis or internal audit against all requirements of the standard;
- Completing a management review and closing any actions identified;
- Ensuring documents and records are current, controlled, and available;
- Training team members and briefing them on what to expect during the audit;
- Confirming that the site is ready, including housekeeping, maintenance, and access to all areas;
- Nominating an Authorised Representative and a support team; and
- Planning the logistics of the audit, such as the schedule, meeting space, and access to records.

Certification should reflect how the business operates every day, not how it performs on audit day.

Which Certification Body Should You Choose?

Choosing a Certification Body can be difficult. It usually involves finding out about the services offered by the available Certification Bodies and deciding how well each can service your business. As with any business transaction, a risk assessment should be considered before making an informed decision to use the services of a particular Certification Body.

The selection of a Certification Body may be based on factors including:

- The industry reputation of the Certification Body;
- The range of certification standards for which the Certification Body is accredited;
- Geographical location and availability;
- Your business's commitment to a particular Certification Body, whether for personal or commercial reasons; and
- Cost. As with most things, services that cost less are not guaranteed to be the best.

The Certification Body you choose is not a final decision. Although the Certification Body assesses your management systems against the applicable standards, it is contracted by you and should not pressure you into anything that you or your business are not comfortable with. Certification Bodies are bound by operational requirements, including the way they interact with their clients. If at any stage you feel threatened or uncomfortable with the way a Certification Body is interacting with you and your business, seek a second opinion.

Subject to the terms and conditions of certification standards, Standard Owners, and other contracts, businesses are free to change their Certification Body as required. The decision may be based on the level of services supplied by the Certification Body, its industry reputation, or a business restructure.

It is generally considered inappropriate for a Certification Body to recommend only its own support services, such as

training and consulting, to a business it certifies, as this may create a conflict of interest. It is generally acceptable for a Certification Body to recommend many providers of support services, which may include affiliated services alongside impartial service providers.

Certification Etiquette

As with every business transaction, etiquette in food industry certification is founded on written and unwritten rules of conduct. These rules must be followed to maintain certification as a respected and valued measure of contemporary business management. Many etiquette requirements are reciprocal between the business holding certification and the relevant Certification Body. Etiquette is a code of behaviour that helps people get along with one another. It is a set of good manners and provides guidelines for courteous, considerate, and ethical behaviour.

These suggestions are based on normal industry interactions. Any departure from them should be used to identify potential conflicts of interest or other issues that could undermine the impartiality and confidence on which industry and consumer trust in certification depends. Personal judgement and consideration of morality should be applied when using or judging any of the following etiquette points.

Certification Bodies and their Auditors should:

- Act professionally, appropriately, and in an unbiased manner;
- Strive to increase the competency and prestige of the Certification Body they represent and of the auditing profession;
- Not undertake any assignments that they are not certified or accredited to perform;
- Not represent conflicting or competing interests, and disclose to any client or employer any relationships that may influence their judgement;
- Not discuss or disclose any information relating to any assignment unless required by law or authorised in writing by the client or the relevant Certification Body;
- Not accept any inducement, commission, gift, or other benefit from client organisations, their employees, or any interested party, or knowingly allow colleagues to do so;
- Not intentionally communicate false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of any assignment within the certification process;
- Keep to the intended audit schedule and, if changes must be made, keep everyone informed;
- Not try to trap the auditee with hypothetical situations or lecture the auditee on how to conduct their business;
- Not purposely put themselves into a dominant position during the auditing and certification process, including related interactions;
- Not make special individual requests of the auditee organisation that could be considered as catering to the whimsical needs of the auditor, and make their own arrangements for special needs;
- Ask permission to use any special equipment such as a camera, and ask permission before photographing people;
- Respect the auditee's privacy;
- Not talk negatively about the auditee, other auditors, or rival Certification Bodies; and
- Be tactful when correcting auditee personnel and other auditors in front of their peers.

Certification Etiquette for the Audited Business

The business being audited should reciprocate and support these requirements as part of its commitment to maintaining the integrity of the auditing and certification process. Standard Owners generally do not consider it appropriate for an audited business to pick and choose auditors based on their reputation. Auditors employed by Certification Bodies are made available to audit after rigorous skill, knowledge, and competency assessments, and grievances about performance should be referred to the Certification Body for discussion.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Development requirements in relation to their items.

Certification Standards Development Key Points

- Certification Standards programs must be developed to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- The Senior Management of your business is committed to providing adequate resources for the development of your Certification Standards program;
- Should you require additional resources for the development of Certification Standards program elements, please discuss this with the relevant Senior Management representative;
- A properly developed Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly developed Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Documentation

To establish the developed detail in a viewable format to facilitate information.

Documentation

Document: A document provides guidance and/or direction for performing work, making decisions, or rendering judgments that affect the safety or quality of the products or services that customers receive.

Documented policies, procedures, work instructions, and schedules form the basis of any food safety and quality management system. The following documentation formats may be considered to ensure ongoing compliance with specified requirements for Certification Standards:

- Certification Standards policy;
- Certification Standards development procedures;
- Certification Standards implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Certification Standards monitoring procedures;
- Certification Standards corrective and preventative action procedures;
- Certification Standards verification schedule;
- Certification Standards verification procedures;
- Certification Standards validation schedule;
- Certification Standards validation procedures;
- Certification Standards training procedures.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Documentation requirements in relation to their items.

You may wish to visit the Certification Standards Templates section of haccp.com for examples of Certification Standards documentation, record, and resource formats commonly applied within food safety and quality systems.

Certification Standards Documentation Key Points

- Certification Standards programs must be documented to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- All documented Certification Standards program elements must be controlled to ensure compliance;
- Key documented Certification Standards program elements should be available to your business team at all times to ensure they can facilitate required tasks;
- A properly documented Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly documented Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Implementation

To facilitate the application of the documentation.

Implementation

Implementation: Implementation is the application of documented food safety and quality system elements into the actual business operation.

The implementation of Certification Standards within any food business requires genuine commitment from senior management, staff, and visitors to ensure the nominated goals of implementation are achievable on an ongoing basis. It is a step that requires significant planning and consideration of general and specific food business circumstances to ensure the outcomes of Certification Standards do not negatively impact the safety and quality of the food items dispatched from the business.

Implementation of Certification Standards must include a clear definition of responsibilities and authorities for all levels of participation by senior management, staff, and visitors to the site.

When implementing Certification Standards within the food safety and quality system, you may wish to consider the following requirements before completion:

- Communication and display of the Certification Standards policy;
- Completion of Verification and Validation of Certification Standards development procedures;
- Availability of Certification Standards implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Availability of Certification Standards monitoring procedures and record templates where applicable;
- Availability of Certification Standards corrective and preventative action procedures and record templates where applicable;
- Availability of the Certification Standards verification schedule;
- Availability of Certification Standards verification procedures;
- Availability of the Certification Standards validation schedule;
- Availability of Certification Standards validation procedures;
- Completion of Certification Standards training procedures;
- Completion of product design and development requirements related to Certification Standards;
- Completion of process design and development requirements related to Certification Standards;
- Completion of training for team members who have responsibilities and involvement within Certification Standards;
- Completion of competency approval for team members who have responsibilities and involvement within Certification Standards.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Implementation requirements in relation to their items.

Certification Standards Implementation Key Points

- Certification Standards programs must be implemented to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Your Certification Standards program must be fully implemented as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- The implementation of Certification Standards requires a commitment to the provision of resources by the Senior Management of your business;
- A properly implemented Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly implemented Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Monitoring

To review, confirm and document evidence of the implementation against documented limits.

Monitor

Monitoring: Monitoring is the act of reviewing and confirming measurable parameters of a defined process or product status.

Monitoring requirements within food industry sectors are generally identified against limits of acceptability defined within HACCP plans, implementation procedures, and work instructions. Monitoring usually includes some element of record-keeping, which may be maintained manually or through digital systems. Advancements in technology have produced many systems and processes that are self-monitored or self-adjusted when variances are identified. Regardless of the system used, the goal of any monitoring activity is to provide sufficient evidence that any limit of acceptability has been met.

Traditional Certification Standards monitoring requirements include manual recording and the application of corrective actions when the results of monitoring are found to be outside acceptable limits. Corrective Actions should also generally be strongly linked to the monitoring process where applied to ensure full traceability of the applied actions.

The following examples of monitoring activities and record formats may apply to Certification Standards:

- Food businesses must be continuously aware of the status of their Certification Standards to ensure their certification status remains current.
- Updates and notifications for Certification Standards must be reviewed and discussed by Senior Management on an ongoing basis to ensure adequate resource provision for the application of standard requirements.
- Providing feedback to your certification body or standard owner is a constructive way to ensure continuous improvement in the application of Certification Standards for your food business.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Monitoring requirements in relation to their items.

You may wish to visit the Certification Standards Templates section of haccp.com for examples of Certification Standards documentation, record, and resource formats commonly applied within food safety and quality systems.

Certification Standards Monitoring Key Points

- Monitoring provides real-time confirmation and evidence that your risk-based FS&Q Controls are effectively implemented;
- Certification Standards programs must be monitored to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Monitoring of Certification Standards must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Nominated monitoring records for Certification Standards must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures, and Work Instructions;
- A properly monitored Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly monitored Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Corrective Action and Preventative Action

To apply "real time" interventions to documented monitoring limits.

Corrective Action

Corrective Action: Corrective action is mandatory action to be taken when a deviation to the Quality System occurs, particularly in relation to a Critical Control Point.

Preventative Action: At any step in the process where a hazard has been identified, preventative action must be put into place to prevent re-occurrence.

Corrective Action and Preventative Action are implemented to ensure any identified non-conformance is documented, investigated, and rectified within appropriate timeframes. Corrective action is any action applied to regain control over a product, process, policy, or procedure that has been identified as being non-conforming or outside nominated limits of acceptability. Preventative action is any action applied to prevent any identified non-conformance from reoccurring.

The outcomes of corrective and preventative actions should result in regained process control after effective application. Specified corrective actions are commonly linked to the HACCP plan and the food business certification process.

Below are Corrective Action and Preventative Action examples which may be associated with Certification Standards related non-conformance issues:

- Review of the Certification Standards policy;
- Review of Certification Standards development procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Review of Certification Standards monitoring procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards corrective and preventative action procedures;
- Review of the Certification Standards verification schedule;
- Review of Certification Standards verification procedures;
- Review of the Certification Standards validation schedule;
- Review of Certification Standards validation procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards training procedures;
- Re-training in Certification Standards;
- Review of management review activities to include Certification Standards as an agenda item;
- Initiation of product hold procedures where safety or quality may be compromised;
- Initiation of a product recall or product recall procedures where investigations show that there is a substantial safety or quality risk to the released product;
- Contacting stakeholders including customers regarding any confirmed or potential Certification Standards concerns involving their product.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Corrective Action requirements in relation to their items.

You may wish to visit the Corrective Action and Preventative Action section of haccp.com for examples of best practice applications for this food safety and quality system element.

Certification Standards Corrective Action and Preventative Action Key Points

- The implementation of Corrective Action and Preventative Action provides confidence that your FS&Q Program is effectively implemented and that FS&Q criteria are being met;
- Where deviations or variations are observed, Corrective Action and Preventative Actions must be facilitated to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Corrective Action and Preventative Action of Certification Standards must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Records of Corrective Action and Preventative Action for Certification Standards must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Proper application of Corrective Action and Preventative Action for your Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and

Customer standards and requirements;

- Poor application of Corrective Action and Preventative Action for your Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Verification

To review and confirm documented monitoring and corrective actions against documented parameters.

Verify

Verification: The act of reviewing, inspecting, testing, checking, auditing, or otherwise establishing and documenting whether items, processes, services, or documents conform to specified requirements.

Verification is the detailed review of all food safety and quality system elements to confirm that they are effectively developed, documented, implemented, monitored, and reviewed. All food safety and quality system elements, including documented policies, procedures, training, HACCP plans, and their operational applications, should be verified on an ongoing scheduled basis. The verification process commonly includes a defined schedule for which verification activities are required, how often they are conducted, who is responsible, and detailed documented procedures for each nominated verification activity.

The general goal of an established verification process is to ensure any systemic non-conformance issues are identified and rectified within an appropriate time frame. When non-conformance issues are identified through the verification process, Corrective Actions and Preventative Actions should be implemented to ensure they do not impact the effectiveness of the food safety and quality system.

The following examples of verification activities may apply to Certification Standards:

- Review of the Certification Standards policy;
- Review of Certification Standards development procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Review of Certification Standards monitoring procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards monitoring records;
- Review of Certification Standards corrective and preventative action procedures;
- Review of the Certification Standards verification schedule;
- Review of Certification Standards verification procedures;
- Review of the Certification Standards validation schedule;
- Review of Certification Standards validation procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards training procedures;
- Review of Certification Standards performance since the last review and historically;
- Analytical testing of product or process to ensure the effectiveness of Certification Standards;
- Inclusion of Certification Standards as an agenda item within the Management Review Process.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Verification requirements in relation to their items.

You may wish to visit the Verification Activities section of haccp.com for examples of best practice applications for this food safety and quality system element.

Certification Standards Verification Key Points

- Your verification program provides evidence that your FS&Q Controls have worked;
- Certification Standards programs must be verified to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- The verification of Certification Standards must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;

- Nominated verification records for Certification Standards must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- A properly verified Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly verified Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Validation

To confirm the documented monitoring or procedural limits.

Validate

Validation: The process of gathering evidence to provide a scientific basis for the documented act of demonstrating that a procedure, process, and activity will consistently lead to the expected results. It often includes the qualification of systems and equipment.

Validation is the provision of evidence to support the limits of control or acceptability for food safety or quality parameters nominated within systemic elements. Limits of control or acceptability are commonly included within documented food safety and quality systems elements such as procedures, HACCP plans, and specifications.

Common sources of validation include regulatory and legislative standards, finished product specifications and customer requirements, industry codes of practice and guidelines, verified and validated research, historical product, and process control outcomes, and analytical testing.

The general goal of an established validation process is to ensure any systemic non-conformance issues are identified and rectified within an appropriate time frame. When non-conformance issues are identified through the validation process, Corrective Actions and Preventative Actions should be implemented to ensure they do not impact the effectiveness of the food safety and quality system.

Validation activities are commonly defined within the verification schedules and procedures of established food safety and quality management systems.

The following examples may apply to validation of the limits of control or acceptability for Certification Standards:

- Confirmation of nominated food safety and food quality control limits for Certification Standards. These limits may apply to regulatory, industry, customer, or finished product specifications;
- Confirmation of analytical testing methods being used to confirm the effectiveness of Certification Standards and ensure the accuracy of outcomes.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Validation requirements in relation to their items.

You may wish to visit the Validation Activities section of haccp.com for examples of best practice applications for this food safety and quality system element.

Certification Standards Validation Key Points

- Your validation program provides evidence that your FS&Q Controls will work;
- Certification Standards programs must be validated to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- The validation of Certification Standards must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Nominated validation records and supporting documentation for Certification Standards must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- A properly validated Certification Standards program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly validated Certification Standards program will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

Training, Competency and Resources

Skills, knowledge and competency requirements to facilitate development, documentation, implementation, monitoring, corrective action, verification and validation of every Food Safety and Quality System Element.

Skills and Knowledge

Skills and Knowledge: Skills and knowledge are attributes of human interactions commonly linked to competency within any specific job-related task.

Training and competency requirements for Certification Standards must be ongoing, including regularly scheduled reviews to ensure the effectiveness of training and competency outcomes.

Team members who have defined responsibilities regarding Certification Standards should have knowledge including:

- Basic Certification Standards requirements;
- Positive outcomes of Certification Standards;
- Negative outcomes of a lack of Certification Standards;
- Current Certification Standards procedures, methods, and techniques;
- General operational, corporate, and social awareness regarding Certification Standards;
- Regulatory, industry, and customer requirements regarding Certification Standards.

Team members who have defined responsibilities regarding Certification Standards should have skills including:

- Competency regarding Certification Standards;
- Effective application of current Certification Standards procedures, methods, and techniques;
- The basic development, documentation, and implementation of HACCP and Prerequisite Programs within the food industry sector.

Team members who have defined responsibilities regarding Certification Standards should have access to resources including:

- Certification Standards training;
- Certification Standards associations and events;
- Regulatory standards, industry and customer information and updates regarding Certification Standards;
- Incidents within the food industry sector regarding Certification Standards;
- Commitment to Certification Standards by senior management;
- Suitably qualified food industry professionals with verified experience in Certification Standards;
- Effective communication systems including email, internet, and phone through which Certification Standards information can be sent and received within suitable timeframes.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Certification Standards Training, Competency, and Resources requirements in relation to their items.

You may wish to visit the Training, Competency, and Resources section of haccp.com for examples of best practice applications for this food safety and quality system element.

Certification Standards Training, Skills, and Knowledge Key Points

- Your Training, Skills, and Knowledge program ensures all participating personnel, visitors, and contractors have the required skills and knowledge to effectively facilitate the requirements of your FS&Q Program;
- Training, Skills and Knowledge programs for Certification Standards must be facilitated to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Training, Skills and Knowledge programs for Certification Standards must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Training, Skills and Knowledge records for Certification Standards must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;

- Properly applied Training, Skills and Knowledge programs for Certification Standards will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Poorly applied Training, Skills, and Knowledge programs for Certification Standards will not fully support your business and may contribute to significant non-compliance against Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements.

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