

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management

Applying Customer Focus and Managing Customer Complaint Processes

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 superior Food Compliance Culture.
- We welcome your suggestions for additions of general or specific content through the haccp.com Contact Page.

Key Definitions for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management

- Complainant: A complainant is someone who has lodged a complaint.
- Customer Comment: Feedback from a customer, such as praise, a suggestion or an observation, that does not express dissatisfaction with a product or service.
- Customer Complaint: Notification of displeasure or disappointment regarding a product or service received.
- Customer Focus: Customer focus is a term used to describe the structured systems through which a food business reviews, trends and analyses customer expectations and requirements. This may also include customer contact and communication requirements.
- Foodborne Illness Outbreak: An incident in which two or more people experience a similar illness after consuming a common food.
- Key Performance Indicator or KPI: A quantitative or qualitative measure that enables the overall delivery of a service to be assessed against the goals or targets set by an entity in their strategic plan. Also known as a KRA or Key Result Area.
- Non-conformance: A failure to meet a specified requirement, such as a regulatory, customer, industry or internal food safety and quality requirement.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Development

When considering the development, documentation, and implementation of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management within food safety and quality management systems, the following information should be considered to ensure effective outcomes:

About Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management



Welcoming and understanding customers is the foundation of customer focus.

Without customers, food businesses do not survive! Food businesses must understand the rapidly changing and evolving requirements of customers, and anticipate customer requirements before they change. This process is aimed at meeting customer requirements through a strategic approach to identifying and managing customer needs.

The benefits of customer focus include:

- Developing and maintaining an understanding of customer needs;
- Meeting customer requirements;
- Exceeding customer expectations;
- Ensuring Food Safety, Food Quality and Ethical Sourcing requirements are maintained as per customer specifications;
- Ability to obtain increased revenue and market share through efficient and flexible responses to market opportunities;
- Effective use of the business' resources including plant, equipment, staff, and processes to enhance customer satisfaction;
- Ongoing business through continued customer loyalty.

The Senior Management of any food business must play a leading role within the management and review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaints processes. This will ensure general awareness of product or service issues as they occur, rather than after a significant incident has occurred.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management review activities must be scheduled, conducted, and recorded as elements of established Verification Activities within any food business.

Customer Focus Activities

Customer focus activities are important to verify the related processes. These activities can be divided into two areas, Proactive Customer Focus and Reactive Customer Focus:

Proactive Customer Focus

Proactive Customer focus generally involves a communicative process to ensure systems and procedures are developed, implemented, and maintained to provide a strong foundation on which customer requirements can be met, and customer expectations can be exceeded. Proactive Customer Focus provides a strong foundation upon which mutually beneficial customer relationships can be built and maintained.

Proactive Customer Focus may include:

- Regular communication with customers regarding their opinion of products or services being received;
- Reviews of product specifications, contracts, and other relevant documentation to ensure the customer is receiving an appropriately costed, quality product and/or service;
- Systematically managing customer relationships;
- Ensuring all staff and contractors are aware of customer needs and expectations;
- Researching and understanding the needs and requirements of customers;

- The development, implementation, and management of objectives that are linked to those of the customer;
- Acting upon identified opportunities for improvement;
- Facilitating a balanced approach to managing relationships with current and prospective customers.

Reactive Customer Focus

Reactive Customer Focus includes procedures and mechanisms through which customer incidents, concerns, or complaints are received, investigated, and rectified within appropriate timeframes, and with the required sufficiency. Corrective and preventative actions are important elements of this process, as they can be used to ensure similar incidents, concerns or complaints do not occur again.

Customer Focus is better managed and maintained by proactive measures, but reactive measures must be readily available for the management of any customer issues if and when they arise.

Reactive Customer Focus may include:

- Documenting responses and investigations regarding customer incidents, concerns, or complaints, and ensuring related protocols are followed whenever a customer issue arises;
- Using corrective actions as a stimulus to improve business systems, so that similar customer issues do not occur again;
- Implementing appropriate preventative actions after a customer issue has occurred, to ensure that similar customer issues do not occur again.

Customer Requirements



Customer ratings and feedback show which requirements matter most.

Customer requirements are the aspects that the customer or consumer wants from a product or service from any particular business. Once the basic and expected elements of customer requirements have been met, desired and unanticipated elements can be addressed to produce increased customer confidence and loyalty.

A common method of understanding what elements of your Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management systems require the most attention is to find out from your customer what exactly is important to them. This may be done by presenting a survey to your customer, including questions such as the following:

- How well do we deliver what we promise?
- How often do we do things right the first time?
- How often do we do things right on time?
- How quickly do we respond to your request?
- How accessible are we when you need to contact us?
- How helpful and polite are we?
- How well do we speak your language?
- How well do we listen to you?
- How hard do you think we work at keeping you a satisfied customer?
- How much confidence do you have in our products or services?

- How well do we understand and try to meet your special request?
- Overall, how would you rate the appearance of our facilities, products, communications, and people?
- Can you list any specific instances where we have fallen short?
- Overall, how would you rate the quality of our service?
- What could we do to improve our service to you?
- Overall, how would you rate the quality of service provided by our competitor?
- How willing would you be to recommend us?
- How willing would you be to buy from us again?
- Is there anything we do, or fail to do, that frustrates you?
- What do you like best about what we do?
- What parts of our service are most important for you?
- What parts of our service are least important to you?

Once you have received feedback from your customers, you can sort customer requirements into the following categories, presented in the order in which they should be addressed:

Basic Expectations

Basic elements are those that are critical to providing value to the customer. These could be either the product itself or how a service provider acts towards the customer. Both examples need to ensure that a proactive approach to customer focus is implemented, as there is no point trying to sell the product or service to the customer without these basic elements.

Expected Expectations

Expected elements of the product or service are what the customer has come to expect from the supplier. These are usually preconceived expectations, based on best practices, legislative and industry compliance. Expected elements include the customer's expectation that the sales and marketing team of the food business has high levels of product and process knowledge. Customers also expect that food is of substantial quality and safe until its designated use by date.

Desired Expectations

Desired elements of customer expectations are those that the customer does not expect, but value highly and genuinely appreciates when they are present. These may include promotional or permanent size increases for a product or complimentary addition to a service provided. Desired elements are an important resource in maintaining customer confidence and loyalty to brands of products and services. Desired elements add value for the customer, and also promote added value for the supplier through return custom.

Unanticipated Expectations

Unanticipated elements are often grouped closely with the desired elements but are generally separated when the expectations of the customer have been overwhelmed. This may include circumstances in which the customer is given products and/or services that are far beyond what they had anticipated. It may be an unexpected offer from the supplier to assist with transport costs, or the initial offer from the supplier to tailor a product and/or service to the customer's specific requirements.

It is important to consider that desired and unanticipated elements can become expected elements within long-term supplier and customer relationships. This is not always a negative situation, as long-term customer interactions are beneficial to both suppliers and customers alike.

Customer Complaint Management

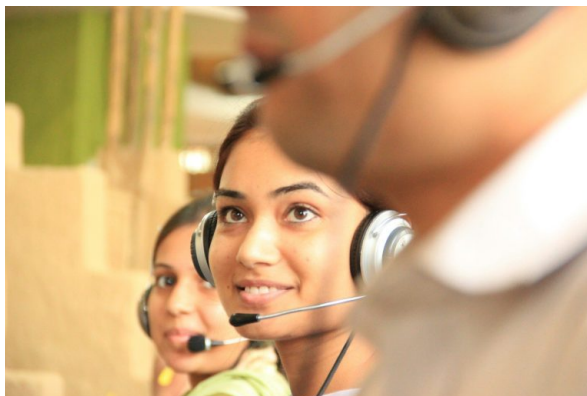
When your business receives a customer complaint, it is important to record the complaint details and conduct an investigation before responding to the complaint. This enables your business to identify potentially unsafe products and correct non-conformance issues or opportunities for improvement within your food safety management

systems.

There are three main components to the Customer Complaint Management process:

- Recording of the initial complaint information;
- Investigating the complaint and recording the findings;
- Taking action based on the investigation findings.

Recording of the Initial Complaint Information



Complaint details are best recorded by a trained person at the first point of contact.

Complaints should be recorded by a designated individual or individuals and should include details such as:

- Name, address, email address, and telephone number of the complainant;
- What is the problem with the product, for example, chemical taste, allergic reaction, illness, foreign object;
- Product details including product name; package type; product size; product identification coding;
- Details of whether the complainant has a sample of the product.

Retail details including:

- Name and address of where the product was purchased;
- Date of purchase;
- Details of storage and handling after purchase.

Illness and Injury details including:

- Details of the consumption date and time;
- Details of whether the food has been consumed before by the customer;
- Number of persons consuming the product;
- Number of people ill or injured;
- Names and ages of the people ill or injured;
- Amount of product consumed;
- Time the people became ill or injured;
- Symptoms of illness or injury in order of occurrence;
- If a physician has been consulted, the Physician's: Name; Contact details and Date of consultation;
- Current status of illness or injury;
- Details of whether the issue had been referred to anyone else.

Customer complaints may be received by proxy through a member of staff, from a completed customer feedback form, or through general mail directed to management. Complaints made directly to a member of staff should be actioned immediately, taking into account the content and authentic nature of any comments received. It is crucial to remember that the reputation of yourself and your business may be at stake after a complaint, so it is in the best interests of all involved to rectify the problem with propriety. Complainants should be encouraged to substantiate a serious complaint in a written form. Such objective evidence would form the basis of any investigation required to address the issue of concern. Complaint subjects may be specified regarding the associated responsibilities of

management staff.

Key team members with responsibility for the Customer Complaints process should liaise closely with other key team members regarding any complaints, addressing corrective actions, and providing appropriate and timely responses to the complainant. Details should be documented, archived, and regularly reviewed as part of standard procedures.

Investigating and Managing Complaints

Should a foodborne illness outbreak occur in relation to a particular food business, the impact on the business and the alleged ill or injured can be substantial. The following section suggests a scenario and procedures to follow if a suspected foodborne illness outbreak is alleged against your business:

A customer contacts your food business to inform you that they or someone they know has become ill as a result of consuming your product.

Follow these steps, presented in logical sequence, to handle the matter appropriately. It is essential to remain objective regarding the submission throughout the investigation until a conclusion is reached.

1. Regard the matter as very serious. At this point, no one has been proven guilty, and due process requires a diplomatic approach. Your business may wish to propose to the complainant or those allegedly affected some form of compensation, though this action should not be pursued until the findings of the investigation are conclusive and legal advice has been sought;
2. Remain calm and courteous with the complainant at all times and do not try to offer explanation until an investigation has been undertaken;
3. Record the complainant, product, retail, and illness or injury details described under Recording of the Initial Complaint Information, as appropriate, keeping in mind that all interactions with the complainant must remain confidential.

The information needs to be promptly evaluated and a decision made on the likelihood that a product-related outbreak has occurred. There are no clear-cut guidelines. The best practice is to consider that a foodborne disease outbreak may have occurred when two or more persons experience a similar foodborne illness after consuming a common foodstuff.

This guidance is general only and is not legal advice. Seek legal advice before responding to a serious complaint.

Customer Complaint Investigation, Results Notification, and Resolution



Testing samples and checking records helps establish how a problem occurred.

The complaint should be investigated immediately by a suitably qualified person from your business, or by an approved external specialist. The investigation should answer the following questions:

- How did the problem occur?
- Did the problem occur in your manufacturing plant or was it caused by a raw ingredient or package received from a supplier?
- Could the problem affect other products?

All products that may have been implicated by the problem should be immediately risk assessed and investigated.

Record in your customer complaint file:

- The name of the person at your firm who investigated the complaint;
- Date and time of the investigation;
- Investigation findings;
- Other products that may be affected by the problem;
- Corrective Action taken;
- Preventative action taken or proposed actions to be implemented.

Where Customer Complaints involve allegations such as foreign objects, samples of such objects may be provided by the complainant. During the investigative process, it is in the best interests of the food business involved to:

- Test the foreign object to confirm its composition, which can then provide information regarding the source of the material;
- Assess the size of the foreign object against the size of physical contaminant control, such as screens, filters, or metal detectors within the process. This may provide useful information regarding the genuine nature of the complaint, or may also provide a stimulus for considering deliberate product contamination. Where an identified foreign object is extremely unlikely to have originated from raw materials or through processing, consideration should always be given to the potential for deliberate product contamination or a false complaint.

After giving the matter proper consideration, if key team members have reason to believe that a foodborne illness incident has occurred, the following contacts should be facilitated within an appropriate timeframe:

- Key Customers: Contact key customers who on-sell the items manufactured by your food business;
- Legal Representative: Advise your legal representative of the situation and the action taken. Your legal representative will most likely recommend that you cooperate fully with the health authority, and may want to be included in the investigation to ensure that the rights of all concerned are properly respected;
- Insurance Agent: Depending on the nature and the extent of the outbreak, your insurance company may become involved. It is advisable to inform your agent at the beginning of an official investigation.

Once the investigation has gathered as much information as possible from all relevant sources:

- Contact the senior management of the business and all relevant personnel. These contacts should be made aware that the person handling the complainant has gathered all of the relevant information. If it is ascertained that more information is required from the complainant or other sources, additional details must be collated and recorded as soon as possible. The responsibility is now placed on the food business to determine whether or not any of the alleged suspect food remains at the business premises. If any such foods are located, they must be hygienically segregated, secured, and identified so as not to potentially cause further foodborne illness;
- When you have all of the investigation findings, a decision of notification to relevant authorities should be made. This process may include contacting the local health authority to ensure that the corrective and preventative actions applied are appropriate considering the situation. It is important to consider that a multi-tiered contact structure may be required for regulatory bodies. Relevant food legislation must be followed to ensure appropriate notification of suspected or confirmed foodborne illness incidents. Once this notification has occurred, it is often the responsibility of appropriate government departments to investigate the matter and assist with any related processes, which may include Product Recall and Product Withdrawal. It is important to consider at this step that if your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, you may be required to contact the customer before notifying the nominated regulatory body, particularly where private label branded products are involved. This is an important consideration as legal accountability for the regulatory compliance of any foodstuff often remains the liability of the brand owner, rather than the manufacturer.

A local health authority notification contact list should contain the following information:

- Name of the primary contact;
- Contact telephone number;
- Contact email address;
- Contact postal address;
- Secondary contact details.

Outcomes of this notification process generally include details for:

- What to do with the affected product;
- How to correct the problem.

The following details should be recorded as an element of notifications:

- Who made the corrective and preventative action decision, including time and date;
- The details and dates of the corrective action taken with the affected product;
- The corrective action taken to fix the problem that caused the incident and any preventative actions taken to prevent reoccurrence.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Development requirements in relation to their items.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Data and Information

The data and information collected through Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management activities can provide a wealth of information for any business. In the best-case scenario, positive customer feedback can be used as a form of validation that the business' systems are well-formatted and managed. Though important, positive feedback should never be used as a substitution for continuous improvement. Negative customer feedback can be used as a mechanism to identify and correct system failures, which are related to customer feedback. This is not ideal, as it requires negative feedback to be initiated, but it should be considered whenever negative customer feedback is received.

Customer focus data and information can be sourced from:

- Customer feedback and complaints;
- Customer surveys;
- Customer dedicated assistance mechanisms such as toll-free phone numbers, customer-based Internet sites, and complimentary technical assistance from appropriately skilled representatives;
- Food industry sector information;
- Internal and external auditing processes.

Customer Complaints Trending and Data Analysis



Trending complaint data over time highlights areas that need attention.

Most food businesses maintain trending and data analysis tools to ensure the outcomes of Customer Complaints can be used as a stimulus for continuous improvement within their business operation. It is important to acknowledge and use the data and information received to demonstrate the commitment of the business to meeting the customer's requirements and exceeding the customers' expectations. This is commonly done by trending data and information to identify areas of interest.

A simple application of such trending is to identify classes of customer complaints over a designated period; monthly is commonly used. This may include defining how many customer complaints have been received in the past month regarding:

- Delivery issues;
- Packaging;
- Smell;
- Texture;
- Colour;
- Taste;
- Food safety-related product issues including, but not limited to foreign objects and Temperature Control.

The number of each relative complaint item could then be graphed, and compared to previous months. Targets or Key Performance Indicators are often used to set performance levels, which can also validate continuous improvement activities. Key Performance Indicators are often set for a specific period:

For example, Customer complaints regarding product colour may have averaged 10 per month for the past year. A Key Performance Indicator might be set for an average of less than 5 per month for the coming 12-month period. If this Key Performance Indicator is met, the business has succeeded, and this is a good indication that the quality systems and procedures are working well. If the Key Performance Indicator is exceeded, the quality system and procedures may need some attention regarding the corrective and preventative action processes.

When collating Customer Complaint data and information, it is important to consider that Customer 'Comments' are not 'Complaints'. The data inputted for Customer Complaints trending and analysis should display customer comments separately to complaints. This will ensure complaints figures are accurate, whilst still including information regarding customer comments, which can still be a valuable continuous improvement tool for any food business.

Regulatory and Industry References

The following references provide further guidance on customer focus and complaints handling within food safety and quality management systems. Always confirm the current edition before relying on them:

- ISO 10002:2018, Quality management: Customer satisfaction: Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations (International Organization for Standardization);
- ISO 9001, Quality management systems: Requirements (International Organization for Standardization), which includes requirements for customer focus and the monitoring of customer satisfaction;
- ISO 22000:2018, Food safety management systems: Requirements for any organization in the food chain (International Organization for Standardization), which includes requirements for communication with customers and for handling feedback.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Development Key Points

- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program;
- Should you require additional resources for the development of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program elements, please discuss this with the relevant Senior Management representative;
- A properly developed Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly developed Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management:

- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management policy;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management development procedures;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management monitoring procedures;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management corrective and preventative action procedures;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management verification schedule;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management verification procedures;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management validation schedule;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management validation procedures;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management training procedures.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Documentation requirements in relation to their items.

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

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Documentation Key Points

- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management programs must be documented to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- All documented Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program elements must be controlled to ensure compliance;
- Key documented Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program elements should be available to your business team at all times to ensure they can facilitate required tasks;
- A properly documented Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly documented Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management do not negatively impact the safety and quality of the food items dispatched from the business.

Implementation of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management within the food safety and quality system, you may wish to consider the following requirements before completion:

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

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Implementation requirements in relation to their items.

Premium Resources on haccp.com that support this element include the Template CUSFOC Complaint Details Form, the Work Instruction CUSFOC Complaint Details Form, the Signage CUSFOC Customer Requirements Must Be Met At All Times and the Signage CUSFOC Customer Specifications Must Be Met At All Times.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Implementation Key Points

- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management programs must be implemented to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Your Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program must be fully implemented as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- The implementation of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management requires a commitment to the provision of resources by the Senior Management of your business;
- A properly implemented Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly implemented Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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. It is important to consider that 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management:

- Customer Focus Report Format: It is common for Customer Focus reports to be formatted to present to Customers on an ongoing scheduled basis. Such reports commonly include statistical information for Customer Complaints and Comments and are displayed in text, tabular and graphical formats. It is also common for these formats to include details of the Corrective Actions and Preventative Actions applied for each complaint.
- Customer Complaint Form: Customer complaint forms are commonly formatted to ensure that all relevant information is gathered at the initial complaint, including:
 - Name, address, email address, and telephone number of the complainant;
 - What is the problem with the product, for example, chemical taste, allergic reaction, illness, foreign object;
 - Product details including product name; package type; product size; product identification coding;
 - Details of whether the complainant has a sample of the product;
 - Name and address of where the product was purchased;
 - Date of purchase;
 - Details of storage and handling after purchase;
 - Details of the consumption date and time;
 - Details of whether the food has been consumed before by the customer;
 - Number of persons consuming the product;
 - Number of people ill or injured;
 - Names and ages of the people ill or injured;
 - Amount of product consumed;
 - Time the people became ill or injured;
 - Symptoms of illness or injury in order of occurrence;
 - If a physician has been consulted, the physician's name, contact details, and date of consultation;
 - Current status of illness or injury;
 - Details of whether the issue had been referred to anyone else.
- Customer complaints register: A register of all complaints received that records the date, complainant, product, nature of the complaint, investigation outcome and closure status, so that trends can be identified.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Monitoring requirements in relation to their items.

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

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Monitoring Key Points

- Monitoring provides real-time confirmation and evidence that your risk-based FS&Q Controls are effectively implemented;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management programs must be monitored to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Monitoring of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Nominated monitoring records for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures, and Work Instructions;
- A properly monitored Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly monitored Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 from 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 that any identified non-conformance issues are 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 Plans and the food business certification process.

Below are examples of Corrective Action and Preventative Action that may follow a Customer Focus or Customer Complaint Management non-conformance:

- Review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management policy;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management development procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management monitoring procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management corrective and preventative action procedures;
- Review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management verification schedule;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management verification procedures;
- Review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management validation schedule;

- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management validation procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management training procedures;
- Re-training in Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management;
- Review of management review activities to include Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management as an agenda item;
- Initiation of product hold procedures where safety or quality may be compromised;
- Initiation of a product recall or product withdrawal 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management concerns involving their product.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 is being met;
- Where deviations or variations are observed, Corrective Action and Preventative Action must be facilitated to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Corrective Action and Preventative Action of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Records of Corrective Action and Preventative Action must for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Proper application of Corrective Action and Preventative Action for your Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 must 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 timeframe. 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 be applicable to Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management:

- Review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management policy;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management development procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management implementation procedures and work instructions;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management monitoring procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management monitoring records;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management corrective and preventative action procedures;
- Review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management verification schedule;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management verification procedures;
- Review of the Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management validation schedule;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management validation procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management training procedures;
- Review of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management performance since the last review and historically;
- Review of customer feedback and complaint trends against targets;
- Inclusion of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Verification Key Points

- Your verification program provides evidence that your FS&Q Controls have worked;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management programs must be verified to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- The verification of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Nominated verification records for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures, and Work Instructions;
- A properly verified Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly verified Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 inappropriate limits of control or acceptability are identified and rectified within an appropriate timeframe. 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 be applicable to the validation of the limits of control or acceptability for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management:

- Confirmation of nominated food safety and food quality control limits for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management. These limits may be applicable to regulatory, industry, customer, or finished product specifications;
- Confirmation that complaint targets and Key Performance Indicators reflect customer requirements.

If your food business supplies foodstuffs manufactured to a customer's specifications, it is important to consider any specific Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management Validation Key Points

- Your validation program provides evidence that your FS&Q Controls will work;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management programs must be validated to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- The validation of Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Nominated validation records and supporting documentation for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- A properly validated Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management program will provide a strong framework for your business to maintain compliance with relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- A poorly validated Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be ongoing, including regular scheduled reviews to ensure the effectiveness of training and competency outcomes.

Team members who have defined responsibilities regarding Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management should have knowledge including:

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

Team members who have defined responsibilities regarding Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management should have skills including:

- Competency in basic Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management;
- Effective application of current Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management should have access to resources including:

- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management training;
- Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management associations and events;
- Regulatory standards, industry and customer information and updates regarding Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management;
- Incidents within the food industry sector regarding Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management;
- Commitment to Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management by senior management;
- Suitably qualified food industry professionals with verified experience in Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management;
- Effective communication systems including email, internet, and phone through which Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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.

Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be facilitated to meet relevant Regulatory, Industry, and Customer standards and requirements;
- Training, Skills and Knowledge programs for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be facilitated as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures, and Work Instructions;
- Training, Skills and Knowledge records for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management must be maintained as per relevant documented Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions;
- Properly applied Training, Skills, and Knowledge programs for Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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 Customer Focus and Customer Complaint Management 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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