

SQF (Safe Quality Food) Edition **9** – Certification Requirements

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Revision History

Rev No	Revision Date	Author	Approved by	Page No	Sec. No	Brief Description of Change
1	-	-	-	-	-	Old NCSI Recognition Booklet
2	November 2013	Stephanie Vincent	Stephanie Vincent	-	-	Transfer of NCSI procedure to BSI Procedure
3	September 2014	Mary Portelli	Stephanie Vincent	-	-	Changes are highlighted in yellow
4	September 2015	Alex Davies	Stephanie Vincent	Various	Various	Review of requirements
5	November 2016	Mary Portelli	Stephanie Vincent	15	11.7	Requirement added for the client to be provide permission for their details to be used on the SQFI website. Clarification that this document links to the Ts and Cs
				5	1.0	
5	December 2017	Mary Portelli	Stephanie Vincent	-	5	Updated to Edition 8.
6	October 2018	Mary Portelli	Mary Portelli	-	-	Updated contact details Addition of recall notification
8	November 2019	Mary Portelli	Todd Redwood	Various	Various	New title and Edition 8.1 <u>Now a Global Document</u> Update to Obligations & Complaints / Certification Requirements / Non-conformities Revised Complaints and Appeals
9	June 2020	Mary Portelli	Todd Redwood	5	2.0	Change to accreditation body Pre-Assessment details Inclusion of the recall section as well as its related record (Food Safety Product Incident Form) Auditors may be accompanied
				6	3.4	
				17	11.0	
				19	11.6	
10	March 2021	Mary Portelli	Todd Redwood	Various	Various	Updated to meet the release of SQF Edition 9

Related Documents

Document Number	Title
ISO/IEC 17021	Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
Edition 9	SQF Food Safety Codes
Edition 9 – February 2021	Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies
Edition 9.2 – March 2021	Criteria for SQF Auditors and Technical Reviewers
PP1630	SQF – Requirements for Audits Impacted by Pandemic and Serious Events
PF1411	Food Safety - Product Incident Form
PF1386	Pre-Operational checklist
PF1285	Service Request Form

1 Introduction

These certification requirements are designed to assist your organization on the requirements for certification to the Safe Quality Food (SQF) standard Edition 9 throughout the BSI Group.

This document is considered an addendum to the BSI Standard Terms and Conditions and therefore a part of the contract with BSI.

2 Accreditation Status

Certification to this standard is accredited. BSI holds accreditation for this standard with ANAB (ANSI National Accreditation Board).

The standard owner is Safe Quality Food Institute (SQFI).

This scheme follows the requirements of:

- ISO17065:2012
- Edition 9 – February 2021 Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies
- Edition 9.2 – March 2021 Criteria for SQF Auditors and Technical Reviewers

3 Implementation of SQF

3.1 Learn about the SQF Code

There are several ways to learn how to implement the SQF Code within your food business. The following options are available:

- Attend an "Implementing SQF Systems" training course through a licensed SQF Training Centre (recommended);
- Take the online "Implementing SQF Systems" training course available from www.sqfi.com;
- Train yourself by downloading the SQF Code from www.sqfi.com free of charge, and read how to apply it to your industry sector;
- and/or take the SQF online exam.

3.2 Select the Relevant SQF Modules

Your organization selects the relevant modules that apply to their industry sector by visiting the SQF website www.sqfi.com, select *The SQF Code*, and select the relevant industry sector(s).

3.3 Registration

Clients are required to be registered in SQF's Assessment database before an audit can be scheduled

<https://www.sqfi.com/assessment-database/new-suppliers/>

There is a fee for each site, payable at registration and annual renewal. The fee is dependent on the size of the site, as determined by gross annual sales revenue and by industry sector.

The site will be required to complete a profile which includes its food sector category(ies), add contact information and select a certification body.

Clients are also required to maintain their registration at all times and re-register on an annual basis. Failure to maintain registration will result in the certificate being invalid.

3.4 SQF Practitioner

The SQF Code requires that every site has a suitably qualified SQF practitioner.

More than one SQF practitioner may be required to meet shift, operational requirements and a back-up.

The Senior site management shall designate a primary and substitute SQF Practitioner for each site with responsibility and authority.

The SQF practitioner must have completed HACCP training as a minimum (2 day duration and assessed).

Training in the SQF Code is also recommended, as well as food industry disciplines, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), and Internal Auditing.

3.5 Document and Implement the SQF Code

To achieve SQF certification, your organization must document and implement the relevant modules of the SQF Code, at the level required (refer to 1.7). This requires a two stage process:

Document the SQF System – prepare policies, procedures, work instructions and specifications that meet the relevant modules of the SQF Code. In other words “say what you do.”

Implement the SQF System – implement the prepared policies, procedures, work instructions and specifications, and keep records to demonstrate compliance to the relevant modules of the SQF Code. In other words, “do what you say”.

A minimum of ninety (90) days of records is available before a site audit is conducted.

4 The Certification Process

The following section outlines the steps that apply during the BSI certification process for SQF.

BSI reserves the right to provide its clients and those that request quotations with marketing and technical information relating to standards, training and compliance services.

4.1 Initial Inquiry

BSI will respond to either verbal or written expressions of interest from organizations interested in one or more of our programs. If your organization is located near one of BSI's offices, an advisory visit may be arranged to discuss your recognition requirements and how BSI can help your organization achieve them.

BSI will also, on request and receipt of a Request for Quotation, prepare a proposal tailoring our services to your organization's needs.

4.2 Application for Certification and Assessment

Receipt of your organization's Application form (or authorized acceptance of a valid BSI proposal), along with the accompanying payment of the non-refundable application fee (or invoicing instructions) together with this document forms the contract between your organization and BSI.

Your requirements will be entered into BSI database and an Auditor will be appointed to look after your certification or assessment requirements.

The Auditor will be your primary point of contact with BSI and is responsible for ensuring that our certification/assessment services are delivered to your organization in the most effective manner possible.

The client will be asked to complete the BSI 'PF175 - Service Request Form'.

4.3 Client Contact

As soon as practicable after receipt of your signed application/proposal, a BSI auditor who is SQF registered for the same food sector category (or nominated representative) will contact your organization. Your auditor will seek to establish a working relationship between your organization and BSI, and to confirm your recognition requirements in terms of the certification or assessment services, standards or codes of practice, locations, and activities and/or products to be included in the scope of certification.

The auditor (or nominated representative) will seek to gain an appreciation of the structure of your organization and the activities being conducted. In particular the auditor will:

- Seek an appreciation of the nature and scope of the organization's activities, structure and location(s), including any activities for which confirmation is being excluded; and
- Determine the status of system documentation and implementation including organizational policies, objectives and targets.

If you are working with a consultant it is often useful for that person to be party to the communication process.

4.4 Conduct a Pre-assessment Audit (Optional)

A Pre-assessment audit is not mandatory but recommended and permitted to provide a 'health check' of the site's implemented SQF Food Safety System.

A Pre-assessment audit can assist in identifying gaps in the site's SQF Food Safety System so that corrective action can occur before engaging the selected certification body for a full certification audit.

A written report will be left with the client detailing the findings. Normal reporting conventions will be followed, but non-conformances cannot be raised.

The auditor who performs the Pre-assessment must be a registered SQF auditor.

4.5 Identifying the Scope of Certification

SQF certification is site and product specific. When activities are carried out in different premises but are overseen by the same senior, operational, and technical management, and are covered by the one SQF System, the site can be expanded to include those premises.

The scope of certification forms part of the certificate of registration. It describes the food sector categories (Refer to SQF Code - Appendix 1) and the products processed and handled on that site.

The scope of certification shall be clearly identified and agreed upon between the site and BSI prior to the initial certification audit and included in the scope of the initial certification audit and all subsequent audits. The scope of certification cannot be changed once the audit has commenced.

Exemption

Where a site seeks to exempt any products processed or handled on site, the request for exemption must be submitted to BSI in writing prior to the certification audit, explaining the reason for exemption.

If approved, the product exemptions shall be listed in the site description in the SQF Assessment Database and in audit reports.

Corporate Audits

Where a site is part of a larger corporation and some food safety functions are conducted at a corporate head office (i.e. an office that does not process or handle products), an optional corporate audit can be conducted of the Code elements managed by the corporate office.

- All **Mandatory and Applicable elements** of the SQF food safety Code shall be audited at each site irrespective of the findings of the corporate audit.
(Refer Mandatory Clauses in the SQF Code)
- Any open non-conformities shall be attributed to the site or sites.
- A typical duration is 1 day for a Corporate site to be audited.
- A separate audit report is completed and this can be used as a reference for all other central sites to be audited.
- Corporate head office audits do not apply to central sites within an SQF multi-site program.

Multi-Sites

A Multi-site Organisation shall meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Sites is a low risk facility
- Site is involved in Packing / Packhouse, Grain Handling/Elevating or Manufacturing of Primary Products.
- The central site and all sub-sites are all located in the one country
- All sites operate under the same food safety legislation.
- The central site is the entity responsible for the SQF multi-site program.
- Sub-sites are linked to the central site by a legal or contractual arrangement.
- Only one CB can audit the central site and all sub-sites in the multi-site program

The selection of the sample is the responsibility of the certification body.

At least twenty-five (25) percent of the sub-sites selected shall be based on random selection.

On the application of a new sub-site or group of sub-sites they will be included in the audit sample for the next re-certification audit.

4.6 The Certification Audit

A facility audit is conducted on site and determines the effective implementation of the supplier's documented SQF System.

Ideally, once a client has satisfactorily completed all their policies, procedures, work instructions, and specifications, BSI can be contacted to do the audit.

Applicable Elements

All applicable system elements and GMP requirements are assessed during the certification audit.

Where an element is not applicable and this can be appropriately justified, it is stated as "not applicable" or "N/A" by the SQF food safety auditor in the audit report.

Mandatory Clauses are requirements within 'System Elements - Module 2'.

Multi-sites

Central and sub-sites are audited every twelve (12) months.

Seasonal

Some sites may have a time in which the major activity is conducted in a period of less than five (5) consecutive months in a calendar year.

If a site is involved in a seasonal production, then the initial certification audit must be conducted during this peak period. If a site is seeking to include products from more than one season within their scope of certification, then the initial certification audit must be conducted during the period that is of the highest risk and/or highest volume production operation.

If a site is a Mult-site operation, the central site shall be audited before the majority of the sample of sub-sites. It is recognized that for seasonal operations harvesting dates and having product available to the central site may require some sub-sites audits being conducted prior to the central site audit.

FSMA - Voluntary Modules

This module can be added to an audit or as a stand-alone

This is not a certification audit, so a separate Voluntary module certificate cannot be awarded to the client. This module is considered advisory only

- An additional 4 hours with the SQF Code for Food Manufacturing
- The audit shall be carried out by any SQF approved auditor, who has also undertaken the PCQI training.
- The addendum is voluntary and is not scored or rated.
- Responses are either compliant, non-compliant or not applicable. There are no non-conformances to be raised. The items raised are considered advisory only.

4.7 The Re-certification Audit

Clients maintaining certification for SQF are required to have a re-certification audit annually, within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the anniversary of the last day of the initial certification audit.

The re-certification audit score is calculated in the same way as the initial certification audit, and an audit rating of C or better must be obtained.

If the re-certification audit is not undertaken within the agreed timeframe the client's certificate is immediately suspended.

The BSI 'PP1386 Pre-Operational checklist' should be completed before the audit to collect any changes.

Seasonal

If a recertification audit's sixty (60) day window cannot be met, a request can be made in writing to the Technical and Compliance Manager by the client to temporarily or permanently change the re-certification audit date, so that it falls during the peak operational part of the season.

A formal request shall then be entered on the SQF website to the SQF Compliance Manager.

Remote Audits

With site access and travel restrictions imposed due to pandemic and other serious events, SQF has provided options for Certification Bodies to utilize the ICT audit approach to deliver SQF certification. The ICT audit approach is voluntary and shall be mutually agreed between BSI and the certificated organization prior to the audit.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely.

In cases where access and travel are not impacted, then the usual SQF GFSI benchmarked certification process applies. SQF have provided a variety of options for clients/sites impacted by the pandemic and/or serious events:

1. A Date Change (certificate extension)
2. The audit conducted in part using ICT (Information Communication Technology)
3. A full remote audit

BSI must be informed of this audit type and the 'PP1630 - SQF Audits Impacted by Pandemic and Serious Event Restrictions' form must be submitted.

Multi-sites

Audits are conducted on the anniversary of the last day of the initial certification audit, plus or minus thirty (30) calendar days.

4.8 Surveillance Audit

A surveillance audit is conducted when the client attains a "C" rating at a certification audit or re-certification audit.

A new score and rating is issued at the surveillance audit however the re-certification audit date is not affected.

The surveillance audit shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the six month anniversary of the last day of the last certification or re-certification audit.

Non-conformities raised at the surveillance audit shall be closed out as indicated in the SQF Code.

Seasonal

If the due date of a Surveillance audit falls outside the operational season, a Pre-operational audit shall be scheduled. This will occur no more than thirty (30) days prior to the next season.

The pre-operational audit comprises a full review of corrective actions from the last audit and preparedness for the next re-certification audit

SQF Fundamentals

A surveillance audit is conducted when the site has any of the following number and type of non-conformances raised at a certification or re-certifications:

- i. 2 or more majors
- ii. 1 major and 4 or more minors or
- iii. 14 or more minors

Multi-sites

Surveillance audits are conducted for any site in the multi-site program that receives a 'C-Complies' rating. The internal audit of that sub-site by the central site shall also be reviewed.

Surveillance audits are conducted six (6) months from the last day of the last certification audit, plus or minus thirty (30) calendar days

4.9 Audit Duration

The audit duration is the expected total time that is required for the SQF auditor to complete the assessment of the SQF System.

This is based on:

- The scope
- Food safety risk
- Three (3) HACCP studies. (Additional time is required if there are more than three HACCP studies)
- Size of the facility
- The number of employees
- Design of the product flow and staff movement
- The number and complexity of product lines and the overall process
- Whether the product is high or low risk
- The level of mechanization and labour intensiveness;
- The ease of communication with staff (e.g., different languages spoken within the site)
- Certification in a Food Safety Management System (i.e. – ISO22000)

The minimum duration for a certification or re-certification audit is 2 (two) days, with additional time for report writing.

The typical audit duration shall be 16 hours of which approximately 8 hours (i.e. approximately half of the audit) shall be spent auditing the production environment, site facilities, interviewing staff and observing processes.

If the SQF Quality code is combined with a certification audit to the SQF Food Safety Code, a minimum of ½ day is added. While a stand-alone certification audit will be a minimum of 1 day

Remote Audits

The duration shall be the same if it is a Remote audit. The total duration must cover both the remote and on-site activities.

SQF Fundamentals

There are specific duration tables for the SQF Fundamentals

Multi-sites

A typical duration is 1-2 days for a Multi-site to be audited.

4.10 Audit Report

At the conclusion of the audit, the audit team will prepare a written report on the audit findings and the audit team leader will present these findings to your organization's senior management at the exit meeting. BSI can provide the audit report available to your organization within ten (10) calendar days from the last day of the audit. It is also available on the SQF Assessment Database after the certificate decision.

Non-conformities will be discussed with your team during the auditor's visit and outlined at the exit meeting. Non-Conformities are categorized as Critical, Major and Minor. Observations can not be raised at SQF assessments.

BSI undertakes an extensive review process of audit reports and there may be occasions when the audit result rating is revised based upon discussions with the Compliance and Risk team.

The audit findings include a summary of the overall compliance of your system with the requirements of the relevant standard(s) or codes of practice. If you are unclear regarding the meaning of anything in your report, please contact your BSI auditor or the Compliance and Risk team.

4.11 Audit Score, Rating and Audit Frequency

The SQF rating provides an indication of the overall condition of your organizations' site against the SQF Code, and also provides a guideline on the required level of surveillance by BSI.

(Refer to the SQF code for Audit Score criteria)

If a site receives a "F – fails to comply" rating at an initial certification audit or fails to correct identified non-conformances within the required timeframe, the site is considered to have failed the SQF food safety audit and must then re-apply for another certification audit.

Sites that have received a "F – fails to comply" rating at a recertification audit, will receive a system generated surveillance audit to be completed.

SQF Fundamentals

There is no score or rating for the SQF Fundamentals Primary or Manufacturing.

Sites are deemed to have successfully implemented the SQF Basic or Intermediate Fundamentals Primary Production Code if the site closes out all non-conformities within thirty (30) days.

Multi-site

If the central site or any one of the sampled sub-sites has a critical non-conformity or a 'F – Fail' rating, the certificates for the central site and ALL sub-sites shall be suspended.

4.12 Corrective Actions

It is your organization's responsibility to respond to the non-conformities detailed in your audit report by the designated time frame. Failure to do so may result in suspension or cancellation of your certification.

Definitions and close-out requirements for non-conformities are defined in the SQF Code

Seasonal

If a corrective action cannot be corrected due to seasonal conditions, additional time can be requested. The client must request an extension to the Technical and Compliance Manager with details of justification of the extension, how the risk is being controlled, and the agreed completion date. The non-conformance will be closed out by the SQF food safety auditor.

Failure to provide evidence at the new date, will result in a certificate suspension.

4.13 Granting Certification

Certification of SQF System shall be awarded to suppliers that achieve a "C" audit rating or greater with no outstanding non-conformities. The certification decision shall be made within forty-five (45) calendar days of the last day of the facility audit.

Once SQF certification is granted, the SQFI issues a unique certification number which is specific to that supplier's site.

BSI will provide an electronic certificate to your organization within ten (10) calendar days of granting certification. The certificate of registration is valid for twelve (12) months plus 75 days from the date the certification decision was taken.

Multi-site

A certificate shall be issued to the central site and sub-sites audited within the sample program of the SQF multi-site program.

4.14 Maintaining Certification

To maintain SQF certification, your organization is required to attain a "C" audit rating or greater at re-certification audits, ensure that surveillance and/or re-certification audits occur within the required timeframe, ensure that no critical non-conformities are raised at surveillance or re-certification audits, and that all major and minor non-conformities are corrected within the time frame specified.

4.15 Unannounced Re-Certification Audit

SQF sites shall be required to undertake one (1) unannounced audit **once every** three (3) years. The unannounced audit shall occur within the sixty (60) day re-certification window (i.e., the anniversary date of the initial certification audit +/- thirty (30) days).

- The first three-year cycle commences with the initial certification audit date. Within the first three years of certification, clients are required to have one unannounced audit. Thereafter, they will have an unannounced audit every three years.
- If a site changes certification bodies, the site's unannounced re-certification audit schedule shall not change.
- A defined blackout period shall be established by negotiation between the site and BSI to prevent the unannounced re-certification audit from occurring out of season or when the site is not operating for legitimate business reasons.
- Immediate suspension of the site certificate will occur in facilities that refuse entry to the SQF food safety auditor for an unannounced audit.
- Certificates issued following unannounced re-certification audits shall indicate that the audit was unannounced.
- A site may forgo the three-year certification cycle requirement and voluntarily elect to have annual unannounced re-certification audits. If annual unannounced re-certification audits are conducted by the site then the protocol outlined for the three-year certification cycle audit shall be followed. Sites with annual unannounced recertification audits shall be recognized on the SQF certificate as an "SQFI select site."

Un-announced audits do not apply to multisite organisations due to the complexity of the process.

Unannounced audits cannot take place at an initial or surveillance audit.

Unannounced audits are on-site audits. Remote activities using ICT cannot be used.

4.16 Auditor Rotation

SQF have a restriction in place that one auditor may conduct no more than three (3) consecutive audits at the same company.

After three (3) audits, another auditor must be assigned to visit your premises. Following this, the original auditor may return for up to another three (3) consecutive audits

5 Suspending Certification

BSI will suspend a SQF certificate if the client:

- Fails to permit the surveillance or re-certification audit within the audit window;
- Fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified
- Fails to permit an unannounced audit or refuses entry to an SQF food safety auditor for an unannounced audit
- Receives an "F – fails to comply" rating at a surveillance or re-certification audit
- Fails to maintain the integrity of the SQF certificate

BSI shall inform the client in writing that the SQF certificate has been suspended. This will include:

- the reason
- effective date
- information that the site cannot represent itself as holding an SQF certificate for the duration of the suspension
- Amend the site's detail on the SQFI assessment database to a 'suspended' status. The reason for the suspension and effective date will be indicated.
- Submit a change request to SQFI using the online 'Change Request & Notification Form'.

(Refer to the SQF Code for the action required, dependent on the reason for Suspension)

6 Withdrawing Certification

BSI will withdraw a SQF certificate if the client:

- Has been placed under suspension and fails to follow the suspension process
- Fails to take approved corrective action as determined by BSI within the time frames specified
- Has intentionally falsified its records
- Fails to maintain the integrity of the SQF certificate
- Has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets
- Has an order made or a resolution passed for the closure of the client (except for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction)
- Ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors or makes any arrangement or composition with its creditors

BSI shall inform the client in writing that the SQF certificate has been withdrawn. This will include:

- the reason and effective date. An acknowledgment of receipt of the withdrawal notification is required.
- Instruct the client to return the certificate within thirty (30) days of notification.
- Amend the site's detail on the SQFI assessment database to a 'withdrawn' status. The reason for the withdrawal and effective date will be indicated.
- Submit a change request to SQFI using the online 'Change Request & Notification Form'.

The site is posted on sqfi.com for twelve (12) months.

Withdrawn sites are required to wait for twelve (12) months before reapplying for certification

7 Variations to Certification

Your organization is required to advise BSI if there are any significant changes to your organization or the product.

BSI will determine if the degree of change is significant to require an additional assessment or if the changes can be assessed at the next schedule audit or if the product requires re-assessment. This may include:

- Scope of certified products
- Withdrawal of certification by BSI Group
- Change of certification scope

When a Client wants to change the scope of certification, add food sector categories or new products to their scope of certification, the Client is required to state the request in writing.

The decision will be made by the Technical and Compliance Manager, to determine whether or not an audit of the additional process or products is required.

- Change of ownership
- Change of management
- Change of company name
- Change of ABN

- Change of Certification Body

A client can decide to change their certification body after one certification cycle and only after all non-conformances have been closed. Transfer cannot occur if the certificate has been withdrawn, suspended or is in threat of being suspended.

Sites that require a surveillance audit are permitted to change certification bodies only after the surveillance audit is conducted. Alternatively, a change request can be submitted to SQFI using the online 'Change Request & Notification Form'.

The approval shall be provided by the SQFI Compliance Manager. They will confirm if a site can transfer to another Certification Body.

- Transfer from another Certification Body

BSI is required to undertake a review of the site's certification before the transfer is complete.

This is completed by the Sales team and shall include:

A copy of the last audit report and a copy of the current SQF Certificate

When a site changes certification bodies, the certificate issued by the previous certification body remains valid until the expected expiration date. The certification number and the re-certification date are transferred to the new certification body.

- Temporary or permanent change of audit dates

Must be submitted to the Technical and Compliance Manager. The request must include the reason and justification for the change.

The change request is then submitted to SQFI using the online 'Change Request & Notification Form'.

The approval shall be provided by the SQFI Compliance Manager. They will issue an extension to the site's certificate or a temporary or permanent change to the site's re-certification audit timeframe. This may include changes due to extraordinary events such as acts of nature or extreme weather

- Change of Business Ownership

Where a client's business has been sold and the business name is retained, the new owner is required to notify BSI of the change of ownership within 30 calendar days.

Where the ownership of the client changes but the key staff responsible for the management and oversight of the SQF system has been retained BSI may retain the existing audit frequency status.

If there is a significant change to the client's key staff then BSI will complete a Certification Assessment and issue the client with a new certificate number. The audit frequency applicable to a new certification shall apply.

- Relocation of Premises

When a certified site relocates their business premises, the site's certification does not transfer to the new site. A successful certification of the new premises must be conducted.

8 Use of the SQF Logo

The SQF logo is proprietary and use of the logo is subject to SQFI terms and conditions. Refer to Appendix 3: SQF Quality Shield and Logo Rules of Use at www.sqfi.com.

The permission for a supplier to use the SQF quality shield shall be suspended or withdrawn if:

- A site's certification is suspended, withdrawn, relinquished or not renewed
- A site breaches or fails to comply with the logo rules of use
- A site uses the SQF logo in a way that, in the opinion of SQFI or BSI, is detrimental to the SQF logo or the SQF program as a whole, is misleading to the public or otherwise contrary to law
- A site has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets
- A site ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt

A site shall be notified by BSI in writing if their use of the SQF Logo has been suspended or withdrawn.

9 Confidentiality

BSI will treat all information in accordance with the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012

10 Additional Obligations

Following certification, there are a number of managerial responsibilities which your organization will need to fulfil to maintain BSI's certification. These include:

- Continued compliance with the relevant systems standard(s) or code(s) of practice;
- Compliance with the BSI Standard Commercial Terms and Conditions and obligations as specified in this document as well as other guidance documentation that may be specifically provided from time-to-time;
- Conduct of regular internal reviews of your system, with appropriate documentation of such reviews and of any subsequent corrective actions;
- Notification to BSI of any significant changes in the structure (key responsibilities and management system), ownership and operations of your organization to enable the impact of such changes on the certified ownership system to be evaluated; and
- Notification to BSI of any litigation or serious events or matters that relate to the scope of your certification
- As stated in the SQF Code (Section 5.3), in the event of a product recall or regulatory infringement, the client shall inform BSI food.recall@bsigroup.com and SQFI in writing at foodsafetycrisis@sqfi.com within twenty-four (24) hours of the event.

There is no obligation to communicate product withdrawals to BSI. The definitions of product withdrawal and product recall are listed below for reference:

- **Product Recall:** The removal by a supplier of a product from the supply chain that has been deemed to be unsafe and has been sold to the end consumer and is available for sale (GFSI v7.2:2018).
- **Product Withdrawal:** The removal of a product by a supplier from the supply chain that has been deemed to be unsafe and which has not been placed in the market for purchase by the end consumer (GFSI v7.2:2018).
- BSI shall notify the SQFI within a further forty-eight (48) hours of any action it intends to take to ensure the integrity of the certification.
- In case of public food safety events (such as e.g. public recalls, calamities, food safety outbreaks, etc.) that a BSI office becomes aware of, the FCoE shall be notified through food.recall@bsigroup.com within 24 hours of becoming aware.
- In case your organization is affected by serious events that impact the FSMS, legality and/or the integrity of the certification which includes legal proceedings, prosecutions, situations which pose major threats to food safety, quality or certification integrity as a result of natural or man-made disasters (e.g. war, strike, terrorism, crime, flood, earthquake, malicious computer hacking, etc.), BSI shall be contacted within 03 working days through critical.food@bsigroup.com.
- BSI will assess the risks of continuing certification and establish a documented policy and process, outlining the steps it will take in consultation with certified organizations, for a reasonable planned course of action. This includes situations where, due to security and/or visa issues in a Country, an audit cannot be performed as unannounced (e.g. when an auditor requires to be in contact with the organization at all times, due to security reasons or a visa must be requested in advance with the assistance/invitation of the certified organization).
- BSI will document and manage the situation using the BSI 'PF1411 Food Safety - Product Incident' form.

10.1 Complaints

Your organization is required to keep a record of all known complaints. These records must be made available to the audit team and BSI when requested.

Your organization is required to demonstrate that you have taken appropriate action to address these complaints through investigation and correct any deficiencies found. These actions must be documented.

It may be necessary for BSI to conduct audits of certified clients at short notice or unannounced to investigate complaints, or in response to changes or as follow up.

In such cases BSI shall describe and make known in advance to the certified clients the conditions under which such audits will be conducted.

10.2 Certification Agreement

Your Organization is required to meet the requirements of the Certification Agreement. This requires that your organization and products remain compliant with the scheme requirements at and the conditions of certification at all times.

Your organization is required to implement appropriate changes as communicated by BSI in a time appropriate manner.

10.3 Misleading Statements

Your organization is not permitted to use its product certification in a manner that could bring the BSI into disrepute. This includes making misleading or unauthorized statements. If you are unsure if a statement could be misleading you are advised to contact BSI prior to making the statement. Statements include but are not limited to the use of the logo on non-certified product, advertising (including your website) and internal communication.

If your organization is required to provide copies of their certification documents these must be reproduced in its entirety. Failure to do so may be misleading to the recipient as to the scope of certification.

10.4 Assessment Scheduling

Your organization is required to make all necessary arrangements to allow the evaluation and surveillance activities to take place. This includes but is not limited to; Equipment, Product, Locations, Personnel and Sub-contractors.

10.5 Observers

- From time to time BSI requires an Observer to be in attendance at an audit. This may be related to training of new staff and witness assessment of existing staff. It is a requirement of certification that your organization allows these activities to occur.
- Failure to allow this activity to occur may result in cancellation of your certification.
- BSI will, at all times, ensure that the use of observers is kept to a minimum and your organization will be advised prior to the assessment activity.
- The Observer does not take an active part in an assessment.
- BSI, SQF or the accreditation body (ANAB) reserves the right to conduct its own audit or visit to a site once certificated in response to complaints or as part of routine compliance activity to ensure the integrity of the scheme. Such visits may be announced or unannounced

10.6 Training

If a SQF Trainer is delivering a public course using SQF copyright materials, it is not considered a conflict of interest for the same individual to audit the client.

10.7 SQFI website

It is a SQFI requirement for your organization's details to be displayed on the SQFI website.

www.sqfi.com/sqf-supplier-directory/

11 Complaints and Appeals

Appeals against certification decisions and / or complaints against service delivery levels may be raised with your auditor. If you remain dissatisfied, contact the BSI Scheme Manager. All complaints will be investigated and the originator of a complaint will be advised of the outcomes, as appropriate.

BSI will also investigate legitimate documented complaints, relevant to operation of the system, from customers of certified sites, SQF and the accreditation body (ANAB). Certified sites shall, at all reasonable times, provide representatives of BSI, SQF or ANAB with access to its premises and records for the purposes of investigating such complaints.

If your sites application for certification has been refused; or your certified sites certification has been suspended, withdrawn, or reduced in scope, you may appeal against the decision to a Review Committee constituted and operated as set out below:

Where necessary a Review Committee will be established and operated as set out below:

- The appellant shall, within 28 days of the disputed advice from BSI, lodge a notice of written notice of appeal with an affidavit as to the grounds of appeal;
- The Global Food and Retail Supply Chain Operations and Compliance Director shall be advised within 14 days of receiving the appellant's notice;
- The Global Food and Retail Supply Chain Operations and Compliance Director shall then establish a Review Committee;
- The Review Committee shall consist a minimum of three persons considered as experts in the area of technology or business relevant to the appeal. The Review Committee shall be constituted as follows:
 - One-person expert in the relevant area of technology or business
 - Two persons selected by the appellant from a list of four persons
- The appellant shall represent himself and no legal representation will be allowed unless approved by the Review Committee; and
- The Review Committee will carry out investigations as are required, including assessment of information supplied by the appellant and, within a reasonable time, decide by majority vote whether or not to reverse the original decision.
- The Global Food and Retail Supply Chain Operations and Compliance Director shall give notification of the decision to the appellant within 14 days of the Review Committee decision

To raise a complaint or appeal against the service delivery by BSI or audit outcome please notify:

Mary Portelli

Technical and Compliance Manager - Food

Email: mary.portelli@bsigroup.com