



Certification Rules - SQF

Company Information: Food Safety Net Services – Certification and Audit, LLC, (FSNS C&A), is legal entity located in San Antonio, Texas and accredited against ISO guide 65 standards and approved by SQF to perform certification activities on their behalf.

Certification Procedures: The audit will be carried out as outlined in Section 2 and/or 4 of the SQF Code Ed 7.2 July, 2014 audit requirements. Only items included in the Scope of Certification as defined in 2.2 of the SQF Code Ed 7.2 July, 2014 (hereafter referred to as “the Code”) will be evaluated against the SQF audit. The audit duration will be based Section 2.5 of the Code.

In the event that changes are made to the certification requirements, these changes will be communicated to the client by FSNS C&A and compliance with the updated requirements is verified by FSNS C&A.

Scope of Certification: Only those products and processes detailed in the scope of the audit will be covered by the certificate. The scope of the audit will be pre-determined and mutually agreed to prior to the time of the audit. Processes or products that the customer does not wish to be included in the scope of certification must be declared prior to commencement of the audit. Exclusion must meet the requirements

Auditor Qualification: Auditors are qualified following the requirements established under the Criteria for SQF Auditors, 7th edition February 2012. Auditor qualifications and impartiality is be verified by Certification Management prior to audit assignment. Note: you, the client, have the right to deny an auditor proposed by FSNS C&A.

Conducting the Audit: Per the Certification and Auditing Services Terms and Conditions; the auditee agrees to provide the auditor with accurate and complete information. The auditee commits to assisting the auditor and to provide all necessary and appropriate information requested by the auditor that is within the scope of the certification audit. All production lines that will be included in the scope of certification shall be in operation at the time of the audit.

Corrective actions: Corrective actions for minor non-conformities must be implemented within 30 days from the commencement of the audit as required by SQF Evidence of corrective actions shall be submitted to FSNSC&A for review.

Corrective actions for major non-conformities must be implemented within 14 days from the commencement of the audit as required by SQF. Evidence of corrective actions shall be submitted to FSNS C&A for review. FSNS C&A commits to maintaining confidentiality during the review of corrective actions and material provided by the auditee. If corrective actions are not implemented and made available to FSNS C&A within the required timeframe a re-audit may be required.

Appeals: Per ISO 65 and SQF requirements, certification decisions may be appealed. Appeals must be communicated to the certification body and/or BRC within 7 days of the certification decision. Please note that appeals against the certification decision will not delay the suspension or withdrawal of certification. Inquiries in reference to non-conformities issued may also be lodged. Inquiries must be filed with the FSNS C&A within 10 days of the audit. Complaints may be filed at any time. Inquiries, appeals, and complaints may be communicated to FSNS C&A via phone or email. The FSNS C&A policy relating to inquiries, appeals, and complaints will be made available upon request.

Granting Certification: The final certification decision is based on information collected throughout the certification process including the application, scope proposal, on-site audit, corrective actions and technical review. The decision to grant certification is retained by FSNS C&A management personnel and is not, under any circumstance, delegated to a third party. In the event that FSNS C&A finds the client to be in compliance with requirements defined in the SQF Code the facility will be granted certification as defined in Part A section 3.4 of the Code.

Additional Audits: A final grade of C will require an on-site verification of corrective actions within 30 days and the certification is only valid for a period of 6 months. A Surveillance audit shall be conducted every 6 months until an appropriate audit result is achieved; see Section 4 of the Code. Note: if the 30 time frame is not met the supplier’s certification may be suspended. Surveillance or re-certification audits may be necessary in the event that significant changes are made to the facility, process or products included in the scope of certification. Significant changes must be communicated to FSNS-C&A. The auditee must inform FSNS C&A of a product recall, regulatory activity requiring public notification, facility modification, natural disaster, or other occurrence at the plant that may affect

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product safety or quality to determine if surveillance or re-evaluation activities are required.

Where appropriate, FSNS C&A may carry out further audits or question activities to validate continued certification at any time.

Seasonal Products: If the client wishes seasonal products to be included in the scope of the certification the client must inform FSNS C&A of seasonal products. Per SQF requirements the re-certification/surveillance audit must be conducted within 30 days of the start of the season.

Unannounced audits: Beginning July 1, 2014, SQF will require an unannounced audit be performed in one out of every three certification cycles. SQF Code 7.2 edition allows the company to designate blackout dates on which the certification audit may not be performed. Please note that blackout dates may only be used for dates when the facility is not operational. Auditors will verify that the facility was not operational during the requested black-out dates.

Certificate Validity: The certificate issued to the auditee is valid during the timeframe indicated on the certificate. It is the responsibility of the Client to schedule re-certification audits in a timely manner to ensure no lapse in certification. Re-audits must be scheduled within a 60 day period of the anniversary date; the 60 day period is defined at 30 days either side of the anniversary date as outlined in Section 4 of the Code. The client must inform FSNS C&A of a product recall or other food safety event requiring public notification relating to certified products or of any legal actions relating to the safety or legality of certified products.

Certification Suspension or Withdraw: It is the responsibility of client to maintain compliance with the requirements outlined in the SQF Code Edition 7.2. FSNS C&A reserves the right to suspend or withdraw certification. Suspension or withdrawal may be determined based on legal or regulatory actions taken against the client. It is the responsibility of the client to ensure that products and processes defined in the scope are in compliance with the Code. If it is discovered that these criteria are not being met by the client certification may be withdrawn or suspended.

Abuse or misuse of the SQF logo may result in withdraw or suspension of certification. Additionally, corrective actions for all non-conformities identified in the certification audit must be implemented within the timeframe defined in Section 3.2 of the Code. If corrective actions are not implemented within this timeframe, the certificate may be suspended or withdrawn. Upon suspension or withdrawal of certification

the auditee must immediately remove any reference made regarding certification. Failure to do so may result in legal action.

Publication: Audit reports will remain the property of the auditee. According to the contract between FSNS C&A and the scheme owner, a list of companies certified by FSNS C&A, the audit report and the certification decision will be communicated to the scheme owner via their certification data-base. Additionally, information provided to FSNS C&A during the certification process may be reviewed by the accreditation body employed by FSNS C&A, the Scheme owner and by the certification committee who oversees the activities performed by FSNS C&A. Confidentiality agreements are maintained between FSNS C&A and the accreditation body and with the certification committee. A list of certification committee members is available upon request. Information provided to FSNS C&A will remain confidential and will not be shared with third parties other than those listed above without prior written consent.

Conflict of Interest: FSNS C&A maintains a Policy on Ethics in Business conduct and Undue Pressure. This policy is signed by certification body personnel. A copy of the policy will be provided upon request.

Use of FSNS C&A and SQF logos: The client must abide by logo and shield usage requirements outlined in Appendix 3 of the Code. The supplier must request receive approval from FSNS C&A prior to using the SQF Logo or Quality Shield. As part of the request procedures the client must agree to abide by SQF and FSNS C&A requirements. Contact FSNS C&A for more information. Note: References made to certification that are untrue or misleading may results in suspension or withdrawal of certification.

Complaints: Complaints received regarding certified product shall be documented with appropriate investigation and corrective action. This information shall be made available to FSNS C&A personnel when a reasonable request is made. A request will not be made without proper cause. In the event that FSNS C&A receives a complaint regarding a certified site a surveillance audit may be performed.

Fees and Pricing: FSNS C&A is a financially independent entity who maintains independence through fees charged to the client. Information related to audit and certification fees will be made available up request.