

Implementing SQF Systems Training



Participant Workbook –
Instructor Key

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Your Information

Name:

Course Dates:

Exam Date:

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Training Center Information

Training Center Name:

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Evaluation Requirements

The purpose of the Implementing SQF Systems Training Participant Workbook is to assist the participant in understanding the SQF Code and implementing an SQF System. Participants should complete this Workbook at the instruction of their trainer and retain this Workbook as a reference.

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Introduction to SQF & Implementing SQF Systems Training

1. How can a supplier use SQF certification and the SQF certification audit as a benefit to their business?

Answers may include:

- *Recognition in the form of a listing in the SQFI summary of SQF approved facilities on the SQFI website.*
- *Marketing. If certified at level 3, the organization's sales and marketing teams can use the SQF quality logo to promote their SQF certification.*
- *Sales and customer service. Certification can be used to address and satisfy customer requirement to sustain business.*
- *Improve the efficiency, quality and safety of their process.*

2. How does GFSI impact the SQF program and Code?

Answers may include:

The SQF Code is benchmarked to the GFSI guidelines, a set of food safety criteria. GFSI internationally recognized by food retailers throughout the world, thus systems certified to SQF are also internationally recognized by retailers who specify food safety systems that are certified to a GFSI benchmarked scheme.

3. What is the function of the SQF Technical Advisory Council?

In response to advances in science and technology, the needs of the food industry, changes to GFSI documents and to changes in food regulations, the SQF Technical Advisory Council proposes and reviews the SQF Code content and supporting documents and makes recommendations on improvements to training materials, implementation, audits and certification requirements.

Preparing for SQF Certification

1. What is the purpose of the food sector categories?

The food sector categories identify in the modules they specify the specific food safety requirements unique to the operation's business, product and/or processes. They also help to identify the product's risk level.

The categories also are used to identify the experience necessary of auditors so only an auditor with experience in that sector can audit a specific operation.

Finally, the categories are used in the SQF assessment database to allow searches of registered suppliers by potential customers and others.

2. Name one food sector category that corresponds to a product you produce. What module(s) would you implement for that food sector category?

Answers will vary depending upon the participant's product and food sector category.

All responses will include a mention of Module 2.

3. Explain how the SQF Code is arranged to address various industry sectors, products and processes.

The SQF Code contains an implementation and maintenance guide followed by 16 modules. Module 2 applies to all suppliers and contains many mandatory requirements of an operation's food safety and quality system. Modules 3 through 15 contain requirements unique to various product processing methodologies. Module 16 applies to multi-site registrations. The Code contains three appendices: one lists the food sector categories addressed by the SQF Code; another defines the terms used in the Code; and the third outlines the certification logo rules of use.

4. What is the role of Module 2?

Module 2 includes the food safety management requirements or system elements that are common to the food safety and quality practices all food sector categories. Module 2 can be certified at three levels by SQFI licensed certification bodies.

Within Module 2 are mandatory elements that cannot be recorded as "not applicable" or "exempt" and must be audited and reported for compliance status.

5. What is the purpose of Modules 3 through 15?

Modules 3 through 15 contain the unique requirements for each food sector category addressed in the SQF Code. Producers/suppliers must meet the requirements of the Module or Modules applicable to their food industry sector.

The food sector categories and their corresponding Modules are outlined in Table 1 in Part A and in Appendix 1: Food Sector Categories of the SQF Code.

6. Where can you find the definition of a word in the SQF Code?

Definitions of terms used in the SQF Code can be found in Appendix 2: Glossary.

7. Explain the differences among Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 certification?

Level 1 covers a facility's food safety program for GAP/GMP/GDP and basic food safety fundamentals only.

Level 2 recognizes suppliers that have implemented a HACCP food safety plan in addition to food safety fundamentals.

Level 3 recognizes suppliers who have implemented a HACCP food quality plan in addition to a food safety plan and food safety fundamentals.

8. Are all three levels of certification benchmarked by GFSI?

Only levels 2 and 3 (for food safety only) are benchmarked to the GFSI guidelines.

9. How does a supplier determine their risk level?

A supplier's level of risk is dependent upon the potential food safety hazards posed to the consumer if control is lost during processing/production or it can be a food or process deemed high risk by a customer or declared high risk by the relevant food regulation.

10. Where are suggested risk levels for various commodity groups found in the SQF Code?

Appendix 1: Food Sector Categories lists a suggested level of risk for each food sector category.

11. What level of certification would a supplier begin at if producing a high risk product or product?

Level 2 (HACCP-based food safety plan)

12. Describe the differences between the SQF practitioner and an SQF consultant.

Practitioner

Sections 2.1.2.4 and 2.1.2.5 of the SQF Code define the of the SQF Practitioner. See also 1.5, Part A of the Code.

The SQF practitioner is required of a supplier who implements an SQF System. Employed by the supplier and designated by the senior management, the practitioner oversees the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF System.

Consultant

See section 1.4, Part A of the Code.

The SQF consultant provides expert advice to the supplier if they choose to not use their own internal resources to develop the SQF system. Consultants are registered by SQFI to work in specific food sector categories in which they are registered and adhere to the SQF consultant code of practice.

SQF Certification

1. Explain the differences among internal audits, second party audits and third party audits.

Internal audit can be considered a "Us on Us" or in-house audit. This type of audit is an audit of your own procedures against the SQF Code.

A second party audit is considered a "Them on Us". A second party audit is often an audit of your procedures by your customer (or their representative) against their expectations of your product or System.

A third party audit is an independent auditor of the supplier's food safety system. This type of audit is conducted by an impartial third party of your food safety and quality system against the SQF Code.

2. What is the purpose of the desk audit?

The desk audit is conducted by the certification body during initial certification to assure the supplier has designated an appropriately qualified practitioner, that the food safety and/or quality plan and the associated CCP/CQP determinations, validations and verifications are appropriately documented and endorsed by the practitioner and that the documented system is relevant to the scope of certification and the products processed thereunder.

3. Explain the differences among a minor non-conformity, a major non-conformity and a critical non-conformity. How is each scored? Provide an example of each relevant to your food industry sector. How promptly must a facility respond with a corrective action to each type of non-conformity?

Examples of each will depend upon the participant's food industry sector.

<i>Non-conformity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Time for close out</i>
<i>Minor</i>	<i>An omission or deficiency in the SQF System producing unsatisfactory conditions that carry a food safety or quality risk and likely to result in a systems element breakdown.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>30 days</i>
<i>Major</i>	<i>A breakdown of control(s) at a critical control point, a pre-requisite program, or other process step and judged likely to cause a significant public health risk and/or where product is contaminated.</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>14 days</i>
<i>Critical</i>	<i>Raised if the supplier fails to take effective corrective action within the Agreed timeframe, or if the certification body deems that there is systemic falsification of records relating to food safety controls and the SQF System.</i>	<i>50 (considered to have failed the audit)</i>	<i>Supplier must reapply for another facility audit.</i>

4. The SQF auditor identified 6 minor non-conformities and 1 major non-conformity during a surveillance audit. What is the facility's audit score and rating? How much time does the facility have to correct the identified non-conformities?

The facility would lose one point each for each of the minor non-conformity and ten points for the major non-conformity. The facility has lost sixteen points of the 100 possible, and would have an audit score of 84; they would receive a 'C-Complies' rating. The supplier would have 30 days to correct the minor non-conformities and 14 days to correct the major non-conformity.

5. Under what circumstances can a supplier use the SQF quality shield?

Suppliers who achieve and maintain level 3 certification are granted permission to use the SQF quality shield. The supplier must comply fully with The SQF Quality Shield and Logo Rules of Use found in Appendix 3 of the SQF Code.

6. Your site is registered by Ajax Certification Company and assigned certification number 01073. Complete the SQF quality shield below.

The name "Ajax Certification Company" would be added to the outer ring of the shield where 'Certification Body Name' is found in the example. The number "01703" would replace '0000' in the lower section of the example mark.



Ajax Certification Company



01073

7. List five appropriate uses of the SQF certification quality shield.

Answers may include:

- *In a company brochure*
- *On company stationary*
- *On goods or product for public display*
- *On business cards*
- *On products intended for retail display*

8. List two conditions for suspending or ceasing permission to use the SQF quality shield.

Answers may include:

- *If the supplier fails to use the SQF quality shield in accordance with its certificate of registration*
- *If the suppliers uses the SQF quality shield in a way that is misleading to the public or otherwise contrary to law*
- *If the supplier has an administrator, receiver, receiver or manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets*
- *If the supplier breaches or fails to complies with the SQF Quality Shield and Logo Rules of Use*

9. How would a facility prepare for an SQF recertification audit?

- *Review the purpose of a recertification audit found in Part A, 4.3 of the SQF Code.*
- *Conduct a thorough management review of the SQF System.*
- *Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out from previous audits.*
- *Verify that critical steps remain under control.*
- *Verify steps to improve the System.*
- *Verify overall effectiveness of the System.*

10. The last day of your initial SQF audit was 1 January, 2011. Between what dates must your operation have your first recertification audit in order to maintain certification?

Between 2 December, 2011 and 31 January, 2012 (1 January, 2012 plus or minus 30 days).

11. A facility received a "C-complies" rating at its certification audit requiring a surveillance audit. What aspects of its SQF System will an SQF auditor address at this facility's surveillance audit?

The purpose of the surveillance audit is to:

- i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;*
- ii. Verify that the SQF Systems continues to be implemented as documented;*
- iii. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the supplier's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the supplier's SQF Systems;*
- iv. Confirm continued compliance with the requirements of the SQF Code;*
- v. Verify all critical steps remain under control; and*
- vi. Contribute to continued improvement of the supplier's SQF Systems and business operation.*

12. If a facility is SQF certified at level 2, is it necessary to advise SQFI if a product recall of a public nature is required?

Yes, the supplier shall notify the certification body and the SQFI in writing at foodsafetycrisis@sqfi.com within twenty-four (24) hours of the event.

The certification body shall notify the SQFI within a further forty-eight (48) hours of any action they intend to take to ensure the integrity of the certification.

Implementing an SQF System

1. Name some benefits to having management commitment prior to implementation of an SQF System.

Answers may include:

- *Assures senior management involvement in the food safety and quality process.*
- *Communicates to staff management involvement and commitment.*
- *Sets the tone and criteria for plant-improvement activities.*
- *Assures budget allocations for SQF certification initiative.*
- *Assures customers of a total commitment by their supplier.*

2. Name some people who should be involved in the development of an SQF System.

Answers may include:

- *SQF Practitioner*
- *Production Manager*
- *Maintenance Manager*
- *Supervisors*
- *Quality Manager*
- *Human Resources*
- *Service Providers*
- *Front Office Staff*
- *Marketing (Level 3)*

3. What is the purpose of a pre-assessment audit?

A pre-assessment audit is conducted often by a third party on an SQF System that was determined by the facility to be complete. A pre-assessment audit is a preparatory step prior to the actual SQF Certification or reassessment audit to determine completeness of the System.

4. What is documented as part of an SQF System?

The food safety plan and/or quality manual. Policies and procedures that define specific activities within the food safety and/or quality manual. Work instructions associated with the policies and procedures, checklists, schedules, process flowcharts, corrective actions, organization charts, specifications, etc.

5. What records are kept as part of an SQF System?

Answers may include:

Test results, temperature readings, verification activities, training, management review, validation actions, evaluation, calibration, internal audits, corrective actions taken, nature of nonconformities, authorizations, procedure or process changes, outcomes, regulatory changes, system updates, etc.

6. What is implemented as part of an SQF System?

Implement prepared policies, procedures, and work instructions and specifications. Keep records to demonstrate compliance to the relevant modules of the SQF Code.

The Quality Plan

Product Description

Composition	
Method of Preservation	
Packaging – Primary	
Packaging - Shipping	
Storage Conditions	
Distribution Method	
Shelf Life	
Special Labeling	

Intended Use of the Product

Customer Preparation	
Sensitive Population	

Process Flow Diagram (Stages)

Draw the stages of your process flow in the space below.

Process Flow Diagram (Steps)

Draw the steps in your process flow diagram below.

The Food Quality Plan

Food Quality Risk Analysis

Product:

Date:

Version:

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Principle 1			
Step	Threat	Cause	Control Measures

The Food Quality Plan

Food Quality Risk Analysis

Product:

Date:

Version:

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Principle 2				
Frequency	Consequences	Significance	CQP/QP	Reason

The Food Quality Plan

Product:

Date:

Version:

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Step/Input	Principle 1		Principle 2	Principle 3
	Threat	Control Measure Step 6	CQP Type Step 7	Critical Limit Step 8

The Food Quality Plan

Product:

Date:

Version:

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Principle 4				
Monitoring				
Step 9				
What	Where	How	When	Who

The Food Quality Plan

Product:

Date:

Version:

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Principle 5 Corrective Action Step 10	Principle 6 Verification Step 11	Principle 7 Recordkeeping Step 12
Who and What	Who and What	
Immediate:		
Preventative:		
Immediate:		
Preventative:		

SQF System Elements

1. List the mandatory system elements.

The mandatory elements are:

- 2.1.1 Management Policy*
- 2.1.2 Management Responsibility*
- 2.1.3 Food Safety and Quality Management System*
- 2.1.4 Management Review*
- 2.2.1 Document Control*
- 2.2.2 Records*
- 2.4.1 Food Legislation*
- 2.4.2 Food Safety Fundamentals*
- 2.4.3 Food Safety Plan (at level 2, 3)*
- 2.4.4 Food Quality Plan (at level 3)*
- 2.4.8 Product Release*
- 2.5.2 Validation and Effectiveness*
- 2.5.4 Verification and Monitoring*
- 2.5.5 Corrective and Preventative Action*
- 2.5.7 Internal Audit*
- 2.6.1 Product Identification*
- 2.6.2 Product Trace*
- 2.6.3 Product Withdrawal and Recall*
- 2.7.1 Food Defense*
- 2.9.2 Training Program*

2. The SQF practitioner is responsible for _____ and _____ activities related to the SQF System.

Verification, validation – 2.5.1.1

- Specifically how must the effectiveness of the pre-requisite programs be verified?

As described in 2.5.4.

Documentation must demonstrate that the pre-requisite program was verified to be effective in accomplishing its intended purpose. As an example, microbiological environmental monitoring data and finished product microbiological testing can be used to prove the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the sanitation program. Absence of pest activity as determined by the pest control program monitoring plan would prove the effectiveness of the integrated pest management program.

- How must records be stored? For what length of time must records be stored?

As per Part A, section 1.8 and 2.2.2.3.

Records shall be readily accessible, retrievable, securely stored to prevent damage and deterioration and shall be retained so that a minimum of two months of records are available before a site audit and/or in accordance with periods specified by a customer or regulations.

- List the 11 registers or lists found in the SQF Code that the supplier may need to develop and maintain as part of their SQF System.

<i>Training Skills Register</i>	<i>2.9.7.1</i>
<i>SQF System Documents and Amendments</i>	<i>2.2.1.1</i>
<i>Raw and Packaging Materials Specifications and Labels</i>	<i>2.3.2.6</i>
<i>Contract Service Specifications</i>	<i>2.3.3.2</i>
<i>Finished Product Specifications</i>	<i>2.3.5.2</i>
<i>Approved Suppliers and Records of Inspections and Audits of Approved Suppliers</i>	<i>2.4.5.5</i>
<i>Allergens</i>	<i>2.8.2.1</i>
<i>Chemicals</i>	<i>5.7.5.4, 7.7.4.3, 8.7.4.3</i>
<i>Pesticides/Pest Control Chemicals</i>	<i>5.2.10.2, 6.2.7.2, 7.2.9.2, 8.2.7.2, 9.2.12.2, 10.2.11.2, 11.2.9.2, 13.2.9.3</i>
<i>Medications</i>	<i>6.7.2.3</i>
<i>Glass</i>	<i>9.7.4.4, 10,7.4.4, 11.7.5.4, 12.6.1.3, 13.7.1.3</i>

6. List the 9 sub-elements of section 2.4 - *Attaining Food Safety*. Which sub-element is applicable only at level 3?

2.4.1	<i>Food Legislation</i>
2.4.2	<i>Food Safety Fundamentals</i>
2.4.3	<i>Food Safety Plan</i>
2.4.4	<i>Food Quality Plan (Required at Level 3 only)</i>
2.4.5	<i>Incoming Goods and Services</i>
2.4.6	<i>Non-Conforming Product or Equipment</i>
2.4.7	<i>Product Rework</i>
2.4.8	<i>Product Release</i>
2.4.9	<i>Stock Rotation</i>

7. List the seven minimum requirements of an approved supplier program addressed in element 2.4.5 - *Incoming Goods and Services*.

The approved supplier program shall be based on the prior performance of a supplier and the risk level of the raw materials ingredients, packaging materials, and services supplied, and shall contain as a minimum:

- i. Agreed specifications;*
- ii. Reference to the rating of the level of risk applied to a raw material ingredients, packaging materials and services and the approved supplier;*
- iii. A summary of the food safety controls implemented by the approved supplier;*
- iv. Methods for granting approved supplier status;*
- v. Methods and frequency of monitoring approved suppliers;*
- vi. Details of the certificates of conformance if required, and*
- vii. Methods and frequency of reviewing approved supplier performance and status.*

Modules 3-16: GAPs, GMPs and Multi-site Programs

1. List the pre-farm gate, GAP modules.

Module 5, Good Agricultural Practices for Farming of Animal Products

Module 6, Good Agricultural Practices for Farming of Fish

Module 7, Good Agricultural Practices for Farming of Plant Products

Module 8, Good Agricultural Practices for Farming of Grains and Pulses

2. List the post-farm gate, GMP modules.

Module 3, Good Agricultural Practices for Animal Feed Production

Module 4, Good Agricultural Practices for Pet Food Production

Module 9, Food Safety Fundamentals for Pre-Processing of Animal Products

Module 10, Food Safety Fundamentals for Pre-Processing of Plant Products

Module 11, Good Manufacturing Practices for Processing of Food Products

Module 12, Good Distribution Practices for Transport and Distribution of Food Products

Module 13, Good Manufacturing Practices for Production of Food Packaging

Module 15, Good Manufacturing Practices for Food Catering, Wholesale and Retail

3. If an element within a module does not apply to your product or facility, or the function is managed by some alternate method, what is the process to demonstrate to the auditor that this element does not apply or that the risk is being controlled by an alternate method?

As per 2.4.2.2.

A detailed risk assessment can be prepared by the supplier that outlines the justification for exclusion or evidence of the effectiveness of alternative control measures to ensure that food safety is not compromised.

Refer to Module 11 when answering the following questions:

4. Hand washing basins shall be constructed of stainless steel or similar non-corrosive material. Name the 4 items a hand washing basin must be supplied with
 1. *A potable water supply at an appropriate temperature*
 2. *Liquid soap contained within a fixed dispenser*
 3. *Paper towels in a hands-free cleanable dispenser*
 4. *A means of containing used paper towels*

In a high risk operation, what 2 additional items must a hand wash basin be supplied with?

1. *Hands-free operated taps (faucet)*
2. *Hand sanitizer*

5. A sign instructing people to wash their hands, and in appropriate languages, shall be provided in a prominent position. Name some good locations for hand wash signs.

As per 11.3.2.1, 11.3.2.4.

A sign instructing people to wash their hands, and in appropriate languages, shall be provided in a prominent position.

Consider that hand wash basins shall be provided adjacent to all personnel access points and in accessible locations throughout food handling and processing areas as required and consider posting hand wash signs at personnel access points and wherever legislation requires.

6. Explain the storage requirements for hazardous chemicals and toxic substances, such as cleaning chemicals, processing aids and pesticides.

As per 11.6.4.

11.6.4.1 Hazardous chemicals and toxic substances with the potential for food contamination shall be stored so as not to present a hazard to staff, product, packaging, product handling equipment or areas in which the product is handled, stored or transported.

11.6.4.2 Processing utensils and packaging shall not be stored in areas used to store hazardous chemicals and toxic substances.

11.6.4.3 Daily supplies of chemical used for continuous sanitizing of water or as a processing aid, or for emergency cleaning of food processing equipment or surfaces in food contact zones, may be stored within or in close proximity to a processing area provided access to the chemical storage facility is restricted to authorized personnel.

11.6.4.4 Pesticides, rodenticides, fumigants and insecticides shall be stored separate from sanitizers and detergents. All chemicals shall be stored in their original containers.

11.6.4.5 Hazardous chemical and toxic substance storage facilities shall:

- i. Be compliant with national and local legislation and designed such that there is no cross-contamination between chemicals;*
- ii. Be adequately ventilated;*
- iii. Be provided with appropriate signage indicating the area is a hazardous storage area;*
- iv. Be secure and lockable to restrict access only to those personnel with formal training in the handling and use of hazardous chemicals and toxic substances;*
- v. Have instructions on the safe handling of hazardous chemicals and toxic substances readily accessible to staff;*
- vi. Be equipped with a detailed and up-to-date inventory of all chemicals contained in the storage facility;*
- vii. Have suitable first aid equipment and protective clothing available in close proximity to the storage area;*
- viii. In the event of a hazardous spill, be designed such that spillage and drainage from the area is contained; and*
- ix. Be equipped with spillage kits and cleaning equipment.*

7. Give examples of how an SQF practitioner would confirm that a facility's pest control program is achieving the required results? The facility's allergen program? The facility's personnel practices? The facility's training program?

Answers may include:

	<i>Verify</i>	<i>Validate</i>
<i>Pest Control</i>	<i>Audit service provider</i>	<i>Pest Control Council guidelines</i>
		<i>Monitoring data</i>
<i>Allergen Program</i>	<i>Audit procedures</i>	<i>Process Authority reference</i>
		<i>Allergen test kits</i>
		<i>Consumer complaint files</i>
<i>Personnel Practices</i>	<i>GMP audits</i>	<i>Regulation/legislation</i>
		<i>Third party audits</i>
		<i>Regulatory audits</i>
<i>Training Program</i>	<i>Annual review of training program</i>	<i>Regulation/legislation</i>
	<i>Training records audit</i>	<i>Third party audit</i>
		<i>Test scores</i>
		<i>Supervisor's ratings and assessments</i>

8. An employee training program shall be documented and implemented. Provide 4 examples of training that would be found in the facility's training register.

Answers may include:

*Good Manufacturing Practices/personal hygiene
HACCP - CCP monitoring tasks and responsibilities
SQF Food Safety and Quality Systems-specific tasks
OSHA safety
Hold and release practices
Allergen management practices*

9. Define a site that is eligible for multi-site certification.

A central-site (i.e. manufacturer, packer, warehouse) with a network of primary producer sub-sites that are eligible for certification to the SQF Code and are all involved in the same production activity.

The following criteria must be met:

The central site is the entity responsible for the SQF multi-site program.

Sub-sites shall be linked to the central site by a legal or contractual arrangement.

Central sites shall implement an SQF System that includes management of the sub-sites and internal audit of the sub-sites.

Sub-sites shall implement a common SQF System which is subject to continuous surveillance by the central site.

The central site shall implement corrective actions when needed in any sub-site. This shall be laid down in the contract between the central site and the sub-sites.

The product(s) supplied by each of the sub-sites shall be substantially of the same kind and produced according to the same fundamental methods and procedures.

The central site shall establish and maintain SQF Certification for the duration of the SQF multi-site program.

The central site's SQF management system shall be administered under a centrally controlled plan and be subject to central management review.

The central site shall demonstrate an ability to collect and analyze data from all sites, including the central site, and have the authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required.