

GUIDANCE ON OUR CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Introduction

Certification of your Food Safety Management System (FSMS) is a way of providing assurance that you have implemented a system for the management of the food safety risks associated with the products and processes involved.

The Certification International FSMS certification process involves the following activities:

1. The Application

Firstly, we ask that you fully complete and submit to Certification International our Application form. It should be signed and dated by an authorised representative of your organisation. The form contains a specific section for FSMS certification and it is important that all questions are answered as accurately as possible.

2. The Quotation

Upon receipt of your Application Form, we will review your request for certification and ensure you have provided sufficient information for Certification International to prepare a quotation, and that we have the capability to carry out the assessment in relation to the proposed scope of certification. Once we are satisfied, we will send you a quotation that will detail the number of Audit days involved and costs associated with the assessment of your FSMS. We will also send you a copy of the conditions of Certification that will apply to your assessment.

3. Client Acceptance

If you are happy with our quotation, you should sign and return to Certification International, the Client Acceptance Form. We will then complete our Contract Review process to enable us to effectively select and appoint our Audit team and to ensure that any clearances of auditors and of personnel records are managed if required.

We will agree with you in advance the proposed dates for your assessment, and we will notify you, the Auditors appointed to your organisation, which you will have the right to request a review if you should feel they are not suitable. Finally, we will raise our invoice for payment prior to the commencement of the assessment activity.

4. Initial Assessment Process

A Certification International initial audit is in 2 stages.

Stage 1 Audit – this is conducted on-site, and CI will:-

- Review your FSMS and undertake an overview of your prepared system to validate your readiness in relation to the proposed scope of activities.
- Review your intended Scope of Certification in relation to the products, processes and customers involved.
- Gain an understanding of your FSMS in the context of your organisation's identification of food safety risks, policy, objectives and HACCP Plans. We will do this in order to assess the degree of establishment of your FSMS and to identify any areas of your system which require attention prior to the Stage 2 Audit.
- Establish that you have recognised the legal and contractual requirements which you have to comply with in connection with your Food Safety requirements and establish that you have mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with those requirements.
- Assess the reliance which can be placed on your own Internal Audits from your plans, procedures and process to date. Before Stage 2 is conducted, internal audit of the whole FSMS must have been conducted and at least one management review must have been held.
- Confirm that your implementation programme(s) justifies proceeding with the Stage 2 Audit, and if yes, determine with you a date for your Stage 2 Audit.
- Prepare and agree with you the Stage 2 Audit programme based around the activities of your organisation, and confirm audit days required.
- Provide you with a report of our findings and any potential non-conformities found during the audit.

Stage 2 Audit – This is conducted on-site, and CI will:-

- Discuss with you the clearance of any potential non-conformities which may have been identified during the Stage 1 Audit.
- Assess your documented and implemented FSMS and confirm that it complies with the requirements of the assessment standard.

- Focus on your HACCP Plans and controls you have set, your performance monitoring, reporting and review to determine whether your FSMS is achieving the required performance, improvement and regulatory or contractual compliance.
- Assess your compliance with your own policies and procedures.
- Review your own Internal Audit and Management Review programmes to verify they are designed to ensure your FSMS is effectiveness.
- Provide you with a report and Lead Auditor briefing before departure concerning the recommendations on the outcome of the assessment process. The decision whether to award certification will be taken after the Stage 2 Audit but will be based on the evidence gathered during both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits.
- Clearance of non-conformities will require evidence of implementation of the proposed corrective action before a certificate can be issued.

5. Surveillance and Re-Assessment

CI will carry out regular surveillance audits of your organisation to ensure ongoing compliance of your FSMS. In a 3-year period, selective sampling of your FSMS will be undertaken during audits so that the whole system is audited over that time.

Once every 3 years CI will extend or replace a Surveillance Audit to undertake a Re-Assessment Audit. The recommendation for re-certification at this time will take into account the commitment shown to certification requirements over the preceding 3-year period. Following successful re-assessment you will receive an extension of your certification for a further 3-year period.