

Client Information: Remote Audit Options

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The fact that the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the digital transformation has become undeniable. Many things that seemed unimaginable only a few months ago, are now part of a new normal.

Standard setters for food safety systems increasingly use digital solutions for their audits. The so-called remote audit is being added to the norm governing testing methods. The term remote audit is used when the audit does not require the physical presence of an auditor and can be done from afar.

Below, we have compiled standard-specific options for remote audits:

IFS Standards

The IFS Broker is the only IFS standard utilizing complete remote audits. In all other cases, auditors still have to be present on site to conduct an audit.

Please note that first-time certifications or transfer audits, in case of a change in certifiers, require a complete audit on site. In these cases, remote audits are not an option.

BRCGS Standards

With regard to BRCGS, a 100% remote audit is available for the BRCGS agents & broker standard.

For all other BRCGS standards, up to 50% of an audit can be conducted remotely. This option will be available even after the end of the Corona pandemic.

During the Corona pandemic, BRCGS enables complete remote audits for the following standards: BRCGS packaging, food, consumer products, storage & distribution as well as BRCGS START!

This rule remains in effect until March 31, 2021. However, these audits are not recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

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FSSC 22000

With the publication of annex 9, the FSSC 22000 created the possibility to conduct part of the audit remotely.

The duration of the on-site audit must not be shorter than 1 day and must amount to at least 50% of the overall audit effort.

The gap between the remote audit and the on-site audit must not exceed 30 calendar days.

This program can be used for regular re-certification and monitoring audits. In case of first-time certification, the stage 1 audit can also be conducted remotely. The stage 2 audit must happen on site.

Annex 9 is part of the FSSC 22000 certification program and recognized by GFSI.

For the duration of the Corona pandemic, FSSC 22000 makes it possible to conduct complete remote audits. These are not recognized by GFSI.

Background Information on GFSI Benchmarking 2020

The Global Food Safety Initiative is a private organization, operating a system for benchmarking food safety standards for producers. It was founded with the goal of finding solution for the dangers present in the area of food safety. The GFSI pursues the harmonization of certification systems and develops demands, which are used to create so-called benchmarking requirements, with the ultimate goal of harmonizing the various standards.

Therefore, please verify whether your contracts with your customers call for a GFSI-recognition of your certified standards. Ask your customers whether this audit option can be used without repercussions.

All first-time certifications require a complete on-site audit. Unfortunately, in these cases, remote audits may not be used.

Standard	Mixed audit option (50% remote + 50% on site)	Complete remote audit option
IFS Broker	—	✓
IFS Cash and Carry	—	—
IFS Food	—	—
IFS Global Markets Food	—	—
IFS HPC	—	—
IFS Logistics	—	—
BRCGS Packaging	✓	✓*
BRCGS Agents and Broker	—	✓
BRCGS Food	✓	✓*
BRCGS Consumer Products	✓	✓*
BRCGS Storage and Distribution	✓	✓*
BRCGS Start	✓	✓*
FSSC 22000	✓**	✓*

* only during Covid-19 pandemic,

** On-site audit must not be shorter than one day and must constitute at least 50% of the overall audit effort.