

Table of contents

1	CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE.....	2
1.1	Audit Preparation	2
1.2	Certification audit	3
1.3	Corporate Audits	3
1.4	Seasonal Production	3
1.5	Surveillance Audits	4
1.6	Issue of the certificate.....	4
1.7	Failure to comply	4
1.8	Re-certification audit	4
1.9	Unannounced audits	4
2	TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION.....	5
3	CERTIFICATE SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL	5
4	SPECIAL VISITS	6
5	NOTIFICATION OF RECALLS AND REGULATORY INFRINGEMENTS.....	6
6	COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CERTIFICATION BODY.....	6
7	SQF LOGO RULES OF USE.....	7

Do you have any questions about this performance description? We will be pleased to help.

Please contact us via mail to info.tncert@tuev-nord.de or by telephone 0800 245 74 57 (Free-phone from within Germany) or +49 511 9986-1222 from abroad.

TÜV NORD CERT GmbH
Langemarckstraße 20
45141 Essen

www.tuev-nord-cert.de

Description of the TÜV NORD CERT Certification Procedure for SQF Codes, Edition 9.0



The rules and performance description regarding SQF certification form an integral part of the offer. They are supplementary to the General Conditions of Certification.

The SQF Code as well as other applicable documents and rules are available on the SQFI website (www.sqfi.com) The below specified items are detailed described in the SQF Food Safety Codes Edition 9.0 for

1. Primary Animal Production; FSC 1
2. Primary Plant Production; FSC 2, 3, 4, 5
3. Aquaculture; FSC 6
4. Animal Product Manufacturing; FSC 7, 8, 9
5. Food Manufacturing; FSC 10~22, 25, 33
6. Dietary Supplements; FSC 34
7. Pet Food; FSC 32
8. Animal Feed; FSC 31
9. Storage & Distribution; FSC 26
10. Food Packaging; FSC 27

And:

- SQF Quality Code, edition 9.0 (standalone or as Addendum to a GFSI-benchmarked program audits or other Food Safety Management Standards including HACCP certification and ISO 22000)
- As well as the unchanged:
 - SQF Food Safety for Fundamentals for Manufacturing Edition 1
 - SQF Food Safety Code for Food Retail – Edition 8
 - SQF Food Safety Code for Foodservice – Edition 8

1 CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

1.1 Audit Preparation

If desired, a voluntary pre-assessment audit can be carried out. It is not mandatory, but recommended to provide a “health check” of the client’s implemented SQF system. A pre-assessment audit can assist in identifying gaps in the client’s SQF system so that corrective action can occur before engaging TN CERT for a full certification audit. It can be conducted using internal resources, an SQF consultant, or an SQF auditor.

Before the certification audit begins, the client registers with SQFI through the SQF Assessment Database (ReposiTrak) registration <https://www.sqfi.com/assessment-database/new-suppliers/>. This registration sends an email to the selected Certification Body notifying them that the client has registered and has selected them.

The client and TN CERT shall agree on the audit scope. The scope of the audit shall cover the relevant SQF Code(s), the food sector categories, and the products listed under the scope of certification for a site. The audit scope shall cover all processes under the control of the client including from raw material receipt to shipment of finished product. The details for food sector categories can be found in each Food Safety Code.

Once the audit scope is agreed between the client and TN CERT, it cannot be changed once the audit has commenced.

1.2 Certification audit

The initial SQF certification audit is conducted by the SQF food safety auditor(s) appointed by TN CERT

Part of the audit may be conducted remotely using information and communication technology (ICT), but at least half of the allocated audit duration must be onsite. Remote activities can only be conducted by agreement between you and your certification body and are dependent on your ICT capability and information security requirements.

The audit is conducted at a time agreed between the client and TN CERT, when the main processes are operating. The on-site audit must include a visit of the entire facility, including the inside and outside of the building, regardless of the scope of certification. The on-site audit determines if the SQF System is effectively implemented as documented. It establishes and verifies the:

- Effectiveness of the SQF System in its entirety;
- Food safety hazards and food quality hazards are effectively identified and controlled.
- Effective interaction between all elements of the SQF System;
- Level of commitment demonstrated by the client to maintaining an effective SQF System and to meeting their food safety regulatory and customer requirements and
- The exempted products or areas of the site do not pose a food safety risk to the products covered under certification.

1.3 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 of the Code elements managed by that corporate office can be conducted by the TN CERT. This decision is agreed by all parties (corporate office, the site to be certified). This part of the assessment may also be conducted remotely using ICT (Information Communication Technology).

When a corporate audit is conducted, the audit evidence shall be reviewed and all identified corporate non-conformances must be closed out before the site audits are conducted. Any open non-conformances, which are not closed out, are attributed to the site or sites.

The SQF food safety auditor audits the application of the corporate functions relative to the site's scope of certification during the audit of each site managed by the corporate office. All mandatory and applicable elements of the relevant SQF Food Safety (or Quality) Code are audited at each site regardless of the findings of the corporate audit.

1.4 Seasonal Production

If your site is involved in seasonal production (i.e., the major production activities are conducted over a shorter time duration that does not exceed more than five consecutive months in any calendar year), your initial certification audit will need to be conducted during the peak operational part of the season (i.e., when your processes are operating).

Additional information/details can be found in the respective Food Safety Code.

1.5 Surveillance Audits

The surveillance audit is conducted when the client attains a “C – complies” rating at a certification audit or recertification audit. The surveillance audit will be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the six (6) month anniversary of the last day of the previous certification or recertification audit. A new score and rating is issued at the surveillance audit, but the recertification audit date is not affected.

The surveillance audit is a full SQF System audit. Major or minor non-conformities raised at the surveillance audit shall be closed out as indicated in the relevant Code.

1.6 Issue of the certificate

The TN CERT makes the certification decision based on the evidence of compliance and non-compliance recommended by the SQF food safety auditor during the SQF audit. Although SQFI provides guidance on certification, the certification body is responsible for deciding if certification is justified and granted, based on the objective evidence provided by the SQF food safety auditor.

Certification of the SQF System will be awarded to clients that achieve a “C - complies” audit rating or greater with no outstanding non-conformities. The certificate is valid for 75 days from the anniversary of the initial certification audit date.

1.7 Failure to comply

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

1.8 Re-certification audit

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

Re-certification audits are conducted to verify the continued effectiveness of your site’s SQF System. They are full audits and, as agreed, may be partially-remote (using ICT) or Unannounced audit.

The variations from the Initial Certification Process:

- your site fails to permit the re-certification audit within the agreed timeframe, the certification body is required to immediately suspend your site’s certificate.
- If your site receives an “F – fails to comply” rating at the re-certification audit, the certification body is required to immediately suspend your site’s certificate.
- If your site fails to closeout non-conformities within thirty (30) days, the certification body is required to immediately suspend your site’s certificate

1.9 Unannounced audits

The certification body is required to conduct an unannounced audit of your site once every three years. Your first three-year cycle commences with your initial certification audit date. Within the first three years of certification, you are required to have one unannounced audit. Thereafter, you will have an unannounced

audit every three years. The unannounced food safety audit occurs within the sixty (60) day re-certification window (i.e., the anniversary date of the initial certification audit +/- thirty (30) days).

Additional information/details can be found in the respective Food Safety Code.

2 TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION

The new certification body is required to undertake a review of your site's certification before the transfer is complete to:

- Confirm the certificate is current, valid, and relates to the SQF System as certified;
- Confirm your site's food sector category falls within the new certification body's scope of accreditation;
- Confirm any complaints received are actioned;
- Review your site's audit history (where you can demonstrate such history to the satisfaction of the new certification body by way of copies of audit reports completed by any previous certification body(ies) and the impact of any outstanding non-conformances);
- Confirm the stage of the current certification cycle.

If you are transferring from another certification body, you need to make the last three (3) re-certification audit reports and surveillance audit report (if applicable) available to TN CERT.

3 CERTIFICATE SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL

TÜV NORD CERT is the owner of the SQF certificates and can suspend or withdraw them at any time.

The certification body is required to suspend your SQF certificate if your site:

- Fails to permit the re-certification or surveillance audit within the audit window;
- Fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified (refer to 9.4);
- Fails to permit an unannounced audit or refuses entry to an SQF food safety auditor for an unannounced audit; or
- Receives an "F – fails to comply" rating at a surveillance or re-certification audit.

The certification body may also suspend certification if in the opinion of the food safety auditor and supported by the technical reviewer the site fails to maintain the requirements of the SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing.

The certification body withdraws the certificate if your site:

- Has been placed under suspension and fails to follow the suspension protocol, as defined by the certification body in your notice of suspension;
- Fails to take approved corrective action within the timeframes specified, as determined by the certification body (refer to step 13.1);
- Has intentionally and systemically falsified its records;

- Fails to maintain the integrity of the SQF certificate; or
- Has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager, or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the closure of your site (except for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the site ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt or 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.

If your certificate is withdrawn, you are not permitted to re-apply for certification for twelve (12) months from the date the certificate was withdrawn by the certification body. The withdrawn site is posted on sqfi.com for twelve (12) months.

Important: SQF Codes have very detailed Suspension & Withdrawal procedures. All relevant additional information can be found in the respective SQF Food Safety Code or in the SQF Quality Code.

4 SPECIAL VISITS

TN CERT holds the right to a visit (unannounced or with a short notice) of a certified site in case of a complaint about the site, or any other reason that might appear to jeopardize the integrity of the certificate issued. Such visits may or may not be initiated by SQF asking TN CERT to investigate. These visits may be 0.5 to 1.0 day in duration and the expenses incurred may be charged to the certified site.

5 NOTIFICATION OF RECALLS AND REGULATORY INFRINGEMENTS

If your site initiates a food safety event that requires public notification, such as a Class I or Class II recall or receives a regulatory warning letter, you must notify your certification body and SQFI in writing at foodsafetycrisis@sqfi.com AND TNCert-Food-Recall@tuev-nord.de within twenty-four (24) hours of the event.

Your certification body and SQFI are required to be listed in your essential contacts lists as defined in system element of the respective SQF Food Safety Code.

Your certification body is required to notify SQFI within a further forty-eight (48) hours of any action it intends to take to ensure the integrity of the certification.

6 COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CERTIFICATION BODY

The certified client is required to be in communication with the current Certification Body to forward any changes to:

- Change of address of the site
- Change of ownership of the certified site
- Changes to size and/or configuration of the site,
- Addition or removal of new products, categories or any production lines
- Seasonal sites: change of raw material availability
- Change in number of employees

- Penalties, shut-downs resulting from a regulatory visit
- In case of any crisis affecting the site's capabilities

Please communicate with your TUV NORD contact and/or below email:

FSD-Americas@tuv-nord.com

7 SQF LOGO RULES OF USE

The rules of use for the SQF logo are described in the Appendix 3 of each SQF Food Safety Code and the Quality Code.

- Permission for a site to use the SQF logo will be suspended and/or withdrawn:
- If the site's certification is suspended, withdrawn, relinquished or not renewed;
- If the site breaches or fails to comply with these rules of use;
- If the site uses the SQF logo in a way that, in the opinion of SQFI or the CB, is detrimental to the SQF logo or the SQF program as a whole, is misleading to the public or otherwise contrary to law; or
- If the site has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the winding up of the site (except for the purpose of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the site 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.