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SQF 2000 Guidance

Guidance for Developing, Documenting and Implementing SQF 2000 Systems for General Food Processing

6th Edition

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2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22202 USA
202-220-0635
www.sqfi.com

SQF Institute is a division of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

Guidance for Developing, Documenting and Implementing

an

SQF 2000 System
Level 3

for

General Food Processing

Foreword and Acknowledgements

The preparation of this guide provides guidance for Suppliers when implementing their SQF 2000 System. It compliments the SQF Systems training course that has been developed to ensure those implementing, auditing and maintaining an SQF System have a full understanding of the SQF Program.

The SQF 2000 Code is unique in that it has three levels of certification. It is recognized that some Suppliers have made considerable investment in developing extensive food safety and quality management systems and have the capacity to achieve full SQF 2000 Certification at Level 3. It is also recognized that others have in place minimum food safety controls with little management system oversight and practically no available records to substantiate actions taken.

Achieving SQF 2000 Certification does not equal complacency. The SQF 2000 Code requires a Supplier review their SQF system at least annually and make changes where appropriate. Moving through the three levels of certification also encourages continuous improvement of a Supplier's management of food safety and quality.

The SQF Institute will release guidance for various industry sectors as required. This document outlines guidance for those implementing or reviewing SQF 2000 systems for general food processing operations and can be used where no specific industry sector guidance is available.

The SQF Institute is grateful for the assistance provided by the SQF Institute Technical Committee and other associated working groups for their assistance in finalizing this document.

Foreword and Acknowledgements

Contents List

Section 1. Scope

1.1 Purpose of This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance on how to design, develop, document, implement, and maintain an SQF 2000 System for a general food processing operation. This guide references the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) technique but does not explain HACCP in detail. It assumes that those implementing an SQF 2000 System have completed HACCP training and have extensive knowledge of the HACCP guidelines, its principles and experience in the implementation of HACCP. It is not meant to deliver prescribed absolute rules for food processing facilities, but to be utilized by both suppliers, SQF Consultants and SQF Auditors for recommendations on practical applications for implementation and certification of this code. This guidance document is targeted at a certification of level 3.

1.2 What is the SQF Program

The SQF Program consists of the SQF 1000 Code (for use by primary producers) and the SQF 2000 Code (used mainly by food manufacturers). These Codes are not audit checklists nor are they product or sector codes of practice. Specific procedures, practices, methods and records a Supplier must implement to achieve certification are not described. Unlike a code of practice the SQF Codes are general requirements. The Codes require that a Supplier implement a management system, utilizing the HACCP method, encompassing pre-requisite programs and good practices applicable to their industry sector in order to grow or manufacture a product that meets food safety legislation and their customer's specified requirements.

Applicable to all links in the food supply chain (from primary production, manufacturing, transport and storage), the SQF Program provides a solution for the management of supply chain food safety and quality assurance. Its certification and audit procedures, including auditor qualifications, are governed by one set of rules which are overseen by established international accreditation standards.

The SQF 2000 Code (Level 2) is recognized by the European-based Global Food Safety Initiative. Major regional and global retailers now accept product grown or manufactured by SQF certified Suppliers. The SQF Program is suitable for both large and small Suppliers. It reduces the need for multiple Supplier audits, it enables flexibility in its implementation and, when implemented fully, the SQF 2000 Code provides an effective management tool to demonstrate that customer requirements are being met while setting the framework for continuous improvement within the business.

1.3 What is the SQF 2000 Code?

The SQF 2000 Code is a HACCP-based food safety and quality management program designed primarily for the processing and manufacturing sector. The Code utilizes the CODEX HACCP method to address both food safety and quality. The methods used to manage food safety are documented in a Food Safety Plan and the methods used to manage quality are documented in a Food Quality Plan.

The SQF 2000 Code is divided into three certification levels. Each level indicates the stage of development of a Supplier's food safety and quality management system. A Supplier can choose a level that is acceptable to a customer and the attainment of a level indicates the stage of development of the Supplier's food safety and quality management system. The three levels of certification for the SQF 2000 Code are:

Level 1 Food Safety Fundamentals
Level 2 Certified HACCP Food Safety Plans
Level 3 Comprehensive Food Safety and Quality Management System

1.4 Implementing the SQF 2000 System.

The SQF 2000 Code requires that Pre-requisite Programs, Food Safety Plans and Food Quality Plans be implemented and maintained by an SQF Practitioner. An SQF Practitioner is an employee of the Supplier who has attended a HACCP course and is able to demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding of the SQF 2000 Systems. An SQF Practitioner can utilize the services of an SQF Consultant to aid in the validation and verification of the SQF Systems as defined within the SQF code.

All SQF Consultants are registered with SQFI and are issued a certificate and identity card to indicate the food industry category(s) in which they are qualified to work. The criteria outlining the qualification requirements necessary to qualify as an SQF Consultant and application forms will soon be available on the SQFI web site

(www.sqfi.com). SQF Consultants operate under a "Code of Practice" which outlines the practices expected of SQF Consultants and assists SQF Consultants in proper delivery of their services. A copy of the Code of Practice is available on the SQFI website along with a list of currently registered SQF Consultants. The SQF Institute emphasizes that it is a Supplier's responsibility to exercise appropriate due diligence when selecting and engaging an SQF Consultant. Information on selecting an SQF Consultant is outlined in the SQF "How to Guide" and is available on the SQF web site.

1.5 What is in the SQF 2000 Code?

The Code is made up of sections which are called system elements. Each element outlines where procedures need to be documented, where record keeping is required or where actions must be taken.

Table 1. Elements and sub-elements of the SQF 2000 Code:

Element No.	Element	Sub-element No.	Sub-element
4.1	Commitment	4.1.1	Management Policy
		4.1.2	Management Responsibility
		4.1.3	Food Safety and Quality Management Systems
		4.1.4	Management Review
		4.1.5	Complaint Management
		4.1.6	Business Continuity Planning
4.2	Document Control and Records	4.2.1	Document Control
		4.2.2	Records
4.3	Specifications and Product Development	4.3.1	Product Development and Realization
		4.3.2	Raw materials
		4.3.3	Packaging
		4.3.4	Contract Service Provider
		4.3.5	Contract Manufacturers
		4.3.6	Finished product
4.4	Attaining Food Safety	4.4.1	Food Legislation (Regulations)
		4.4.2	Food Safety Fundamentals
		4.4.3	Food Safety Plan
		4.4.4	Food Quality Plan
		4.4.5	Incoming Goods and Services
		4.4.6	Corrective and Preventative Action
		4.4.7	Non-conforming Product or Equipment
		4.4.8	Product Rework
		4.4.9	Product Release
		4.4.10	Stock Rotation
4.5	Verification	4.5.1	Frequency and Methods
		4.5.2	Validation
		4.5.3	Verification of Monitoring Activities
		4.5.4	Product Sampling, Inspection and Analysis
		4.5.5	Internal Audits
		4.5.6	Verification Schedule
4.6	Product Identification, Trace and Recall	4.6.1	Product Identification
		4.6.2	Product Trace
		4.6.3	Product Withdrawal and Recall
4.7	Site Security	4.7.1	Food Defense

4.8	Identity Preserved Foods	4.8.1	General Requirements

Section 2. References

2.1 Obtain the Commitment of Senior Management.

Implementing the SQF system requires planning based on clearly outlined tasks and resource requirements. A critical preliminary step is to ensure that top management (1) is aware of the requirements; and (2) has a strong commitment of support to the development, implementation and ongoing maintenance of the SQF System. Management, once committed, shall support those involved in designing and documenting the system. Without this commitment, suitable resources may not be available to enable personnel to complete the task in a systematic and thorough manner.

2.2 Determining the Scope of an SQF 2000 System.

The first consideration in the development of an SQF 2000 System is to determine the "scope" of the system to be implemented. For a general Supplier this will normally cover from receipt of Raw materials to dispatch of Finished product. This means that the system will cover all those food safety and/or quality management activities (depending on the level of certification) that are under the control of the Supplier at that site. The scope of the certification can also be impacted by a customer requirements and products produced at the site.

2.3 Conduct a Gap Analysis.

A "Gap Analysis" is an assessment of the systems, procedures and protocols (already in place) to determine current gaps requiring action in order to reach the level of SQF certification required. This assessment is essential to the development of the process and may be conducted by a consultant, a certification body or by the Supplier's staff under direction of an SQF Practitioner. A gap assessment tool in the form of an audit checklist is available at the SQFI website.

2.4 Preparing to Develop and Document an SQF 2000 System.

Each business has its own unique culture and infrastructure and, as such, will require a customized implementation program designed to fit the respective business. The process of implementing an SQF system should be treated as a project. The implementation should be planned, structured and have a target date for completion. Management must be kept informed of progress which is best achieved through regular written progress reports.

For best long-term results, involvement of plant employees in every phase of SQF Systems development and implementation is critical. History shows that systems designed without the involvement of line operators have mixed success. The benefits of employee involvement include perceptive risk identification, effective program implementation and sustained maintenance consistent with, or exceeding generally accepted good practices. Non-technical language and use of familiar terminology, consistent with the business operation, is encouraged for successful implementation by plant employees.

While there is no right way to document a food safety and/or food quality system, a major consideration is to keep it as simple and uncomplicated as possible. A system that is easy to follow will be easy to implement and maintain. It will also be easy to audit and this will prevent frustrations, save time and most importantly – save money.

2.5 Documenting a Policy Manual.

The Policy Manual provides an overview of the SQF System. It briefly describes how the SQF System has been implemented and makes reference to all the policies and procedures the Supplier has implemented to meet each element of the Code. It serves as an effective marketing tool describing the Processor's commitment to the principles that support the delivery of safe, quality food. While parts of the policy manual will need to be prepared at an early stage in the development of the SQF System, (such as the management policy or the organization chart), the preparation of the Policy Manual is best left to last.

2.6 Documenting the Food Safety Plan.

This section contains the information necessary to support all food safety controls documented in the SQF 2000 Level 1 Food Safety Plan and SQF 2000 Level 2 Food Safety Plan.

i. SQF 2000 Level 1 – Food Safety Plan

Level 1 requires that a Supplier demonstrate how their operations comply with federal food safety legislation (including, but not limited to, FFDC, Bioterrorism Act of 2002, Fair Labeling and Packaging Act, Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 and current Regulations promulgated under these Acts) and other state and local requirements that apply to their business operations. In addition, it requires that a plan of the site be provided indicating the location of the premises in relation to the surrounding activities. The Supplier is also required to provide plans and specifications of the premises and demonstrate that its design and construction will facilitate sanitary operations. Finally, the establishment of Pre-requisite Programs, those fundamental food safety controls that are essential to provide a sound foundation for the manufacture of safe food, are required at this level.

ii. SQF 2000 Level 2 – Food Safety Plan

Level 2 incorporates all Level 1 system requirements. At this level a Supplier is required to complete and document a food safety risk analysis of the product and its process, using the HACCP Method to identify hazards that can impact on the processing of safe food. Included in this risk analysis is an outline of the action taken by the Supplier to eliminate, reduce or prevent these hazards from occurring. To qualify for Level 2 SQF Certification the Supplier is required to attain Level 1 Certification and/or incorporate all Level 1 requirements under its Level 2 Certification.

2.7 Documenting the Food Quality Plan.

This section contains the information necessary to support all food quality controls documented in the Level 3 Food Quality Plan.

i. SQF 2000 Level 3 – Food Quality Plan

Level 3 incorporates all Level 1 and Level 2 system requirements. At this level a Supplier is required to complete and document a food quality risk assessment of the product, and its associated process, to identify the threats to product quality and to outline the action taken to eliminate, reduce or prevent their occurrence. To qualify for Level 3 SQF Certification, the Supplier is required to attain Level 2 Certification and/or incorporate all Level 1 and 2 requirements under its Level 3 Certification.

2.8 Preparing the Policy Manual.

The Policy Manual contains all those food safety and/or quality procedures that are required by the SQF 2000 Code. It may also include examples of forms that are used in general processing to record the results of observations, inspection, tests and other monitoring information.

2.9 Records.

This section contains the completed records, the information that has been collected as a result of inspections, product analysis, monitoring, validation, and verification and surveillance activities. Records provide proof that activities have been completed and are the documents that will be reviewed as part of any investigation, or for planning and basing decisions for improvement.

Section 3. Definitions & Clarifications

DEFINITIONS:

The definitions contained in the SQF Program Vocabulary document apply.

SECTION 4: SQF 2000 SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Contents

Section 4: SQF 2000 System Requirements

The following section explains the elements and sub-elements of the SQF 2000 Code at Level 3 and provides guidance on what a Supplier needs to do to develop, document and implement an SQF 2000 System at this level.

4.1 Commitment.

The Supplier shall provide evidence of its commitment to implement and maintain an effective SQF 2000 System and to support its ongoing improvement.

4.1.1 Management Policy

The owner or most senior person shall define the Supplier's commitment to food safety, quality and continuous improvement as well as make resources available to achieve these objectives in a Policy Statement; which is relevant to the Supplier's goals and customer requirements. The owner or most senior person must sign the policy statement, have it documented in the Policy Manual, and ensure it is communicated to all employees and staff.

Guidance

What does it mean?

Explain management commitment to the SQF 2000 principles so that all employees in the organization understand and accept that this is part of the company's business practice. Ensure that each employee receives a copy of the Company Quality Policy statement and understands his/her responsibility for carrying out those principles as an expectation of his/her job.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.1.1.1 Senior Management Role Senior Management shall prepare and implement a Policy Statement that outlines, as a minimum, the: i. Organization's commitment to supply safe, quality product; ii. Methods used to comply with its customer and regulatory requirements and continually improve its food safety and quality management system; and iii. Organization's commitment to establish and review food safety and quality objectives. **4.1.1.2 Policy Statement** The Policy Statement shall be: i. Signed by Senior Management; ii. Made available in language understood by all employees and staff; and iii. Displayed in a prominent position and effectively communicated to all employees and staff.	**What do I need to do?** At this level the owner or most senior responsible person is required to document and sign a Policy Statement that clearly demonstrates their understanding of their food safety and/or quality responsibility under the SQF System, and outlines how the organization will achieve and maintain food safety and quality. This includes a stated commitment to make the appropriate resources available to implement the food safety and quality plans. Senior management does not have a specific title associated with it. Any individual who has decision making authority in management is sufficient. This demonstrates the facility's commitment to implement their SQF programs. In order to keep pace with changes in company policy, the Policy Statement must be reviewed at least annually by senior management. This review is normally done when annual reviews of the SQF System are undertaken. The Policy Statement must be displayed in a prominent position so all employees and Visitors are aware of the Policies. Further, if your labor forces include employees who do not understand the native language of your country, you must post the Policy Statement in all additional languages which ensure that every employee and Visitor may understand the food safety and quality goals of the Supplier; and any role they play in achieving these goals.

4.1.2 Management Responsibility

The owner or most senior responsible person shall define the organizational reporting structure and assure adequate resources are available to achieve Supplier's SQF objectives.

Guidance

What does it mean?

Communicate to your employees their responsibilities for food safety and quality. By providing an organizational chart that demonstrates the interrelationships and responsibilities within the organization, each employee knows his/her role in assuring food safety, quality, and continuous improvement. This needs to be understood by all employees and staff members. Management must clearly identify and provide the resources to achieve food safety and quality objectives.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.1.2.1 Organization Structure The organizational reporting structure describing those who have responsibility for food safety and quality and their interrelationship shall be defined and communicated within the organization. **4.1.2.2 Food Safety Resources & Practitioner** Senior Management shall ensure adequate resources are available to achieve its food safety and quality objectives and to support the development, implementation and maintenance and ongoing improvement of the SQF 2000 System. Senior Management shall designate an SQF Practitioner with responsibility and authority to: i. Lead the development and implementation of Food Safety Fundamentals outlined in 4.4.2, the Food Safety Plan outlined in 4.4.3 and the Food Quality Plan outlined in 4.4.4; ii. Oversee development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF 2000 System; iii. Take appropriate action to maintain the integrity of the SQF 2000 System; and iv. Communicate to relevant personnel all information essential to ensure the effective implementation and maintenance of the SQF 2000 System. **4.1.2.3 Training Resources** The responsibility for establishing and implementing the training needs of the organization's personnel to ensure they have the required competencies to carry out those functions affecting product legality, safety and quality shall be defined and documented. Note: Legality refers to national Federal, state and local regulations in the country of manufacture and intended markets. **4.1.2.4 Report Food Safety Issues** All staff shall be informed of their responsibility to report food safety and quality problems to personnel with authority to initiate action. **4.1.2.5 Job Description** Job descriptions for those responsible for food safety and quality shall be documented and include provision to cover for the absence of key personnel.	**What do I need to do?** At these levels the senior responsible person is required to document and sign a description of the organizational reporting structure that describes each position that has responsibility for food safety or quality. The document shall provide a snapshot of how positions interact and share responsibility for food safety and/or quality. You must also convey responsibility for food safety and quality to every employee. This may be accomplished through job descriptions at all levels. Job descriptions for key personnel need to include a provision to cover for their absence. You must also provide documented instruction to staff to report food safety and quality problems to personnel with authority to initiate action. Senior Management must also document how they will provide resources to achieve food safety and quality objectives. You are required to demonstrate to employees your support of the development, implementation and maintenance and ongoing improvement of the SQF 2000 system. The SQF Practitioner is the individual designated by Senior Management to develop, validate, verify and maintain the company's Food Safety Plan. The SQF Practitioner may engage the services of an SQF Consultant to support validation and verification of SQF Programs. The SQF Practitioner will need to: i. Be employed by the company and hold a position of responsibility in regard to the management of the SQF System; ii. Have completed HACCP Training and be experienced and competent to implement and maintain HACCP based Food Safety Plans; iii. Have demonstrated knowledge and experience in the SQF 2000 Standard relevant to the scope of the certification. The completion of the Implementation SQF 2000 Systems training course or the completion of the SQF 2000 exam are both examples of ways that a Practitioner can demonstrate their knowledge of the SQF standard. This is not required, but a means to demonstrate knowledge of the standard. The SQF Auditor will verify the relevant details of the SQF Practitioner at each Audit of your SQF System. Any issues with the SQF Practitioner are recorded in 8.2.1. You must document your training program. The documented program should reflect the competencies required of each employee to carry out their food safety and quality responsibilities and the training that is necessary to assure those competencies. Senior Management, through the SQF Practitioner, shall communicate to relevant personnel the actions taken to ensure the effective implementation and maintenance of the SQF 2000 System.

4.1.3 Food Safety and Quality Management System

A Policy Manual, a Food Safety Manual and a Quality Manual, which outline the methods the Supplier will use to meet the requirements of this Code, will be documented.

Guidance

What does it mean?

The Policy Manual is a brief document that sets out how the overall policies, procedures and practices of the Supplier are designed to meet the requirements of the SQF 2000 Code. The Policy Manual is usually prepared as the last step and, if prepared correctly, can also used as a powerful marketing tool. The Food Safety and Quality Manual(s), which are more detailed, thoroughly document the Supplier's food safety and quality program(s). These manuals provide information about the business, how its SQF system will meet the requirements of the 2000 Code and is a roadmap for the food safety and quality programs.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.1.3.1. Policy Manual A Policy Manual shall be documented. It shall outline the methods the organization will use to meet the requirements of this Standard, be made available to staff and include: i. A summary of the organizations food safety and quality policies and the methods it will apply to meet the requirements of this standard; ii. The Policy Statement and Organization Chart; iii. The Scope of the Certification; and iv. A list of the products covered under the Scope of Certification. **4.1.3.2 Food Safety Manual** A Food Safety Manual shall be documented, maintained, made available to relevant staff and include the written procedures, Pre-requisite Programs, Food Safety Plans and other documentation necessary to support the development, implementation, maintenance and control of the SQF 2000 System. **4.1.3.3 Quality Manual** A Quality Manual shall be documented, maintained, made available to relevant staff and include the written procedures, Pre-requisite Programs, and Food Quality Plans and other documentation necessary to support the development, implementation, maintenance and control of the SQF 2000 System.	**What do I need to do?** The Supplier must prepare a Policy Manual that outlines the methods used to meet the requirements of the Code in regard to its food safety and quality obligations. The Policy Manual will include your policy statement and an organizational chart. This document will contain the food safety and food quality policies and include information on how the Supplier will make the Policy Manual available to key staff. The Supplier may also provide the manual to potential customers to inform them of how the Supplier has set up and maintained a food safety and quality management system. At Level 2 of the SQF certification, you are required to prepare a Food Safety Plan using the HACCP Method (see 9.0). The Policy Manual will contain a description of how this will be (or was) achieved initially and how it is maintained on an ongoing basis. *Tip – Keep it brief and concise.* You must include the Policy Manual in the annual SQF System Review. The Supplier must prepare a Food Safety Manual and a Food Quality Manual that document the written procedures, Pre-requisite Programs, Food Safety and Quality Plan(s) and other documentation necessary to support the development, implementation, maintenance and control of the SQF 2000 System. These manuals must be maintained and made available to applicable staff. There is no prescribed format or organization prescribed by the standard on how the manuals are to be constructed. SQF Auditor is to verify content, not format. Format should be determined by company, whichever ever format is most convenient for them.

4.1.4 Management Review

Senior Management is responsible for an annual review of the entire SQF 2000 System. This review must be documented.

Guidance

What does it mean?
Senior management is responsible for an annual review of the SQF 2000 System. The SQF Practitioner will direct the review. The Supplier may also utilize the services of an SQF Consultant to assist with the validation activities outlined in 4.1.4.4.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.1.4.1 Senior Management Review of SQF 2000 Senior Management shall be responsible for reviewing the SQF 2000 System and documenting the review procedure. Reviews shall include: i. The policies outlined in the Policy Statement; ii. Internal and external audit findings; iii. Corrective Actions and their investigations and resolution; and iv. Customer complaints and their resolution and investigation.	**What do I need to do?** Senior Management shall assure that the entire SQF System is reviewed annually. This review shall include the policies outlined in company's Policy Statement, findings in the regularly scheduled internal audits and external audits and customer complaints. The Supplier must prepare a procedure documenting how the reviews of SQF System will be completed. The reviews must be conducted by a representative from the senior management team with the objective of ensuring the continued integrity of the food safety and quality management system. The annual review shall measure the effectiveness of the Pre-requisite Programs, the Food Safety Plan, other food safety controls and the Food Quality Plan.
4.1.4.2 Annual SQF 2000 Review The SQF 2000 System in its entirety shall be reviewed at least annually.	All reviews and major changes to the SQF 2000 System are to be documented by the SQF Practitioner. Documentation shall include reasons for any changes. Major changes to a process, a process control or any change that could impact on the ability of the system to deliver a safe quality food may trigger a review of the Food Safety Plan and/or the Food Quality Plan in addition to the annual review. Any major change to Food Safety or Quality plans shall be validated and verified by the SQF Practitioner (Practitioner) before implementation.
4.1.4.3 Review of Changes to Food Safety & Quality Plans Food Safety Fundamentals outlined in 4.4.2, Food Safety Plans and Food Quality Plans shall be reviewed when any changes implemented have an impact on the Supplier's ability to deliver safe, quality food.	*Note: When completing an annual review of the SQF System, documents which should be considered include any document that might highlight deficiencies in the system, such as, customer complaint records, corrective action reports, internal and external audit reports and deviations from process control reports, etc.*
4.1.4.4 Validation of Changes to Plans The SQF Practitioner shall be responsible for validating changes to Food Safety Fundamentals outlined in 4.4.2, Food Safety Plans and Food Quality Plans that have an impact on the Supplier's ability to deliver safe, quality food. *Note: The Supplier may utilize the services of an SQF Consultant to assist with the validation activities outlined in 4.1.4.4.*	
4.1.4.5 Records of All Reviews Records of all reviews and reasons for amending documents, validations and changes to the SQF System shall be maintained.	

4.1.5 Complaint Management

The Supplier shall document a procedure for handling customer complaints and identify who is responsible for investigating the cause and resolution of customer complaints. Customer complaints shall be handled efficiently and records of customer complaints and their investigations shall be maintained.

Guidance

What does it mean?

Customer complaints provide an important measure as to how well the management system is working. By recording customer complaint types a Supplier can show improvements in a process. Customer complaints may also show trends that have not been identified during processing and normal process control checks. The SQF 2000 Code requires the company implement a procedure for resolving customer complaints. The procedure shall outline the methods used and identify responsibilities for ensuring complaints are investigated and appropriate action is taken.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.1.5.1 Methods of Responsibility Documented The methods and responsibility for handling and investigating the cause and resolution of complaints from customers and authorities shall be documented and implemented. **4.1.5.2 Analysis of Complaints** Complaints shall be analyzed by personnel knowledgeable about the incident. **4.1.5.3 Corrective Actions from Complaints** Corrective Action shall be implemented commensurate with the seriousness of the incident and as outlined under 4.4.6 **4.1.5.4 Records of Complaints** Records of customer complaints and their investigations shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** Outline a procedure showing how customer complaints will be received, investigated and responded to, and describe the methods used to investigate the complaint. Retain records of customer complaints and their investigation. The procedure will outline the responsibility for investigating customer complaints, initiating follow up actions and communicating back to the customer how the complaint has been resolved. Procedure should include criteria for the determination of the validity of complaints. Any trending or data management of complaints that are reviewed is to be included within the procedure. Procedure can include criteria when trends show issues that require corrective action plan development and/or process adjustment. Complaints may be locally received or received from a central site, call center, or corporate entity. All should be available to be used in complaint procedure. If the facility's corporate function is responsible for creating the complaint management program, that program must still be reviewed by the SQF auditor during the audit. The auditor shall look at how the facility was made aware of the program, how it has been communicated to the facility, how the facility has implemented the program, and how the facility verifies that the program is being followed within the facility. Finally, the auditor should verify how the facility is using the information that is provided by corporate to develop corrective action plans. Records of complaints should include corrective actions taken by Supplier.

4.1.6 Business Continuity Planning

The Supplier must prepare a business continuity plan based on known threats to the business.

Guidance

What does it mean?
A business continuity plan based on the Supplier's understanding of known threats to the business shall be prepared by Senior Management outlining the methods and responsibility the organization will implement to cope with a business crisis that may impact on the ability of the Supplier to deliver safe, quality food.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.1.6.1 Business Continuity Plan A business continuity plan based on the understanding of known threats to a business shall be prepared by Senior Management outlining the methods and responsibility the organization will implement to cope with a business crisis that may impact on the ability of the Supplier to deliver safe, quality food. **4.1.6.2 Elements of the Business Continuity Plan** The business continuity plan shall include as a minimum: i. A Senior Management responsibility for decision making, oversight and initiating actions arising from a crisis management incident; ii. The nomination & training of a crisis management team; iii. The controls implemented to ensure a response to a crisis does not compromise product safety and quality; iv. The measures to isolate and identify product affected by a response to a crisis; v. The measures taken to verify the acceptability of food prior to release; vi. The preparation and maintenance of a current crisis alert contact list; vii. Sources of legal and Practitioner advice; and viii. The responsibility for internal communications and communicating with authorities, external organizations and media. **4.1.6.3 Annual Business Continuity Plan Review** The business continuity plan shall be reviewed, tested and verified at least annually. **4.1.6.4 Records of Business Continuity Plan Review** Records of reviews and verification of the business continuity plan shall be maintained. **4.1.6.5 Product Withdrawal Incidents** Incidents involving product withdrawal and recall shall be handled as outlined in 4.6.3.	**What do I need to do?** Identify known threats to the company which could disrupt or impact the company's ability to produce and deliver safe, quality food. Prepare a business continuity plan outlining the methods and controls the company will implement to address these threats if they were to occur. Examples of business interruptions could include power failure, ammonia leak, fire, flooding, storm damage, process equipment interruption and tractor trailer crashes. The plan shall include the senior person responsible for management of the response to a crisis, and the names of and training of individuals composing a crisis management team. The plan must document, in detail, the controls the company will implement to assure that food safety and quality are not compromised and that if the integrity of any product is compromised, the product is isolated and controlled. The plan should ensure that everyone on the crisis management team is familiar with the withdrawal and recall procedures the company has documented under 4.6.3. The plan should include criteria for when controls will be implemented (ie. numbers of hours with no power, rise in product temperature prior to moving to alternative storage locations) and how criteria will be monitored during business threat condition. Criteria should be product specific as appropriate. Also included should be product review and disposition criteria to determine which product is recoverable, which is salvageable, and which is to be destroyed. Methods for recovery, salvage, and destruction are to be described within plan. Communication during a crisis is important, and therefore methods for communication with customers, stakeholders, and news media must be described. The individual who is responsible for communication must be identified. The business continuity plan shall include a crisis alert contact list, sources of legal and Practitioner assistance which may counsel senior management in a crisis situation, and designation of responsibilities for internal and external communication during a crisis. The business continuity plan shall be reviewed at least annually. All elements of the plan should be tested. This could include a mock press release, mock incident, requirement to contact external storage locations, etc. Documentation of this review is required. An annual review should have similar aspects to a mock recall. The key provision is to have a mock crisis identified, product identified, criteria for monitoring of affected product, actions that would be taken based on results from monitoring, and final disposition of identified product. If a mock communication is created, it is not recommended to contact customers for fear of confusion

4.2 Document Control and Records.

4.2.1 Document Control

A list of documents and amendments to documents shall be maintained to identify the current document in use. Documents shall be securely stored, effectively controlled and readily accessible.

Guidance

What does it mean?
Mistakes can be made if it is not clear which of many documents is the most up-to-date in describing how work must be done. All operational reference documents and forms are subject to change at some point in time. It is important that documents are controlled so that when changes to documents are made staff refer to the most up-to-date document e.g. changes to Pre-requisite programs, food safety plans, food quality plans, revised hazard analysis of a process set or Raw Material, procedures and work instruction, Raw Material and Finished product specifications, etc.

Note: To comply with this requirement you need to determine who is responsible for document control, make sure documents are up-to-date and put documents where they will be used. It is important to remove old or out-of-date documents and replace them when they become worn or illegible, and finally keep a record of all documents, when they were issued, updated and where they are kept. A list of current documents and amendments to documents must be prepared to identify the current document in use. This means that you must have a list of all the procedures and all the forms and other documents used in your system and identify those ones or versions are currently in use. Include support programs, work instructions, and/or standard operating procedures, and even the SQF 2000 System itself in this list. You may also control other documents within your system such as Finished product specifications. Document control ensures that the current document is being used and that there is a record of who holds a copy of the document. If you include several columns, you may write the date of the change, new version and signature authorizing the new version. **Example:**

Document Type	Version	Date Changed	New Version Number	Signature
Verification Schedule	Version 1	01/16/01	Version 2	Joe Smith
Sanitation Procedure	Version 1			

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.2.1.1 Methods and Responsibilities of Document Control The methods and responsibility for ensuring personnel have access to current documents and maintaining document control shall be documented and implemented. **4.2.1.2 Register of SQF 2000 Documents** A register of current SQF 2000 System documents and amendments to documents shall be maintained. Documents shall be safely stored and readily accessible.	**What I need to do?** You must demonstrate that all personnel who need access to specific documents such as food safety and quality policies, procedures, customer specifications and applicable food regulations have such access. **You are required to keep a record of all documents used, when they were issued, updated and who has a copy of each document. Documents referred to include for example Pre-requisite programs, SSOPs, SOPs, other work instructions and Raw Material and Finished product specifications, etc.** To comply with this requirement you must establish a written procedure describing how you will maintain, update and replace documents. The procedure must specify who is responsible for document control, make sure documents are updated and securely stored if required. Any requirement for corrections or maintenance of records must be recorded in document control policy, including the appropriate method for addressing corrections. The use of "white-out" to address corrections is not recommended. A line through the inaccurate recording, with accurate recording and initials of monitor is recommended.

4.2.2 Records

The Supplier shall maintain legible records demonstrating compliance with each clause in this Code. All records shall be retained in accordance with periods specified by the Corporation, the customer or legislation (regulation) or for a minimum period of two years whichever is greater. Records shall be securely stored to prevent damage and deterioration.

GUIDANCE

What does it mean?

Records are the information about your processing operations, recorded on forms and therefore they must be clear, concise and legible. Records provide the proof to auditors and clients that what you say you are doing has, in fact, been done. Records must also be stored so that they will not be damaged and so that they can be retrieved for investigation purposes. The SQF 2000 Code states that records must be legible and must be maintained for at least 2 years (or since implementation of program) or as required by Corporation, customer or legislation.

Note: It is also suggested to keep the amount of paperwork to a minimum. Combine as much information on one form as possible. Develop a system that ensures people know what to do with the records once they are completed. This will require you to design an efficient filing system for the safe keeping of the records. Make sure that someone is given the responsibility of maintaining the records for a period of at least 2 years.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.2.2.1 Methods and Responsibility for Recording Maintenance The methods and responsibility for undertaking monitoring activities, verifying, maintaining and retaining records shall be documented and implemented. **4.2.2.2 Records Legible and Signed** All records shall be legible and signed and dated by those undertaking monitoring activities that demonstrate that inspections, analyses and other essential activities have been completed. **4.2.2.3 Records are Readily Accessible** Records shall be readily accessible, securely stored to prevent damage and deterioration and shall be retained in accordance with periods specified by a customer or legislation (regulation). *Note: Initials are acceptable provided a master sheet is provided to identify an initial to a signature.*	**What do I need to do?** You must have a written procedure documenting responsibilities for completing records (monitoring records, inspection and test records, etc.); and identifying those responsible for verifying the records. Records must be retained under secure conditions as required by customer specifications and legislation. You must emphasize to staff responsible for monitoring and recording activities the importance of maintaining all records in a clear and legible manner, and the importance of recording the information at the time the activity is performed. The staff responsible for recording inspections at critical food safety and quality steps in the process is required to sign the record indicating the entry and the date it was made. In addition you are required to ensure that staff responsible for verifying food safety and quality records sign and date each record they review as part of their verification activities. You must ensure these responsibilities and actions are documented in the procedure. Electronic records are acceptable to monitor an SQF program. Supplier must have the means to manage electronic security of records, electronic signatures of monitors and reviewers, and the means for electronic review which must be demonstrated to the auditor. Note: Records under 2 years are acceptable provided that the designated program has been implemented less than 2 years, and the Supplier demonstrates adequate program implementation.

4.3 Specification and Product Development.

The Supplier shall have documented specifications for Raw materials and Contract Services that impact on Finished product safety and quality.

4.3.1 Product Development and Realization

Guidance

What does it mean?
Describe the complete process of bringing a new product to market. Ideas for new products may be obtained from basic research using a SWOT analysis (opportunity analysis), market and consumer trends, focus groups, employees, trade shows, etc. Develop methods to screen ideas and eliminate unsound concepts. Develop marketing and operational details for the product and test the concept.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.3.1.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Product Development The methods and responsibility for designing, developing and converting product concepts to commercial realization shall be documented and implemented.	**What do I need to do?** You are required to describe the methods and who is responsible for the process by which new products are conceived and/or transformed into market applications. Product concepts may include products not previously produced by the company but which exist in the market, a product presented to a new market or a totally new product/packaging. Methods should include specific procedures required for transition from pilot plants and test kitchens to in-plant implementation of production. Even if the facility's corporate function is responsible for creating the product development program, that program must still be reviewed by the SQF auditor during the audit. The auditor must look at how the facility was made aware of the program, how it has been communicated to the facility, how the facility has implemented the program, and how the facility verifies that the program is being followed within the facility. Finally, the auditor should verify how the facility is using the information that is provided by corporate to complete the transition from test project to actual mass production. Any product claims shall be substantiated by means of product research and/or testing, Not all product development will require shelf-life testing. When a Supplier has previous data from similar products or processes, then testing would not be required. Any testing that is required would be focused on product performance, customer handling, or new packaging conditions. When the Supplier determines that shelf-life testing is not required, the Supplier must document the reason for this decision and any supporting evidence. As the product is being prepared for transition from pilot or test phase to mass production, any new processes, equipment, additional handling, new packaging or storage conditions should be reviewed with identification of any possible food safety or food quality risks associated with new conditions. These risks must be assessed, and adjustments made to food safety and food quality plans prior to implementation. Any adjustments to food safety or food quality plans must be validated and verified by the SQF Practitioner prior to mass production of new product. Safe handling information must be included on all packaging, as required by legislation(regulation) and/or customer use.
4.3.1.2 Validation of New Products The Product formulation, manufacturing processes and the fulfillment of product requirements shall be validated by facility trials, shelf life trials and product testing.	
4.3.1.3 Shelf Life Trials Shelf life trials where necessary shall be conducted to establish and validate a products: i. Handling, storage requirements including the establishment of "use by" or "best before dates"; ii. Microbiological criteria; and Consumer preparation, storage and handling requirements.	
4.3.1.4 Validation of Food Safety A Food Safety Plan and a Food Quality Plan shall be validated and verified for each new product and its associated process through conversion to commercial production and distribution.	
4.3.1.5 Records of Product Development Maintained Records of all product design, process development, shelf life trials and approvals shall be maintained.	

4.3.2 and 4.3.3 Raw materials and Packaging

Guidance

What does it mean?
If any of your raw materials, Packaging Materials, Packing Materials, cleaning and pest control chemicals, etc. can impact the quality or safety of your product, you must have written specifications for that Raw Material and Packaging Material.

Note: The first thing to do is to decide if any of the raw materials may impact the quality or safety of your final product. When you have identified these Raw materials, contact the people or company who supply them to you and ask them for documented specifications for that product. Suppliers of cleaning chemicals are required by law to provide you with specifications for these materials and must also provide Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each chemical you purchase. Specifications for Raw materials must be detailed, describing the product in terms of its safety and quality parameters.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.3.2 Raw materials	**What do I need to do?**
4.3.2.1 Raw Material Specifications Specifications for Raw materials and ingredients that impact on finished product safety and quality shall be documented and kept current.	You are required to maintain specifications for raw materials that impact finished product safety and quality. For example, this can relate to cleaning compounds, ingredients, packaging, etc. You are required to keep Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and labels for all chemicals that may be used on-site.
4.3.2.2 Register of Raw Material Specifications A register of Raw Material specifications shall be maintained.	Specifications need to fully describe the product provided.
4.3.3 Packaging	When Raw and Packaging Materials are purchased, the Supplier must be able to demonstrate, through an inspection protocol, that the product received was what you ordered. You need to keep records showing evidence that inspections of Raw and Packaging Materials have been completed and those records of the audit/inspection or oversight of services provided are filed for future review, if needed.
4.3.3.1 Packaging Specifications Specifications for all packaging materials that impact on finished product safety and quality shall be provided and comply with the relevant legislation.	As required by 4.4.5.2 of the Code, the receipt of raw materials from non-approved Suppliers shall be acceptable in an emergency situation provided they are inspected before use.
4.3.3.2 Methods and Responsibility for Developing Packaging Specifications The methods and responsibility for developing and approving detailed specifications and labels for all packaging shall be documented.	Quality related detail included in raw material specifications could include information such as color, grade, nutritional data, size, weight, type of packaging, etc. You must keep a register of raw material and packaging specifications. Be sure to include a version number and date so that you can prove that the specifications are updated (maintained) as needed and ensure that all relevant departments have the most updated information.
4.3.3.3 Functionality of Packaging Validation The functionality of packaging materials shall be validated to ensure product safety and quality is not compromised and the material is fit for its intended purpose and suitable for use. Validations shall include: i. Certificates of Conformance for all packaging in direct contact with food; and ii. Tests and analyses to confirm the absence of potential chemical migrations from packaging to the food contents.	You need to show documented evidence that Raw and Packaging Materials have been inspected or that they come from an approved Supplier. The methods for selecting, evaluating, approving and monitoring an approved Supplier need to be documented. This could be as simple as a good supply history, sourcing from quality assured Suppliers (e.g. SQF Certified Suppliers) or by personally auditing/inspecting the Suppliers' operations. For packaging supplier validation, the facility must determine the need for a testing requirement of packaging based on the risk of the chemicals used and the origin of the packaging material. For packaging materials that are considered low risk, a letter of guarantee or certificate of conformance would also be acceptable.
4.3.3.4 Register of Packaging Specifications A register of packaging specifications and label approvals shall be maintained and kept current.	You must maintain a list of raw materials and packaging suppliers. You shall require Raw and Packaging Material Suppliers to verify they are complying with your specifications for products they supply to you.

4.3.4 and 4.3.5 Contract Service Providers and Contract Manufacturers

Guidance

What does it mean?
Many duties within the food production or processing facility are conducted by individuals or organizations outside of the facility undergoing certification. These parts of the standard address how the services from these outside organizations or individuals are controlled monitored and verified to ensure that food safety and product quality is maintained and customer specifications are achieved.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.3.4 Contract Services **4.3.4.1 Specifications for Contract Services** Specifications for contract services that impact on finished product safety and quality shall be documented, current, include a full description of the service to be provided and detail relevant training requirements of contract personnel. **4.3.4.2 Register of Contract Services** A register of all contract service specifications shall be maintained. *Note: Contract Services include but are not limited to pest control and sanitation services and storage and transport contractors.* **4.3.5 Contract Manufacturers** **4.3.5.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Customer Agreement Management** The methods and responsibility for ensuring all agreements relating to customers product requirements and its realization and delivery are specified and agreed shall be documented and implemented. **4.3.5.2 Verification of Compliance with Customer Agreements** The Supplier shall: i. Verify all customer requirements are being met at all times; and ii. Ensure changes to contractual agreements are approved by both parties and communicated to relevant personnel. **4.3.5.3 Record of Review and Changes to Agreement** Records of all contract reviews and changes to contractual agreements and their approvals shall be maintained. *Note: This clause relates to those Suppliers manufacturing under contract for a customer. Written contracts include basic orders of conditions of purchase and supply.*	**What do I need to do?** The objective of these elements is to ensure that the measures to control the identified raw material hazards are adequate in order to ensure that the safety of the finished product is not compromised. The contract service does not need to directly involve product safety or quality, but could still indirectly affect the product or facility. The facility should detail which types of training that contract service providers require. Training examples could be training done by service provider, training completed by supplier, or certification as demonstration of training. You are required to provide specifications for Contract Services such as cleaning and sanitation of the site and pest control contractor details that are provided by an external contractor. A service contract outlining the service to be provided, the qualification requirements for operators and a list of approved chemicals that will be used are some the details that would be included. Specifications need to fully describe the service provided. Some examples of contract services include transport: construction, pest control, sanitation, chemical management, trash collection, refrigerated storage, uniform cleaning, etc. A contract manufacturer is a supplier who is outside the direct control of the SQF 2000 Certification program but who is contacted to manufacture a product to fulfill or supplement a Supplier or a customer order. These products may be similar to those produced by Supplier, or completely different. These outside manufacturing facilities must be able to follow company product safety and quality requirements and meet customer specifications. The Supplier must define how they will ensure that product produced by the contact manufacturer meets their customer specifications. A verification schedule, with a sampling plan as needed, must be defined. Any changes to customer specifications must be fully documented. Procedures must include the communication to all contract manufacturers with changes to specification identified. The Supplier procedure should include verification that the contract manufacturer is aware of the changes to specification, and that product produced after the change has been implemented reflects those required changes.

4.3.6 Finished product

Guidance

What does it mean?
It is difficult to implement a quality system without a "finished product specification" target. It is important that the Supplier does not undertake to supply goods where the specification is not consistently achievable under all processing and raw material supply conditions. A brief description of how you address this element must be described in your Policy Manual.

Note: A written Finished product specification must be provided for all products covered under the SQF certification. In some cases industry sector specifications may apply e.g. for bulk consignments exported to world commodity markets.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.3.6.1 Finished product Specification Finished product specifications shall be documented, current, approved by the Supplier and their customer, accessible to relevant staff and include: i. Microbiological and chemical limits; ii. Labeling and packaging requirements; and iii. Product quality attributes. **4.3.6.2 Finished product Labels** Product labels shall be established for new and existing products as required. They shall be accurate, comply with the relevant legislation and be approved by qualified company personnel. **4.3.6.3 Register of Product Specifications** A register of finished product specifications shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** A written finished product specification is to be developed for each product (or group of similar products) covered under the SQF certification. The specification must, as a minimum, comply with the appropriate food safety legislation (including labeling requirements) and must be updated as required. You will need to keep a copy of all Finished product specifications and keep a register of all the latest versions of these documents. A finished product specification can include physical (size/grade, color, net weight, etc.), microbiological (aerobic plate count, yeast and mold, lactics, coliforms), chemical (salt, moisture, titratable acidity, pH, % fat, brix, viscosity, etc) and the packaging specifications for the product. You are required to ensure that the annual review of the SQF System (see 4.1.4.2) includes a review of the Finished product specifications and that the list of specifications is maintained and kept up-to-date in a register. Your customer will normally provide the finished product specifications and if this is the case it is advisable that both the Supplier and their customer (e.g. a retailer) agree the specification is achievable and that they agree on the attributes (quality and safety) of a product to be supplied. For stock items that are not customer specific, the supplier is expected to develop finished product specifications for those items. The specification must be made available to relevant processing staff in production, process control, and QC/QA personnel. A register of all the finished product specification which are under the SQF certification must be maintained. The register must be current.

4.4 Attaining Food Safety.

4.4.1 Food Legislation (Regulation)

The Supplier shall ensure that, at the time of delivery to its customer, the product supplied shall comply with federal, state and local legislation that applies to the country of its origin and destination.

Guidance

What does it mean?

This element of the SQF 2000 Code states that the business must ensure that when the product is delivered to the customer, it complies with food legislation in the country where it was processed and where it will be consumed or used. Food regulatory requirements will specify if there are any labeling, chemical, physical or microbiological criteria that apply to your product. You must make sure that your product complies with these requirements.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.1.1 Compliance with Regulation The organization shall ensure that, at the time of delivery to its customer, the food supplied shall comply with the legislation that applies to the food and its production in the country of its origin and destination. *Note: In addition to meeting food safety standards outlined in the legislation suppliers will also need to demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements applicable to trade weights and measures, packaging, product description and nutritional and additive labeling and where necessary adherence to specific religious certification requirements and allergen controls and related labeling declarations.*	**What do I need to do?** You are required to demonstrate that you are aware of and compliant with the food regulation that applies to the products that are produced within your facility. This clause also requires that the Supplier understand the product legislative requirements that apply in the markets they supply as well as the laws governing the country of production. For example, you must ensure that the processing aids are derived from reliable sources which meet the legislative requirements in the country of production and destination. Examples of regulatory compliance verification would be product weight claims, ingredient labeling, ingredient statements, product and process verification.
4.4.1.2 Methods and Responsibilities for Regulatory Updates The methods and responsibility for ensuring the organization is kept informed of changes to relevant legislation, scientific and technical developments and relevant industry codes of practice shall be documented and implemented.	You are required to include a statement in your Policy Manual and/or specifications stating that the products you supply will meet all food regulatory requirements of the customer(s) to whom you sell product. You must indicate how you will get the information necessary to meet this requirement (normally from the customer or agents in overseas countries). Local or national legislation may require that you maintain specific licenses for your facility. You must obtain the appropriate licenses if required and have them accessible for review if necessary.

4.4.2 Food Safety Fundamentals

The Supplier shall document the means by which it will control food safety in a Food Safety Plan.

Guidance

What does it mean?

This element requires the Supplier to document a Food Safety Plan and that these documents be developed, validated, verified and maintained (and signed off) by an SQF Practitioner. The premises, building and equipment design shall be located, constructed and designed to facilitate a safe food product. The facilities and equipment are maintained in a structurally sound and sanitary manner.

Note: **What are Food Safety Fundamentals?** Food Safety Fundamentals are required at SQF Levels 1. The Level 1 Food Safety Fundamentals concentrate on the location design and construction of the site and the equipment. It also requires the application of those Pre-requisite Programs that would apply to your operation. Pre-requisites are the methods and practices used to provide basic environmental operating conditions essential for the processing of safe food. Pre-requisites are generally drawn from federal, state and local regulatory GMP practices and/or standard sanitation operating procedures. The Level 2 Food Safety Plan is a description of what you do, what hazards are present, what the necessary control measures are, and any critical points where a food safety hazard must be controlled in your business. The Food Safety Plan is developed using the HACCP method. To meet the SQF 2000 requirement you are required to demonstrate that you have applied the HACCP Method to the development of each Food Safety Plan that will apply to your operations.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.2.1 Fundamental Food Safety Practices Maintained Senior Management shall make provision to ensure fundamental food safety practices are adopted and maintained. **4.4.2.2 Facility & Equipment Properly Designed** The premises, buildings and equipment shall be located, constructed and designed to facilitate the proper manufacture, handling, storage and delivery of safe, quality food. *Note 1: The requirements outlined in 4.4.2.1 are further described in detail under Section 5.0.* **4.4.2.3 Facility & Equipment Properly Maintained** The Supplier shall ensure the premises are maintained structurally sound and operated in a hygienic manner. **4.4.2.4 Pre-requisite Programs Documented and Implemented** Those Pre-requisite Programs applicable to the Scope of Certification shall be documented and implemented. i. Pre-requisite Programs shall be validated and verified as described in 4.5. *Note 2: The Supplier can utilize the services of an SQF Consultant to assist with the validation and verification activities outlined in 4.4.2.3.* *Note 3: The Pre-requisite Program requirements outlined in 4.4.2.3 are further described in detail under Section 6.0.*	**What do I need to do?** You must prepare Food Safety Fundamentals that include the following: 1. Senior management shall make provision to ensure fundamental food safety practices are adopted and maintained. 2. A site plan showing the location of the premises and the surrounding land use and evidence from the local authority indicating that the premise is approved for the purpose. The premise, buildings and equipment must be located, constructed and designed to facilitate proper processing, handling, storage and delivery of safe quality food. NOTE: These requirements are outlined in further detail in Section 5.0. 3. The premises are to be maintained structurally sound and in a sanitary manner. 4. Pre-requisite programs shall be documented and implemented as applicable to the Scope of Certification. Each Pre-requisite Program must be validated and verified by the SQF Practitioner. The SQF Practitioner is required to sign off on each Pre-requisite Program indicating that the verification and validation has been completed.

REQUIRED PRE-REQUISITES

1. Personnel Practices	8. Monitoring Water Microbiology and Quality
2. Personnel Processing Practices	9. Control of Physical Contaminants
3. Training of Personnel	10. Supplier Approval
4. Calibration of Equipment	11. Transport and Delivery
5. Management of Pests and Vermin	12. Waste Management and Disposal

	6. Premises and Equipment Maintenance	13. Allergen Control
	7. Cleaning and Sanitation	

4.4.3 Food Safety Plan

The Food Safety Plan is a description of what you do, what hazards are present, control measures, and any critical points where a food safety hazard must be controlled in your business. The Food Safety Plan is developed using the HACCP method. To meet the SQF 2000 requirement you are required to demonstrate that you have applied the HACCP Method to the development of your Food Safety Plan.

Guidance

What does it mean?

1. The Food Safety Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the HACCP method.
2. The Food Safety Plan shall include process controls at control points in processing to monitor product safety and, when a process is deviating from set parameters, shall make corrections to keep a process under control.
3. Records supporting verification and validation of the Food Safety Plan shall be maintained.
4. The SQF Practitioner must verify and validate the Food Safety Plan. Requirements for Practitioner are found in section 8.2.1 of the standard.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.3.1 Food Safety Plan Complete A Food Safety Plan shall be prepared to outline the means by which the organization will control and assure food safety. The Food Safety Plan shall outline the results of a hazard analysis conducted to identify food safety hazards. It shall prescribe those measures taken to apply the controls implemented that are critical to assuring, monitoring and maintaining food safety. The Food Safety Plans shall: i. Be prepared in accordance with the HACCP Method; ii. Include process controls at control points in production to monitor product safety, identify when a process is deviating from set parameters and make corrections to keep a process under control; and iii. Cover a food or food group and the associated process.	**What do I need to do?** Once the Pre-requisite Program is in place you are required to prepare a Food Safety Plan. You do this by undertaking a thorough analysis of the process, identifying each step in the process and complete a "hazard analysis" of the hazards at each site in the processing, storage and transport of your product. In developing your Food Safety Plan you are required to demonstrate that you have followed the twelve steps of HACCP (described in the NAMCF or CODEX HACCP Guidelines). Process points that "prevent, eliminate, or reduce food safety hazards" are to be designated as critical control points (CCPs). Each CCP must have defined critical limit(s), identified monitoring tasks(who, what, how, how often), defined corrective actions, identified verification and validation steps, and records that are continuously maintained. Tasks associated with the food safety plan should be documented as work instructions or SOPs, and appropriate staff should be trained in them. Examples of critical control points can be cooking temperature, baking temperature, product rinse, storage temperature, metal detection, pH adjustment and product in-process temperature, etc. In general, critical control points are considered "intervention" steps that are designed to reduce a microbiological hazard within a product during a process. There can be instances when a process may have no critical control points identified, but the elements of this section still apply, and a food safety plan is still required. This would include the hazard analysis of the process and the description of products and process. You must ensure that your Food Safety Plan controls product safety. Before full implementation, the SQF Practitioner must validate and verify that all critical limits in the whole Food Safety Plan have been met. In this regard, you will need to prepare a verification schedule outlining the methods, frequency and responsibility for verifying your Food Safety Plan. Sign off each Food Safety Plan indicating that it has been validated and verified. Guidelines outlining the application of HACCP when preparing the Level 2 Food Safety Plan are outlined in 9.0. Observed failures of the food safety plan by the auditor during the audit, product contamination issues that are not properly addressed by the supplier, instances of corrective actions not being completed for failures of critical limits, or falsification of records associated with the food safety plan could be considered Critical non-conformances of the audit. Further requirements regarding the verification and validation activities are set forth in section 4.5.
4.4.3.2 Food Safety Plans Maintained and Validated Food Safety Plans shall be effectively developed, implemented and maintained; and validated and verified as described in 4.5. *Note: The Supplier can utilize the services of an SQF Consultant to assist with the validation and verification activities outlined in 4.4.3.2.*	

4.4.4 Food Quality Plan

Guidance

What does it mean?

A Food Quality Plan (required at level 3), is a description of the threats to product or process quality and what you do to control them. The SQF 2000 Code utilizes HACCP and the Food Quality Plan should be developed using the HACCP method. To meet the SQF 2000 requirement you are required to demonstrate that you have applied the HACCP method to the development of the Food Quality Plan that will apply to your operations.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.4.1 Food Quality Plan Complete A Food Quality Plan which outlines the means by which food quality will be controlled and assured shall be documented. The Food Quality Plan shall outline the results of a food quality risk analysis conducted to identify threats to achieving and maintaining product and process quality and prescribe those measures taken to apply the controls implemented that are critical to assuring, monitoring and maintaining food quality. The Food Quality Plans shall: i. Be based on the HACCP Method; ii. Include process controls at quality points in production to monitor product quality, identify when a process is deviating from set parameters and make Corrections to keep a process under control; iii. Cover a food or food group and the associated processes; and iv. Include documented Standard Operating Practices (SOPs) and/or Work Instructions (WIs) applicable to the organizations Scope of Certification. **4.4.4.2 Food Quality Plan Complete and Validated** Food Quality Plans, SOPs and WIs shall be effectively developed, implemented and maintained; and validated and verified as described in 4.5. *Note: The Supplier can utilize the services of an SQF Consultant to assist with the validation and verification activities outlined in 4.4.4.2.*	**What do I need to do?** This preparation of a Food Quality Plan is required to control quality. At this level the Supplier is required to undertake a risk assessment of the process to determine those points that are critical to ensuring food quality using the guiding principles of the HACCP method. You are required to demonstrate that the Food Quality Plan provides the desired outcome and that the analysis is validated and verified by an SQF Practitioner. As in HACCP, the entire process is to be reviewed at each step from receiving raw materials to distribution. The risk analysis determines which point(s) in the process are critical to the quality of the product. Those points are designated as a "Critical Quality Point (CQP)". Each CQP must have its critical limit(s) defined, monitoring tasks identified (who, what, how, how often). Corrective actions must be defined; verification and validation steps identified, and records maintained. Tasks associated with the food quality plan should be documented as work instructions or SOPs and appropriate staff must be trained. Some examples of CQP in general processing could be product weight, product count, size, color, moisture, titratable acidity, defects, viscosity, process temperature, head space, dwell time, batter pick-up, drain weight, free fatty acid concentration, receiving temperature, percentage of salt, pH, raw material inspection, cook temperature, storage temperature, packaging integrity, coding, etc. Guidelines outlining the application of HACCP when preparing the Level 3 Food Quality Plan are outlined in 9.0 The SQF Practitioner is required to maintain, validate and verify the Food Quality Plan. Further requirements regarding the verification and validation activities are set forth in section 4.5.

4.4.5 Incoming Goods and Services

Raw materials and services that impact on finished product safety and quality shall be supplied by an approved Supplier or inspected before use. The Supplier shall document responsibilities for monitoring Approved Suppliers and maintain records of Approved Supplier assessments and any needed follow up action. Methods for analyzing Raw materials and ingredients critical to product safety and quality shall conform to recognized standards.

Guidance

What does it mean?

In many businesses, the use of good Suppliers and/or the inspection of the Raw materials including any analysis as required, before they are used are the only means of preventing problems in Finished products. This element addresses the inspection of Raw materials including services such as transport contractors, contract cleaners or pest control agents.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.5.1 Approved Supplier Program for Raw materials Raw materials and Contract Services that impact on finished product safety and quality shall be supplied by an Approved Supplier. **4.4.5.2 Emergency Receipt of Raw materials** The receipt of Raw materials received from non-Approved Suppliers shall be acceptable in an emergency situation provided they are inspected or analyzed before use. **4.4.5.3 Raw materials Inspection** Inspections and analyses shall conform to the requirements outlined in 4.5.4. **4.4.5.4 Monitoring of Raw Material Suppliers** The selection, approval and monitoring of Approved Suppliers shall conform to the requirements outlined in 6.10.	**What do I need to do?** The objective of this element is to ensure that the measures to control the identified Raw Material hazards are adequate to ensure that the safety of the finished products is not compromised. You need to show documented evidence that Raw materials have been inspected or that they come from an Approved Supplier. The methods for selecting, evaluating, approving and monitoring an approved Supplier shall be documented. This could be as simple as a good supply history, sourcing from quality-assured Suppliers (e.g. SQF Certified Suppliers) or personally auditing/inspecting the Supplier's operations. You must require Raw Material Suppliers to verify they are complying with your specifications in the products they supply you. You are required to demonstrate that methods of analyses conform to recognized industry standards. The responsibility for Raw Material inspections and Supplier approval will need to be included in the job descriptions outlined in 4.1.3.2. When you purchase raw materials you must be able to demonstrate through an inspection protocol that you have received what you ordered. You need to keep records showing evidence that inspections and analyses of Raw materials have been completed and those records of the audit/inspection or oversight of services provided are filed for future review if needed. You must demonstrate that all methods of analysis used, conform to industry-recognized standards. You are required to address responsibilities for setting up and approving the methods used to evaluate and analyze Raw materials and prior approval of Approved Suppliers. You must maintain a list of Approved Suppliers, including contract service providers(e.g. pest control, cleaning services etc.)

4.4.6 Corrective and Preventive Action

Guidance

What does it mean?

When significant problems occur with your product quality or safety you must have a procedure that you follow to fix the problem, decide what to do with the affected product, and prevent it from happening again. The procedure must also include actions you would take in response to customer complaints and the need to recall product(s).

Note: Corrective Action is an important part of any management system. The important aspect of this element is to decide what problems are significant. Minor problems arise and are continually addressed all the time in any business. As a guide, significant problems must be those that compromise the product's safety or quality, or those that cannot be readily addressed and fixed immediately. This element requires a procedure that details who, what, when, where and how you address a significant problem. Addressing a significant problem requires you to look at immediate and preventative corrective actions.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.6.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Corrective Action The responsibility and methods outlining how Corrections and Corrective Actions are investigated, resolved, managed and controlled, including the identification of the cause and resolution of non-compliance of critical food safety and quality limits, shall be documented and implemented. **4.4.6.2 Records for Corrective Action** Records of investigations and resolution of Corrections and Corrective Action shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** When significant problems or issues that involve food safety and quality arise you are required to take corrective action and preventive action in a timely manner. You must document a procedure describing the responsibility for investigating and identifying the causes of problems, including a breakdown of critical limits relating to critical food safety and quality. Further, you must document how these problems are resolved, the methods you will use and what action is taken to prevent the recurrence of the problem. Corrections would be considered a "short term fix", a quick action taken to remediate a specific problem and make adjustments to regain immediate control. A corrective action would be a "long term fix" designed to identify the root cause of the problem, and to take actions that will prevent reoccurrence. This process is designed to minimize the risk that the situation will occur again. Corrections should be made when there is any observation within a facility that leads one to believe that product food safety or quality is at risk. After the correction is made, you must investigate to determine the root cause of the issue. When the root cause of the problem is identified, corrective actions can be taken. This type of preventive action helps to assure the continuous improvement of the system, resulting in fewer future problems since the root causes have been addressed. You are also required to maintain records of Corrections and Corrective Action taken. Essentially you are asked to outline and demonstrate how you will manage corrective action, identify who is responsible for managing it and describe what methods are used to resolve any safety or quality issues.

4.4.7 Non-Conforming Product or Equipment

Guidance

What does it mean?
Substantial effort will be wasted if sub-standard product is allowed to mix with quality product. Proper identification and isolation of rejected product helps to reduce the incidence of sub-standard product being released onto the market with the consequent expense of product recalls.

Note: This element can be addressed in a number of ways. First you should write a procedure that documents who, what, when, where, and how raw material and Finished product is handled. You must describe how you ensure that products do not get mixed up. This applies to the control of rejected, retained or quarantined Raw materials, work in progress and finished product. A key point is to design the procedures so that they can be easily understood.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.7.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Non-conforming Product The responsibility and methods outlining how non-conforming product or equipment detected during receipt, storage, processing, handling or delivery is handled shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure: i. Non-conforming product or equipment is quarantined, identified, handled and disposed of in a manner that minimizes the risk of inadvertent use, improper use or risk to the integrity of finished product; and ii. All relevant staff is aware of the organization's quarantine and release requirements applicable to equipment or product placed under quarantine status. **4.4.7.2 Records of Non-conforming Product** Quarantine records, and records of the handling and disposal of non-conforming product or equipment shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** You are required to document the procedure that outlines how you will label and identify products and equipment that are rejected or quarantined pending the results of inspection. Non-conforming product includes Raw materials that may be rejected or quarantined because they do not meet the specifications. In circumstances where Products are condemned you are required to detail how the condemned product is disposed of. You are also required to describe how you will isolate non-conforming product in order to avoid its shipment. Examples of non-conforming product could be finished product that does not meet specification, work in process that does not meet quality limits, raw materials that do not pass inspection or meet specification. Included in this section would also be equipment that has been found to be non-conforming. The equipment must be identified and placed out of production. The means of identification of non-conforming product and equipment must be communicated to relevant staff. This can be a system of tags, signs, designated storage locations, system holds or other methods that meet the intent of this section. You are required to keep all records of the disposition of non-conforming product and equipment including product that is Reworked, repackaged, condemned and/or disposed of.

4.4.8 Product Rework

The Supplier shall document a procedure outlining the responsibility and methods for how product can be reworked (if applicable), ensuring that the Reworked product meets the defined product safety and quality requirements, including customer specifications.

Guidance

What does it mean?

If your process allows product to be reworked, the process for reworking product must be defined and documented to ensure consistent application. This process must ensure that reworked products meet the same requirements as first run products.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.8.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Product Rework The responsibility and methods outlining how product is Reworked shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure: i. Reworking operations are supervised by qualified personnel; ii. Reworked product is clearly identified and traceable; iii. Each batch of reworked product is inspected or analyzed as required before release; iv. Inspections and analyses shall conform to the requirements outlined in 4.5.4; and v. Release of reworked product shall conform to the requirements outlined in 4.4.9. **4.4.8.2 Records of Product Rework** Records of all reworking operations shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** The objective of this element is to ensure the products which are Reworked are of the same quality and standards as first run product. You need to provide documented evidence that your product has been reworked under qualified supervision. The product is to retain traceability and be clearly identified. Each lot is released only after inspection. An important element of the rework procedure is the criteria for determination when product is to be reworked, how much can be reworked, under what conditions may it be reworked, how is it to be identified and traced. Product, after being reworked, must be reviewed per company-designated food safety and quality checks to ensure that it meets all applicable specifications. Records of all Reworking operations shall be maintained.

4.4.9 Product Release

The Supplier shall document a procedure outlining the responsibility and protocols for the release of finished product to ensure customer and regulatory requirements have been met.

Guidance

What does it mean?
The Supplier is required to document the method it will use to release Products only after they have been approved for release.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.9.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Product Release The responsibility and methods for releasing product shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure product is released. The responsibility and methods outlining how product is reworked shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure product is released: i. By authorized personnel; ii. Once all inspections and analyses are successfully completed and documented to verify legislative and other established food safety controls have been met; and iii. Once sensory analysis and evaluations are satisfactorily completed to verify customer specifications have been met. **4.4.9.2 Records of Product Release** Records of all product released shall be maintained. *Note: The successful completion of in-line process control checks to demonstrate product complies with specified requirements is acceptable provided those control measure are outlined.*	**What do I need to do?** You are required to document a procedure outlining the responsibility and protocols for the release of Products. You may do this by outlining in-line process measures that demonstrate that products are compliant with specified requirements. In this procedure you will identify those personnel responsible for collecting samples and carrying out inspections, or ensuring that inspections are carried out . You must outline the procedure for releasing products from "quarantine" or "hold" status. You must identify those staff positions with responsibility for releasing Products and indicate the action they will take when results are outside specification, including reference to other procedures for holding, Reworking or disposing of product. You must ensure that: • All Products released from "quarantine" or "hold" status, and their dispositions are recorded; • All staff is familiar with product release procedures and that personnel authorized to release product are aware of their responsibilities; and that • All Product under "quarantine" or "hold" status is released by authorized personnel only after the product has successfully passed inspection. All products released from hold status must have records maintained. These records should record the product name and identification, amount of product that was held, reason for the hold, and the product disposition. Records should be reviewed routinely to ensure that holds are "closed out". Any product that is still "on-hold" must be physically or visually verifiable.

4.4.10 Stock Rotation

The Supplier shall document and implement a stock rotation program to assure optimal product quality and freshness that meets both the Supplier's and their customer's requirements outlining the responsibility and protocols for effective stock rotation principles.

Guidance

What does it mean?

The Supplier is required to document and implement a stock rotation program that outlines responsibility and a program that meets both the Supplier's requirements and the customer's requirements.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.4.10.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Stock Rotation The responsibility and methods for ensuring effective stock rotation principles are applied and implemented.	**What do I need to do?** You must outline persons and/or positions responsible for documenting and implementing the rotation program. Substitute this: You must implement a stock rotation program and document that program in a written procedure. The position responsible for implementing and maintaining the program must be clearly defined Your program must meet your needs and your customer's requirements. A stock rotation is different than the "first in, first out" (FIFO) program. It is designed to manage product shelf life and codes based on customer specifications, conditions of the product, storage locations, and inventory management. The criteria that determines when products are not to follow the FIFO process should be defined so that proper stock rotation can be achieved by the facility

4.5 Verification.

Note: Verification of the effectiveness of monitoring activities is a key component of the SQF system.

4.5.1 Responsibility, Frequency and Methods

Guidance

What does it mean?
You must document the methods, responsibilities and criteria you use to verify the effectiveness of your monitoring program.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.5.1.1 SQF Practitioner Role in Verification Validation and verification activities outlined in 4.5 shall be the responsibility of the SQF Practitioner. **4.5.1.2 Validation of Critical Limits** The frequency and methods used to validate and verify critical limits established for those hazards associated with the source, storage and use of production inputs, and the application of Pre-requisite Programs shall be documented and implemented. **4.5.1.3 Verification of Food Safety & Quality Controls** The frequency and methods used to verify that each critical control point and other food safety and quality controls identified in Food Safety Plans and Food Quality Plans achieve their intended purpose, and are controlled as designated shall be documented and implemented. **4.5.1.4 Verification Activities** Verification shall include those activities outlined under 4.5.2 to 4.5.6.	**What do I need to do?** SQF Practitioner shall be responsible for verifying and/or validating: • Pre-requisite Programs (Review and sign-off) • Critical Food Safety and Quality Limits • Monitoring Activities for: o Pre-requisite Programs o Critical Control Points o Critical Quality Points o Other Food Safety Programs • Sampling, Inspection and Analysis: o Raw materials o Finished product o Work in Progress • Scheduling and conduction internal audits Verification is the proving that you are doing what you say that you are doing. Validation is the proving that what you are doing is working and effective. Examples of verification of programs could include review of inspection records to ensure all monitoring tasks are completed at the frequency that is defined, ensuring that internal audits occur at the frequency defined. Examples of validation could be internal studies to prove effectiveness of critical limits as stated in the implementation guidance for Section 6.9.2. Other examples could be verifying product temperature on a scheduled thermal process, microbiological testing of product to ensure desired reduction of product rinse system and product quality panel reviews for finished product. SQF Practitioner shall be responsible for establishing a frequency schedule and methods for verifying and validating the programs above. An SQF Consultant may be utilized by the facility to aid in verification activities; however, ultimate responsibility for verification and validation must belong to the SQF Practitioner.

4.5.2 Validation

Validation of Pre-requisite Programs and critical food safety and quality limits is vital to ensuring that the programs and limits achieve their intended purpose, resulting in the production of safe quality food.

Guidance

What does it mean?
The SQF Practitioner must assure that a protocol for validating pre-requisite Programs and critical Food Safety and Food Quality limits is developed, implemented and maintained.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.5.2.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Validation The methods, responsibility and criteria for validating Pre-requisite Programs and critical food safety and quality limits to ensure they achieve their intended purpose shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure that: i. Critical limits are selected to achieve the designated level of control of the identified food safety hazard(s) or threat to the achievement of food quality; and ii. All Critical limits and control measures individually or in combination effectively provide the level of control required. **4.5.2.2 Records of Validation** Record of all validation activities shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** Your SQF Practitioner is responsible for documenting and implementing the methods, responsibility and criteria for validating Pre-Requisite Programs and critical food safety and quality limits to ensure they achieve their intended purpose. You must demonstrate how your validation methods ensure that the selected critical limits achieve the level of control required for the targeted food safety hazard or threat to product quality. You must also have documentation showing that the methods and control measures provide the level of control needed. Potential methods for validating the effectiveness of specific Pre-requisite programs are listed below. The implementation of these specific methods is not necessarily required, but validation of the effectiveness of the program is required. 1. Personnel Practices: Observe employees on your internal audit to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of your program 2. Personnel Processing practices: Observe employees on your internal audit to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of your program 3. Training of Personnel: Interview employees to ensure that job training has bee effective and that key points are understood. 4. Calibration of Equipment: Engage an outside contractor to confirm that equipment is properly calibrated. 5. Management of Pests and Vermin: Trend pest activity information to determine that the program is effective. 6. Premises and equipment maintenance: Trend equipment breakdowns for signs of repeat problems. 7. Cleaning and inspection: Perform environmental testing to ensure that microbiological loads are acceptable. 8. Water Microbiology and Quality: Perform water testing to ensure that it meets potability standards. 9. Control of physical contaminants: Validate the effectiveness of a metal detector by inserting a test piece into a product and confirming that the product is rejected. 10. Supplier Approval: Test product to confirm Certificates of Analysis. 11. Transport and Delivery: Insert temperature recording devices onto transport vehicles to validate proper temperature. 12. Waste management and disposal: Monitor these areas as part of self inspection. 13. Allergen control: Validate the effectiveness of cleaning programs using rapid allergen testing methods. Validation methods for CCP's or CQP's must demonstrate that the hazard is adequately controlled. Possible validation for intervention steps used in the processing of product, such as a "kill" step must be one of the following: 1. Scientific literature; 2. Peer-reviewed published research; 3. In-house or laboratory challenge studies; 4. Reference to legally defined CCP's such as for the pasteurization of milk. If technology is being used in a manner that is different from what is described within literature or research, then the Supplier must demonstrate how the revised manner of use conforms to the original claim of intervention.

	Validation is required for both CCP's and CQP's. Validation of a CQP must prove that the chosen intervention controls the threat to the quality of the product. For example, if the product is a precooked, fully breaded fish fillet, and the identified threat to quality is that the product is too brown when cooked, then a control measure may be the size of the fillet. The facility should validate this be documenting, a study of piece size, and demonstrating the range of sizes that provide acceptable quality, based on cooking directions. All validation activities must be documented to confirm to the auditor that they have been completed. All validation activities must be documented to verify to auditor that they have been completed. Many have difficulties distinguishing the difference between validation and verification. A simple means to determine the differences is below: □ Verification – Are you following the prescribed procedures as they are written, or simply, are you doing what you say that you are doing? □ Validation – Do the prescribed procedures work? Is the process as it has been developed effective? Does it work?

4.5.3 Verification of Monitoring Activities

Guidance

What does it mean?
You must document the methods, responsibilities and criteria you use to verify the effectiveness of your monitoring program.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.5.3.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Verification of Monitoring The methods, responsibility and criteria for verifying the effectiveness of monitoring Pre-requisite Programs, critical control points, critical quality points and other food safety and quality controls identified shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure: i. Personnel with responsibility for verifying monitoring records sign and date each record verified **4.5.3.2 Records of Verification of Monitoring** Records of the verification of monitoring activities shall be maintained. *Note: A master sheet may be required to clearly align the signature to a persons name and position.*	**What do I need to do?** You must document the methods, responsibilities and criteria that you employ for verifying the effectiveness of monitoring Pre-requisite, critical control points and critical quality points. Examples of verification of monitoring include of review of temperature records to ensure that all monitoring activity tasks were completed and temperatures recorded were within critical limits. Other monitoring activities could include monitoring of weight records, product testing records, cook temperature records and in process quality checks. Electronic records can be used for monitoring activities. Suppliers must be able to demonstrate to auditor how records are reviewed for verification purposes. Each monitor must have a unique electronic signature so that it can be verified that records were recorded by individual as assigned. *Note: As discussed in Section 4.2, it is suggested that you maintain a "signature register" for all employees to avoid confusion as to the identity of the verifying signature of some documents*

4.5.4 Product Sampling, Inspection and Analysis

The Supplier shall document a procedure outlining the responsibility and method for sampling and analyzing Finished product to ensure it complies with customer and regulatory requirements and that any such sampling and analyses conforms to recognized standards.

Guidance

What does it mean?

During the normal course of food processing, product is sampled and analysed, either during or after production, to ensure that it meets the specifications and to verify food safety and quality aspects.

Note: You need to determine what raw materials and finished product must be analyzed (usually part of verification and detailed in the verification schedule). In determining the type of analysis the laboratory undertaking any test or analysis must be accredited to recognized standards. The methods and tests applied must also be referenced and control samples withheld to ensure follow up sampling if required. The procedure must include a plan and a schedule for sampling activities and designate individuals who will be responsible for them.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.5.4.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Product Testing The methods, responsibility and criteria for sampling, inspecting and/or analyzing Raw materials, finished product and work in progress shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure: i. Inspections and analyses are completed at regular intervals as required and to agreed specification and legal requirements; ii. Inspections are conducted to ensure Raw materials, work in process and finished products comply with the relevant specification, regulatory requirements, are true to label and comply with weights and measure requirements after shelf life trials are completed; and iii. All analyses are conducted to nationally recognized methods or alternative methods, which are validated as equivalent to the nationally recognized standards. **4.5.4.2 Records of Product Testing** Records of all inspections and analyses shall be maintained. **4.5.4.3 Methods and Responsibilities for Product Sensory Analysis** The methods, responsibility and criteria for analyzing and assessing product quality and sensory attributes shall be documented and implemented. The methods applies shall ensure: i. Sensory analysis and evaluations are completed after shelf life trials, as appropriate, and at intervals designed to demonstrate the products sensory characteristics are consistently being achieved; ii. Sensory evaluations comply with the relevant product sensory attributes specified by the customer; and iii. Sensory evaluations are conducted by trained personnel in accordance with established methods or as specified by the customer. **4.5.4.4 Records for Product Sensory Analysis** Records of all sensory evaluations and actions arising as a result of sensory evaluation shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** You are required to document a procedure outlining the methods you will establish to inspect Finished product and work in progress to ensure it meets the process or Finished product specification in relation to food safety and quality. Inspections, test or analysis of Finished product must be finalized before delivery to a customer. Finished product testing is to be defined by the a supplier and their customer. It is not the requirement of SQF or the SQF licensed Certification Body. You will identify those with responsibility for sampling, inspecting and testing Finished product and work in progress and identify the methods used to collect samples and complete these tests, inspection and analyses. The types of testing that are conducted on Finished product should be determined by the Finish Product Specification. Examples are varied and can include sensory analysis (taste, color, flavor, odor), physical (count, weight, size, texture), chemical (fat, salt, moisture, brix, pH), or microbiological (aerobic plate count, yeast and mold, coliforms, lactics). It should be noted that if pathogens (*Salmonella*, pathogenic *e. coli*, *Listeria*) are found on finished product, that product should not be released into the marketplace until test results are obtained and negative results are verified. If microbiological retesting is required, the sampling plan and retesting must be more robust than the original sampling plan to ensure the validity of results. It is not valid to simply retest a sample when results are obtained that are not desired by the facility. If external laboratory analysis is used you must demonstrate that such analysis is completed by a recognized laboratory using recognized industry standard methods. These methods may be described in the your specifications indicating that the laboratory is classified as an Approved Supplier to your business under clause 6.10. You will demonstrate that sampling of product for inspection or analysis is completed using recognized sampling methods. You must ensure that staff is qualified, trained and competent to complete sampling inspection and analyses and you will keep records of all inspections, tests and analyses made.

4.5.5 Internal Audit

The Supplier shall document its internal audit procedure and identify who is responsible for scheduling and conducting internal audits. The procedure shall include an audit schedule and audit scope. It shall detail the audit frequency and how audits are conducted to verify the effectiveness of the SQF 2000 System and SQF 2000 Plans. Persons conducting internal audits shall be trained in internal auditing procedures. Where possible auditors shall be independent of the area or function being audited. Records of internal audits, and any corrective action taken as a result of internal audits, shall be maintained.

Guidance

What does it mean?

Internal audits are an in-house check to make sure you are doing what you say you are doing, to identify weaknesses in the system and provide a sound basis for deciding on measures for improvement. Internal auditing is part of verification as outlined in the HACCP method, and when used effectively, can provide the basis for validating many pre-requisite programs. Internal auditing of the application of the Level 3 Food Safety and Food Quality Plans provides a means for measuring the effectiveness of those Plans. This element requires you to audit the activities in your system on a regular basis to ensure that everything is running smoothly. Internal audits help you to identify faults in your system so that it can be improved.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.5.5.1 Method and Responsibilities for Internal Audits The methods and responsibility for scheduling and conducting internal audits to verify the effectiveness of the SQF 2000 System including facility and equipment inspections, Pre-requisite Program, Food Safety Plans, Food Quality Plans and legislative controls shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure: i. An internal audit schedule is prepared detailing the scope and frequency of internal audits; ii. Correction and Corrective Action is taken; iii. Audit results are communicated to relevant management personnel and staff responsible for implementing and verifying Corrective Actions; and iv. Records of internal audits and any Corrections and Corrective Action taken as a result of internal audits shall be maintained. **4.5.5.2 Staff Conducting Internal Audits** Staff conducting internal audits shall be trained in internal audit procedures. **4.5.5.3 Staff Conducting Internal Audits Independent** Where possible staff conducting internal audits shall be independent of the function being audited. *Note: Facility inspections will include as a minimum the staff amenities, product and process controls, plant sanitation, the detection of potential foreign body hazards and personal hygiene practices.*	**What do I need to do?** You are required to prepare an internal audit procedure describing how internal audits of the entire SQF System will be conducted and identify who is responsible for scheduling and conducting internal audits. These internal audits must cover the application of Pre-requisite Programs and the critical food safety and quality controls you have implemented. You must also confirm that legislative requirements are being met, that inspections and tests are being conducted as required and that the premises, its surrounds and equipment are being maintained sanitarily and in good condition. The audit program must include: • An audit schedule (when audits will be conducted); • Audit criteria (the area and requirements assessed); • Responsibility (who will conduct the audit); • Corrections and Corrective actions (the response to the audit; also a review of the trace back system as outlined in 4.6.2 There should be some internal audit at least quarterly (4 times per year) within the facility or at least one per season, depending on the length of the season within the facility. The SQF auditor will verify that the audit schedule is adequate based on the observations from the facility assessment of the facility. Major physical or program non-conformances would require a more effective internal audit program. You must provide internal auditor training for personnel who conduct internal audits. The training will cover internal audit procedures including the planning and scheduling of internal audits, preparing internal audit reports and initiating and following up on audit findings. In order to be effective internal audits should combine several information gathering techniques, including interview of personnel, review of records and observation of current conditions. To ensure the objectiveness of the internal audit you are required, "where possible", to use personnel who are separate from the area being audited to conduct internal audits. The inclusion of the words "where possible" illustrates that in the case of some very small Suppliers this is not possible. In such cases you are required to demonstrate that the alternative internal audit arrangement meets the objective of this requirement and is communicated to all affected parties. Finally the outcomes of all internal audits, including any corrective actions taken, must be recorded. Any audit tool that is developed by the supplier can be utilized to perform the internal audits provided it covers the required areas and programs.

4.5.6 Verification Schedule

Regular verification of the SQF system is key to assuring that the Food Safety and Food Quality Plans remain effective.

Guidance	
What does it mean? This section simply requires that you regularly verify the effectiveness of your SQF system.	
SQF 2000 Requirement	**Implementation**
4.5.6.1 Verification Schedule A Verification Schedule describing the verification activities, their frequency of completion and the person responsible for each activity shall be prepared and implemented.	**What do I need to do?** Section 4.5.1 and 4.5.3 require that you define your verification activities. This section simply requires that you further identify when those activities will occur and who is responsible. You must have a verification schedule that: • describes your SQF system verification activities; • outlines the frequency of verification; • designates the person responsible for each verification activity; and • provides for a log of verification activity.

4.6 Product Identification, Trace, Withdrawal and Recall

4.6.1 Product Identification

Finished product and work in progress shall be clearly identified to the customer specification and/or regulatory requirements. The product identification system shall be documented. Product identification records shall be maintained.

Guidance

What does it mean?
In order to be properly labeled, a product package or container must display the correct product description, the name of the business and a code to facilitate trace back. The ability to effectively identify and trace its product is an important aspect of any food business. Food regulators, retailers, insurance companies and food manufacturers now insist that product be clearly identified.

Note: The Customer requirements, regulatory (including food labeling regulations) must be met and the SQF certification number may be included on the package (either in logo format or as a written statement). A general guide is to include the following on the label:

- Identification of Supplier or distributor;
- Name, type and variety of product in the package (include method of preservation);
- Count, size or weight;
- Code to facilitate trace back, which may be a date code
- Cooking/handling instructions (where applicable);
- Country of origin as required by legislation.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.6.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities for Product Identification The methods and responsibility for identifying product during all stages of production and storage shall be documented and implemented. The product identification system shall be implemented to ensure: i. Product is clearly identifiable during all stages of receipt, production, storage and dispatch; and ii. Finished product is labeled to the customer specifications and or regulatory requirements. iii. The effectiveness of the product identification system should be tested at least annually. **4.6.1.2 Records for Product Identification** Product identification records shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** You must be able to clearly identify product upon receipt, throughout the process and when it is finished product. Product that is still in process may be identified in a variety of ways. The facility could use bin tags, pallet tags, colors, product tags, etc. The facility must be able to demonstrate to the auditor how the product identification system works for work-in-progress and for finished product. The facility should expect that the auditor will select product at various stages during the process and ask for the origin of product, raw material supplier, etc. to test the identification system. The product label needs to contain information that accurately describes the product in accordance to customer specification and/or regulatory requirements. You are required to prepare a procedure outlining who is responsible for maintaining the product identification system and include in the procedure the methods you use to identify product. When shipping finished product you must ensure the product is clearly identified and that all product identification details are accurately described on dispatch documents or otherwise included with a shipment once it leaves your business.

4.6.2 Product Trace

Finished product shall be traceable to the customer. A product trace procedure shall be documented with responsibilities defined. It shall provide for the identification of Raw materials and other inputs that may have an impact on Finished product quality and safety. Raw materials and other inputs shall be traceable through the process to the Finished product. Records of product dispatch and destination shall be maintained.

Guidance

What does it mean?

The Supplier must make every attempt to reduce the chance of faulty or defective product reaching the customer. The swift removal of product from circulation can only be completed if the product is clearly identified and traceable. Being able to trace the composition of Finished product used (including the ingredients, food additives, and Processing Aids, etc,) back through the process can also assist in pinpointing problems.

Note: The ability to identify and trace product is an important aspect of any food business. Food regulators, retailers, insurance companies and food manufacturers now insist that product be traceable. You must document the method to be used to trace product ensuring that the method will provide a link to all raw inputs used. The documentation must assign responsibility for product dispatch and include the product name, when it was dispatched (sold), who was the customer (not including direct sales to consumers), the quantity and the production batch dates and details.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.6.2.1 Methods and Responsibilities for Product Trace The Senior Management responsibility and methods used to trace product shall be documented and implemented to ensure: i. Finished product is traceable to the customer (one up) and provides traceability through the process to Raw materials, food contact packaging and materials and other inputs (one back): ii. Traceability is maintained whenever product is reworked; and iii. The effectiveness of the product trace system should be tested at least annually. **4.6.2.2. Records of Product Trace** Records of product dispatch and destination shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** Your system must have a system that enables you to trace product back to your customer. You must develop a written procedure showing how you will accomplish this. The product trace system must account for Raw materials, Packaging Materials and Processing Aids used that may impact on food safety and quality. For the purpose of this section, your first customer is the first location where the product is delivered after it leaves your direct control. This can be a distribution center, customer location, broker, etc. It is not the requirement of the facility to be able to trace past the first customer. For the purpose of the SQF Code, traceability is a "one up, one back" requirement. Your procedure must include details of how all Raw materials, Packaging Materials and Processing Aids are "linked" through to the Finished product; and must outline how you will account for the reuse of Reworked product. The product trace procedure must outline how you will trace product to a customer and who is responsible for implementing and maintaining the product trace system. The SQF auditor will test the facility trace program during the audit simply by selecting a finished product or work in progress and ask for information on source of raw materials. A final requirement is that the product trace system must be tested at least annually and the methods used to test the system must be documented in the procedure. You are required to retain records of all product dispatched. Both he details of the product, and where and to whom it was dispatched must be recorded.

4.6.3 Product Withdrawal and Recall

A product recall system shall be documented in a procedure in which the responsibilities, management and procedures to be implemented are clearly described. The product recall system shall be tested and verified at least annually. Records of recall system tests, verifications and all product recalls shall be maintained.

Guidance

What does it mean?

All manufacturers are aware of the length and the complexity of the food supply chain. From the initial producer to the final consumer, raw materials can undergo a number of processes, and be transported over long distances before it is transformed into a final product ready for consumption. At any stage within this long and complex supply chain, food can become unsafe and cause severe public health and financial consequences. Whilst every effort is made to ensure processes lead to the supply of safe food, recalls are incidents that do occur when least expected. It is for this reason that a product recall procedure must be prepared, implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure everyone involved knows their role and their responsibility in the event of a recall. The recall procedure will cover various types of events. There may only be a need to inform the public of a problem and not recall the product. Circumstances may lead to the implementation of a voluntary recall to reassure consumers and to retain consumer confidence. A customer or a regulator may also impose the recall. In all cases the importance of a tried and tested recall procedure that clearly outlines who does what, how they do it and when cannot be underestimated.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.6.3.1 Method and Responsibilities for Product Withdrawal The Senior Management responsibility and methods used to withdraw or recall product shall be documented and implemented. The procedure shall: i. Identify those responsible for initiating, managing and investigating a product withdrawal or recall; ii. Describe the management procedures to be implemented including sources of legal and expert advice; and iii. Outline a communication plan to inform customers, consumers, authorities and other essential bodies in a timely manner appropriate to the nature of the incident.	**What do I need to do?** You must prepare a withdrawal and recall procedure describing the methods, responsibilities and management procedures you will implement in the event of a product withdrawal or recall. The procedure will contain a description of incidents (specific to your product) that may trigger a withdrawal or recall and include an up-to-date list of customers, regulators and other essential contacts that need to be notified in the event of a withdrawal or recall. It will also outline the methods you will implement to investigate the cause of a withdrawal or recall. The Supplier is to have identified a current "Product Withdrawal Team" that contains all pertinent contact information for team members. You are required to review and test your withdrawal and recall procedure at least annually and verify that the instructions continue to be relevant, that it is effective and efficient and that everyone understands their role. You are required to maintain records of all withdrawals and recalls and the results of testing of the withdrawal and recall procedure. Records for the testing of the withdrawal must include all supporting documentation used to identify product included within the withdrawal. These records can include production records, raw materials receiving records, rework records, product holds, and product storage and distribution records. The Supplier should test product that has already been released so that full distribution traceability can be verified. In the event that a facility has a real recall, a test withdrawal to verify the SQF system will still be required annually. The Supplier should provide a summary of the results of the annual test of the withdrawal of the system. A target for success of the withdrawal exercise would be 100% of product identified within 24 hours or per customer specification or regulatory requirement. Any non-conformances identified during the exercise should be investigated by facility and have required corrective action completed, with a follow up test completed to ensure that corrective actions were effective. SQF Auditor should review the annual test of withdrawal system. During this review, auditor should verify that raw materials are "linked" to finished products and on to first customer. Withdrawal exercise should be able to demonstrate linkage of raw materials through the process to the facilities first customer. This review of the withdrawal system is, therefore, also a review of the trace back system as outlined in 4.6.2.
4.6.3.2 Investigation for Cause of the Withdrawal Investigation shall be undertaken to determine the cause of a withdrawal or recall and details of investigations and any action taken shall be documented.	
4.6.3.3 Product Withdrawal System Tested The product withdrawal and recall system shall be reviewed tested and verified at least annually.	
4.6.3.4 Records of Product Withdrawal Records of all product withdrawals and recalls shall be maintained.	

4.7 Site Security.

4.7.1 Food Defense

The Supplier must document and implement a plan to assure the security of the facility from sabotage or terrorist incidents.

Guidance

What does it mean?
This element requires that you have a plan for preventing food adulteration caused by a deliberate act of sabotage or terrorist activity.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.7.1.1 Method and Responsibilities for Product Defense The methods, responsibility and criteria for preventing food adulteration caused by a deliberate act of sabotage or terrorist like incident shall be documented, implemented and maintained. A food defense protocol shall be prepared and include: i. The name of the Senior Management person responsible for Food Defense; ii. The methods implemented to insure only authorized personal have access to manufacturing and storage areas through designated access points; iii. The methods implemented to protect sensitive processing points from intentional adulteration; iv. The measures taken to ensure the secure storage of Raw materials, packaging, equipment and hazardous chemicals; v. The measures implemented to ensure finished product is held under secure storage and transportation conditions; and vi. The methods implemented to record and control access to the premise by employees, contractors, and visitors.	**What do I need to do?** You must prepare, implement and maintain a food defense protocol that outlines the methods, responsibility and criteria for preventing food adulteration caused by deliberate acts of sabotage. This plan must be reviewed, at minimum, on an annual basis. You must designate a member of Senior Management who has responsibility for food defense. This responsible individual must assure that there are procedures in place for recording and controlling access to areas of the facility by employees, contractors and Visitors. The protocol must identify how you limit access to designated areas of the operation to only appropriately authorized employees. You must implement steps to protect sensitive processing points from intentional contamination. The protocol should explain how your company ensures the secure storage and transportation of raw materials, packaging, equipment, hazardous chemicals and Finished product. Specific areas of program that must be addressed include: • Employee identification • Visitor, contractor, tour access • Facility physical security (secured doors, windows, outside storage areas) • Secured chemical storage • Sensitive areas of processing identification and restriction of access • Secured storage of ingredients, packaging and equipment not in use • Secured storage and transportation of finished product The program must define how these areas are to be addressed. The Supplier is free to develop adequate measures to address these specific areas to ensure control through a wide variety of solutions. The supplier must demonstrate to SQF auditor how their specific controls address the intent of the SQF program requirements.

4.8 Identity Preserved Foods.

4.8.1 General Requirements

Guidance

What does it mean?
The Supplier shall ensure that foods claiming special attributes and raw materials used to achieve those special attributes are handled, stored, transported, segregated and properly labeled to prevent comingling with other foods and raw materials that do not have the same attributes.

SQF 2000 Requirement	Implementation
4.8.1.1 Method and Responsibilities for the Identity of Preserved Products The methods and responsibility for the identification and processing of products requiring the preservation of their identity preserved status shall be documented and implemented. **4.8.1.2 Statement of Identity Preserved Products** Identification shall include a statement of the products identity preserved status of all ingredients, including additives, preservatives, processing aids and flavorings. **4.8.1.3 Raw materials Specifications for Identity Preserved Products** Raw Material and ingredient specifications to identify preserved foods shall include requirements for their handling, transport, storage and delivery prior to use. **4.8.1.4 Assurances of Raw materials for Identity Preserved Products** Assurances concerning the Raw Material or ingredients identity preserved status shall be by agreement with the supplier as described under 4.3.5. **4.8.1.5 Process Description for Identity Preserved Products** The process description shall allow for a products identity preserved status to be maintained with manufacturing carried out in line with the controls described in 5.5.5. **4.8.1.6 Legal Declaration of Identity Preserved Products** The identity preserved status shall be declared in accordance with current legal requirements. **4.8.1.7 Customer Requirements Concerning Identity Preserved Products** Customer requirements concerning identity preserved foods shall be included in the finished product specification described in 4.3.6 and implemented by the Supplier. *Note: Identity preserved foods include but are not limited to Kosher, Halal, ingredients containing allergen and sensitizing agents, organic and Genetically Modified Organisms.*	**What do I need to do?** You must have written procedures stipulating who is responsible for ensuring that products are not comingled. You must have written procedures that detail how you will accomplish the prevention of comingling of foods and Raw materials claimed to have special attributes. In your product identification, you must have a statement identifying the identity preserved products. Examples of claims that would fall under this criteria include organic, kosher, free range, Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) free, halal, etc. Note, allergen control is specifically addressed in 6.13. You must have written procedures detailing how Raw materials that are key to identity preserved products are separated to prevent comingling with generic Raw materials during handling, transport, storage and delivery prior to use. Assurances concerning raw materials' or ingredients' identity preserved status are in agreement with the supplier as described under 4.3.5 A product process description shall allow for a product's identity preserved status to be maintained with manufacturing carried out in line with controls in 5.5.5 The identity preserved status shall be declared in accordance with regulatory requirements. Customer requirements concerning identity preserved products shall be included in the Finished product specification described in 4.3.6 and implemented by you. You must have appropriate licenses, certification or contracts allowing you to use another company's logos or trademarks. Example; Kosher symbol, organic certifying bodies, etc. If the supplier has a current certification from an appropriate authority or regulatory authority for the claim that is being made, the auditor does not need to audit this section, but should note the presence and type of certificate in the audit report.

SECTION 5: SQF 2000 SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Contents

Section 5.0 Food Safety Fundamentals: Building and Equipment Design and Construction

SQF Requirement	Guidance
This Section 5 provides detail of the Building and Equipment Construction and Design Requirements referred to in 4.4.2.2) as inserted below: (4.4.2.2 the premises, building and equipment shall be located, constructed and designed to facilitate the proper manufacture, handling, storage and delivery of safe, quality food.) *Note: Exclusions to these requirements or alternative methods of control are permitted however they are to be supported by a detailed risk analysis outlining the basis for any exclusion or alternative control measure to demonstrate food safety and quality (level 3) is not compromised.*	**What do I need to know?** Food intended for human consumption must be produced, processed and handled in a safe and hygienic manner. In order to accomplish this, food processing premises shall be designed to facilitate proper processing, handling, and storage of product. Section 5 outlines the general requirements for the construction of premises and equipment in which food is processed, handled, stored and/or transported with guidance on each aspect provided where applicable to assist in the understanding of various requirements. While the SQF requirements for section 5 are "Shall do…" and MUST be accomplished where applicable to your specific food processing operation, the note under 5.0 provides a method to seek exclusion where practical provided the exclusion is supported by a detailed risk analysis. This is your responsibility to develop and present to your approved Certification Body SQF Auditor for approval when questioned. When a requirement cannot be met, a processing facility should complete a risk analysis describing alternative food safety and quality controls to address the requirements of the code alternative food safety/quality controls to address the requirement of the code. The risk analysis should focus on portion of the standard that cannot be achieved, the risk associated with not meeting the identified portion, the control mechanisms that the facility will be implementing to adequately control the identified risks and the validation that the controls as identified will indeed adequately minimize the risks to the process and product.

5.1 Site Requirements and Approval.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.1.1 Premises Location **5.1.1.1 Location of Premises Hygienic** The location of the premises shall be such that adjacent and adjoining buildings, operations and land use do not interfere with safe and hygienic operations. **5.1.1.2 Maintenance of Suitable Location** Where measures have been established to maintain a suitable external environment, the efficiency of the established measures shall be validated, monitored and periodically reviewed. *Note: An example includes the maintenance of dusty environments.* *(See section 5.10)* **5.1.2 Construction and Operational Approval** The construction and ongoing operation of the premises on the site shall be approved by the relevant authority.	**What do I need to do?** Local government authority, in approving the premises as a food processing facility, will take the overall location into consideration; however, the Supplier must be satisfied that the premises and its surroundings can be kept reasonably free of outside contaminants. The Supplier shall maintain instructions, procedures, etc. that verify control of external environmental conditions, if applicable, that require control for the safety or quality of the process and/or product produced. *(Documentation may also include: any documentation from local, state, federal, Country or international governing bodies)* Plans and specifications submitted to a local authority for approval would normally include: • Locality map showing the site in relation to the area; • Site plan showing all salient features of the site and a description of adjoining sites including the location of the premises north compass points, roads, storm water, waste water; • Floor plans showing the layout of the premises, processing areas, permanent fixtures, and layout of equipment; • Details of major items of equipment used in the processing area; • A diagram of product/process flow; • Specifications generally include details of construction materials, surface finishes (walls, floors, ceilings, etc.), product contact surfaces, essential services and the number of personnel; • Refrigeration equipment and operating temperatures of cold storage rooms, storage capacity and the means of loading into and out of cold stores should also be included. All applicable certificates or inspection documents from local, state, federal or international governing agency shall be current and kept on file.

5.2 Food Handling Areas.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.2.1 Materials and Surfaces Product contact surfaces and those surfaces not in direct contact with food shall be constructed of materials that will not contribute a food safety risk.	**What do I need to do?** The main features of an acceptable product contact surface are: that it be impervious to liquid, non-corrodible, smooth, easy to clean, non toxic and impact resistant. Stainless steel, aluminum, hot- dipped galvanized steel, fiberglass, polyvinyl chloride and nylon are examples of approved product contact surfaces. All other surfaces must be capable of being kept clean and preferably be light colored. Documentation that product contact surfaces are in good condition can be accomplished by making this item a part of a Monthly Facility's Checklist or other type of checklist.
5.2.2 Floors, Drains and Waste Traps **5.2.2.1 Floor Construction** Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that can be effectively graded, drained, impervious to liquid and easily cleaned.	The use of wood pallets in high risk, wet processing facilities should be minimized. The Supplier must demonstrate that it is their practice to assess, identify and control any food safety risk to product. assess and control the risks to products to control
5.2.2.2 Floor Drainage Floors shall be sloped to floor drains at gradients suitable to allow the effective removal of all overflow or waste water under normal working conditions.	Documentation of floor materials shall be included in the site plan or description of the plant/processing area. Floors shall be provided with proper drainage. Drains should be positioned and constructed to allow the effective removal of overflow or waste water under normal working conditions. Where drainage and gradients are not ideal, a written SOP shall address the timely and effective removal of waste water to a drain.
5.2.2.3 Drains Drains shall be constructed and located so they can be easily cleaned and not present a hazard.	Drains shall be easily accessible for cleaning. Grates should be removable for access and cleaning.
5.2.2.4 Waste Traps Waste trap systems shall be located away from any food handling area or entrance to the premises.	
5.2.3 Walls, Partitions, Doors and Ceilings **5.2.3.1 Walls and Door Construction** Walls, partitions, ceilings and doors shall be of durable construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious with a light colored finish.	For efficiency and ease of cleaning, walls with a cement render and smooth finish, glazed tiles, fabricated insulated panels or similar materials are examples of acceptable surfaces. Where light colored finishes do not exist, a written SOP shall address the timely and effective inspection of adequacy of cleaning and resultant corrective actions when discrepancies are noted if found.
5.2.3.2 Wall Junctions Wall to wall and wall to floor junctions shall be designed to be easily cleaned, sealed and rounded to prevent the accumulation of food debris.	Where floor junctures in older facilities are not rounded to enable easy cleaning and prevent the build up of waste, a written SOP shall address the cleaning protocol in place to meet acceptable hygienic standards for these areas.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.2.3.3 Ducting, Conduits and Pipes Ducting, conduit and pipes that convey services such as steam or water shall be recessed into walls or ceilings; suspended from ceilings to service processing operations or mounted a sufficient distance from walls or ceilings to allow ease of cleaning. *Note: Extended runs of piping are unavoidable in some operations such as dairies and beverage processing and the application of 5.2.3.2 needs to be considered in the context of those operations.* **5.2.3.4 Doors, Hatches and Windows** Doors, hatches and windows and their frames shall be of a material and construction which meets the same functional requirements for internal walls and partitions. i. Doors and hatches shall be of solid construction; and ii. Windows shall be made of shatterproof glass or similar material. **5.2.3.5 Ceilings** Food shall be processed and handled in areas that are fitted with a ceiling or other acceptable structure that is constructed and maintained to prevent the contamination of product. **5.2.4 Stairs, Catwalks and Platforms** **5.2.4.1 Stairs, Catwalks & Platforms Construction** Stairs, catwalks and platforms in food processing and handling areas shall be designed and constructed so as not to present a product contamination risk. **5.2.5 Lighting and Light Fittings** **5.2.5.1 Sufficient Lighting** Sufficient lighting shall be provided in food processing and handling areas. **5.2.5.2 Lighting Intensity** Lighting in processing areas and at inspection stations shall be of appropriate intensity to enable the staff to carry out their tasks efficiently and effectively.	**What do I need to do?** A build up of dust and other residues and waste can accumulate on long runs of horizontal piping and present potential food safety hazards. Ducting, pipes and conduits should be recessed into walls and ceilings whenever practical. Where this is not possible, it is good practice to mount them at least 25 mm away from the wall to allow ease of cleaning. Remember to include exposed horizontal conduits, pipes and ducts in your cleaning program. Do this by developing a standard operating procedure that provides for periodic and effective cleaning of duct work, conduit and piping. The SOP should direct particular attention to those areas where the lines run close to the structure or equipment. Today's food premises design excludes windows in food processing areas. In older premises identify any windows that, if shattered, could pose a hazard to unpackaged product. Windows away from the immediate processing areas are generally not recognized as posing a hazard to packaged food. Windows such as skylights that are located immediately above product processing or packaging areas can pose a hazard. Such windows must be constructed of shatterproof material or otherwise covered to prevent glass or plastic fragments from entering product packaging. A good practice is to have the window sills be sloped downwards at an angle of 45° for ease of cleaning and prevent them from being used for unwanted storage of utensils or other materials. Additionally they should be at least 1.2 m above floor level and be pest/fly proofed if applicable. Doors routinely subjected to water should be of solid construction, impact-resistant, composed of non-corrosive materials preferably with smooth light-colored surface. Doors between processing rooms used to transport food for processing should be protected against damage by crates, trolleys, folk lifts or similar traffic. The need to protect windows and other glass and brittle plastic shall be required in the processing area and vicinity only. There must be a risk of product adulteration if the glass or brittle plastic would be broken. For windows not in the processing area, there is no need for protection. Walls, partitions, doors, and ceilings shall be described in the site plan for the facility. Ceiling design and construction should pose no threat of product contamination All stairs, catwalks, and platforms that are positioned over any portion of the processing area will be constructed so that they do not present a product contamination risk. The materials used should be rust proof and be easy to clean. Solid side plates (curbs) at least 100 mm (4 inches) height shall be installed and the stairs shall have slip-resistant tread. Lighting shall provide the minimum lux intensity as prescribed by any applicable legislation or in their absence, meet good manufacturing best practices appropriate to the commodity being processed. In general, processing and food handling areas shall be illuminated to a minimum intensity of 100 lux. Inspection areas require higher illumination and 200 lux is generally recommended.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.2.5.3 Light Fittings Light fittings shall be shatterproof, manufactured with a shatterproof covering or fitted with protective covers and/or recessed into or fitted flush with the ceiling. *Note: Suspending a light fitting from the ceiling is acceptable provided the material used to suspend the lights is non-corrodible and the fittings are accessible for cleaning.*	**What do I need to do?** Light fittings in food processing and handling areas are required to be fitted with protective covers or have shatterproof lights installed. Documentation that must be kept on file includes: invoices from the manufacturer with a description of the product. An acceptable practice is to recess the light into the ceiling where possible or have it fitted flush to the ceiling. In circumstances where light fittings are suspended from cables, the top of the fitting is sloped to an angle of approximately 45°F to enable easy cleaning. See note under 5.2.5.3 for exception requirements.
5.2.6 Inspection Area	
5.2.6.1 Inspection Area Designated A suitable area within the processing area shall be provided for the inspection of product if required.	Inspection areas shall be provided when online inspection is required for the commodity being processed. This will prevent potential contamination of the processing line and other products.
5.2.6.2 Facilities The inspection area shall be provided with facilities that are suitable for examination of the style product being processed. The inspection area will have: i. Easy access to hand washing facilities; and ii. Sufficient lighting intensity to enable as thorough inspection of the product as required.	Lighting intensity shall be maintained at a minimum of 500 lux is generally recommended. Alternatively, use what is prescribed by applicable legislation for product inspection areas.
5.2.7 Dust, Fly and Vermin Proofing	
5.2.7.1 External Openings All external windows, ventilation openings, doors and other openings shall be effectively sealed when closed and proofed against dust, vermin and flies.	Doors opening directly into processing areas must be effectively sealed to prevent dust and/or the entry of pests.
5.2.7.2 Personnel Access Personnel access doors shall be provided. They shall be effectively fly proofed and fitted with a self closing device.	Doors used for personnel access shall be self-closing unless used for fire exit only.
5.2.7.3 Other Access Points External doors used for product access shall be fly-proofed by at least one or a combination of the following methods: i. A self-closing device; ii. An effective air curtain; iii. A fly-proof screen; and iv. A fly-proof annex.	
5.2.7.4 Pest Control Devices Electric insect control devices, pheromone or other traps and baits shall be located so as not to present a contamination risk to product, packaging, containers or processing equipment.	All pest devices used must be approved and used per applicable legislation so as not to present a contamination risk to the product, packaging, containers or equipment.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.2.8 Ventilation	**What do I need to do?**
5.2.8.1 Adequate Ventilation Adequate ventilation shall be provided in enclosed processing and food handling areas.	Washer steam shall be adequately ventilated to the outside. Ventilation in enclosed food processing areas must meet applicable design and construction legislation and ensure that no condensation is present over food and/or the surfaces of food contact equipment.
5.2.8.2 Cooking Areas Extractor fans and canopies shall be provided in areas where cooking operations are carried out or a large amount of steam is generated and shall have the following features; i. Capture velocities shall be sufficient to prevent condensation build up and to evacuate all heat, fumes and other aerosols to the exterior via an exhaust canopy positioned over cooker; ii. Fans and exhaust vents shall be fly proofed and located so as not to pose a contamination risk; and iii. Where appropriate, positive air-pressure systems shall be installed to prevent air-borne contamination.	This applies to cooking areas only and is self-explanatory.
5.2.9 Equipment, Utensils and Protective Clothing	Food processing equipment shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with manufacturer and/or industry standards. Metal frames, supports and brackets supporting sinks, wash basins, benches, tables, tables and shelves are generally constructed of solid materials such as hot dipped galvanized iron, stainless steel or aluminum. They shall be securely fixed to the walls or on metal frames. Materials should be smooth finished, free from angles, ledges and crevices and easy to clean. The open ends of tubular legs or rails shall be sealed to prevent the accumulation of process waste and residues. Wood is not used in a food processing or food handling environment as equipment unless specifically approved by applicable legislation for specific commodities (i.e. hard maple for dry bakery operations).
5.2.9.1 Equipment & Utensil Construction Equipment and utensils shall be designed, constructed, installed, operated and maintained so as not to pose a contamination threat to product.	
5.2.9.2 Processing Equipment Benches, tables, conveyors, mixers, minces, graders and other mechanical processing equipment shall be easily dismantled for cleaning and located so as not pose a hindrance to the cleaning of the premises. i. Equipment surfaces shall be smooth, impervious and free from cracks or crevices.	Where equipment is dismantled for cleaning, it should be designed free of loose bolts or nuts or other objects that could inadvertently find their way into a food protect.
5.2.9.3 Utensils Product containers, tubs, bins for edible and inedible material shall be constructed of materials that are non toxic, smooth, impervious and readily cleaned. Bins used for inedible material shall be clearly identified.	Containers (tubs, bins, etc.) used for inedible food or materials must be clearly identified (color coded or labeled). Containers previously used for pesticides, insecticides or other dangerous materials may not be re-used for product handling. Non-toxic utensils would be required to be food-grade. Any paint that is used in the facility can only be used on non-food contact surfaces, should be food-grade, and should be lead-free.
5.2.9.4 Equipment Drainage Waste and overflow water from tubs, tanks and other equipment shall be discharged direct to the floor drainage system.	

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.2.9.5 Protective Clothing Protective clothing shall be manufactured from material that is non toxic and easily cleaned. *Note: Protective clothing refers to aprons, gloves (rubber or wire mesh), boots, hard hats, arm guards and sleeves etc., and other items designed to prevent contamination or injury.*	**What do I need to do?** Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), if required to be used by applicable legislation, will be used in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and/or applicable legislation. This should be documented as part of written procedures where applicable.
5.2.10 Cleaning of Processing Equipment, Utensil and Protective Clothing	
5.2.10.1 Cleaning of Processing Equipment, Utensils and Protective Clothing Provision shall be made for the effective cleaning of processing equipment, utensils and protective clothing.	A written cleaning program shall be documented that includes provisions for effective cleaning (see 6.7 for additional guidance).
5.2.10.2 Utensils and Protective Clothing Suitably equipped areas shall be designated for cleaning product containers, knives, cutting boards and other utensils and for cleaning staffs protective clothing. These cleaning operations shall be controlled so as not to interfere with manufacturing operations, equipment or product. i. Racks and containers for storing cleaned utensils and protective clothing shall be provided as required.	The Supplier must provide a washing area with sufficient hot and cold running water, a suitable detergent, sanitizer and, when necessary, suitable racks for draining/drying equipment and protective clothing. These areas should be identified and constructed so they do not present a hazard to any food processing operations. Protective clothing racks may provide temporary storage for gloves, aprons, and other items when staff needs to leave the processing area for meals or other short breaks. Used disposable protective clothing must be immediately disposed of in appropriate manner. When non-disposable protective clothing is used, a written procedure will outline proper laundering practices.
5.2.11 Hand Washing Facilities	
5.2.11.1 Location of Hand Washing Facilities Hand wash basins shall be provided adjacent to all personnel access points and in accessible locations throughout food handling and processing areas as required.	It is a general requirement that hand wash basins be provided at each entry point to the processing area with instructions at the hand basin for all staff to wash hands immediately upon entering the processing area. Additional hand basins are required in areas where hands could become contaminated prior to working with product. (see 5.2.11.3 for additional guidance)
5.2.11.2 Hand Wash Stations Hand wash basins shall be constructed of stainless steel or similar non-corrodible material and as a minimum supplied with: i. A POTABLE WATER SUPPLY AT AN APPROPRIATE TEMPERATURE; ii. LIQUID SOAP CONTAINED WITHIN A FIXED DISPENSER; iii. PAPER TOWELS IN A HANDS FREE CLEANABLE DISPENSER; AND iv. A MEANS OF CONTAINING USED PAPER TOWELS. v. HANDS FREE OPERATED TAPS; AND vi. HAND SANITIZERS. The following additional facilities shall be provided in circumstances where foods are exposed, processed or considered High Risk.	Hand wash basins are constructed of stainless steel or similar non-corrodible material. Porcelain, when used in lieu of sinks constructed of stainless or plastic materials, shall be adequately distanced from food handling areas.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.2.11.3 Additional Hand Washing Stations Additional hand wash basins shall be provided adjacent to all personnel access points and in accessible locations throughout food handling and processing areas as required.	**What do I need to do?** Hands free operated taps can include foot, knee or elbow operated handles, auto sensing devices or any other method that does not require the user to touch the handle with their washed hands to turn it off.
5.2.11.4 Signage A sign advising people to wash their hands, and in appropriate languages, shall be provided in a prominent position adjacent to hand wash stations.	All hand basins shall have a hand wash sign clearly visible and legible. Signage may consist solely of "icons" such as those published by the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) to accomplish this requirement; with the exception of restroom signage where other regulatory requirements must be applied. Example: 
5.2.12 Protective Clothing Racks	
5.2.12.1 Temporary Storage of Protective Clothing Racks shall be provided for the temporary storage of protective clothing when staff leaves the processing area.	Racks should be included in written cleaning procedures.
5.2.12.2 Location of Protective Clothing Racks Protective clothing racks shall be provided in close proximity or adjacent to the personnel access doorways and hand washing facilities.	For convenience, the racks are provided in close proximity to or adjacent to the personnel access doorways and hand wash basins.
5.2.13 Vehicles	
5.2.13.1 Vehicles Designed so as Not to Present a Hazard Vehicles used in food contact, handling or processing zones or in cold storage rooms shall be designed and operated so as not to present a food safety hazard.	Any forklifts or pallet jacks used in the processing plant and cooler will be properly maintained. No diesel or gasoline-powered vehicles may have access to food processing areas. Carbon monoxide emissions from diesel or gasoline-powered vehicles (fork lifts) are toxic and pose health and safety risk to personnel, product and the environment. The general rule is to use vehicles that are powered by battery/electricity and are designed not to release any hydrocarbon emissions in food handling areas. LPG powered vehicles are acceptable in well-ventilated areas on the premises but should be used so that they do not pose a risk to products in food contact, handling or processing zones and cold storage areas. Specifically product which is exposed or absorbent and may absorb odors or fumes.

5.3 Water and Ice Supply.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.3.1 Water Supply	**What do I need to do?**
5.3.1.1 Adequate Supplies of Potable Water Adequate supplies of potable water drawn from a known clean source shall be provided for use during processing operations, as an ingredient and for cleaning the premises and equipment.	See Food Safety Fundamentals-Pre-requisite 6.8 for additional guidance on potable water requirements. Maintain all internal and external reports attesting to the quality and potability of the water supply. Water supply at the correct temperature and pressure prescribed by applicable legislation should be sufficient capacity for all scheduled production needs to include cleaning to meet hygienic compliance.
5.3.1.2 Hot and Cold Water Supplies of hot and cold water shall be provided as required to enable the effective cleaning of the premises and equipment.	
5.3.2 Water Delivery	
5.3.2.1 Water Delivery Not Contaminated The delivery of water within the premises shall ensure potable water is not contaminated.	Backflow prevention devices (vacuum breakers, air gaps, etc.) shall be installed on all water lines in the processing plant. Hoses used for washing down premises and equipment should be limited to 15 m (45 feet) where possible, and contained on a hose rack when not in use.
5.3.2.2 Non-potable Water The use of non-potable water shall be controlled such that: i. There is no cross contamination between potable and non-potable water lines; ii. Non-potable water piping and outlets are clearly identified; and iii. Non-return devices are installed in non-potable water lines to prevent back flow.	As a general rule non-potable water is not used in any food processing or handling area. At no time can non-potable water be substituted for potable water, where potable water is required to be used by applicable legislation. If non-potable water is used on the premises, a map indicating non-potable water lines shall be maintained and updated as needed. Descriptions of the mechanisms used to prevent cross contamination shall be fully described.
5.3.3 Ice Supply	
5.3.3.1 Ice from Potable Source in Processing Adequate supplies of ice derived from potable water shall be provided for use during processing operations or as a processing aid or an ingredient.	Ice used as an ingredient or processing aid or ice that comes into contact with food or food contact surfaces or equipment must meet potable water requirements, microbiological and quality standards as required. Ice storage areas, equipment and dispensing tools shall be easy to clean.
5.3.3.2 Ice Storage Ice rooms and receptacles shall be constructed of materials as outlined in 5.4.1 and designed to minimize contamination of the ice during storage and distribution.	
5.3.4 Water Treatment	
5.3.4.1 Treatment Methods, Equipment and Materials Water treatment methods, equipment and materials shall be designed, installed and operated to ensure water receives an effective treatment.	Refer to "Food Safety Fundamentals- Pre-requisites. 6.8.2 for additional guidance. Procedures should be written on any and all water treatment methods used within the premises. In-plant chlorination of water supplies is recommended to give a free residual chlorine level of 0.25 ppm after 20 minutes of contact time (or equivalent at the point of use). In-line chlorination to provide higher levels of free residual chlorine at specific points is also acceptable. Regular sampling and testing of residual chlorine shall be implemented to ensure a safe water supply. Other methods of bactericidal treatment such as ultra-violet lighting may be used. In all cases, a program of regular microbiological testing of water is required to verify that in-plant water treatment is effective.

5.4 Storage Facilities.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.4.1 Cold Storage, Freezing & Chilling of Foods	**What do I need to do?**
5.4.1.1 Performance The Supplier shall provide confirmation of the effective operational performance of freezing, chilling and cold storage facilities. Chillers, blast freezers and cold storage rooms shall be: i. Designed and constructed to allow for efficient refrigeration and ii. Easily accessible for inspection and cleaning.	Refrigeration equipment shall have the capacity to maintain an ambient temperature of 40°F, or below except when loading or unloading product from the cooler unless other temperatures prescribed by legislation designate other temperatures. During these operations, the average ambient temperature should return to 40°F, a short time after access doors are closed. A description of the refrigeration capacity should be included in the site plan. Verification may be demonstrated through historical temperature recordings.
5.4.1.2 Refrigeration Capacity Sufficient refrigeration capacity shall be available to chill, freeze, store chilled or store frozen the maximum anticipated throughput of product with allowance for periodic cleaning of refrigerated areas.	Refrigeration facilities will be capable of reducing temperatures of product at rates suitable to maintain food safety and/or quality or as prescribed by legislation appropriate to the commodities being processed.
5.4.1.3 Floors Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that is impervious to liquid and easily cleaned. Floors shall be effectively graded, to allow the effective removal of water under normal conditions.	Documentation of floor materials shall be included in the site plan or description of the plant/processing area. A written SOP shall address the timely and effective removal of water or excessive ice buildup. Dense waterproof concrete is the material generally used for flooring and should be smooth and graded to reduce water accumulation.
5.4.1.4 Wall, Ceilings, Doors, Frames and Hatches Wall, ceilings, doors, frames and hatches shall comply with the requirements outlined in 5.2.3.	Note 5.2.3 detailed guidance applicable to refrigeration rooms/areas. The tops of refrigerated rooms are to be covered with a rodent-proof material. Inaccessible cavities are to be sealed to prevent the access of rodents or other pests. Storage racks and shelving are to be constructed of a non corrosive material and easily cleanable. The product on these racks or shelves should be at least one inch (approximately 25mm) from walls and 6 inches (Approximately 150mm) off the floor to prevent contamination and allow for adequate air circulation around the product.
5.4.1.5 Light Fittings Light fittings shall comply with the requirements outlined in 5.2.5.2.	Note 5.2.5.3
5.4.1.6 Defrost and Condensate Lines Discharge from defrost and condensate lines shall be controlled and discharged to the drainage system.	Condensation from cooling equipment must be piped to the plant drainage system, or to the exterior of the building in a manner which does not contribute to standing water. When defrosting refrigeration units in a processing area, it is necessary that the timing of the defrosting should be such that it does not pose a threat to the sanitary conditions of the area or product.
5.4.1.7 Temperature Monitoring Equipment Cold storage rooms shall be fitted with temperature monitoring equipment and located so as to monitor the warmest part of the room and be fitted with a temperature recording device that is easily readable and accessible.	Monitoring and validation of the cooler temperature shall be done in accordance with the facility's Food Safety Plan or similar document. The facility shall be able to verify and validate cooling or storage temperatures prescribed by legislation. Manual monitoring of cold storage rooms on a predetermined frequency is acceptable provided there is a justification in place for the frequency and documentation is kept on file with corrective actions if applicable.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.4.1.8 Loading and Unloading Areas Loading and unloading docks shall be designed to protect product during loading and unloading.	**What do I need to do?** Where open docks exist, load and unload product in a manner which protects the premises, the product and/or packaging from inclement weather, pests and temperature abuse.
5.4.2 Storage of Dry Ingredient and Other Shelf Stable Packaged Goods	
5.4.2.1 Dry Goods & Ingredient Storage Light fittings shall comply with the requirements outlined in 5.2.5.2. Rooms used for the storage of product ingredients and other dry goods shall be located away from wet areas and constructed to protect the product from contamination and deterioration.	Light fittings in storage areas do not need to be shielded where there is no risk to product and all products are enclosed or cased. For product inspection, receiving, and repacking areas, light fixtures are required to be shielded as in processing and handling areas.
5.4.2.2 Light Fittings Light fittings shall comply with the requirements outlined in 5.2.5.2.	
5.4.3 Storage of Packaging	
5.4.3.1 Storage Rooms Storage of food packaging materials shall be separate and located away from wet areas and constructed to protect packaging from contamination and deterioration.	Store packaging and packing materials in designated storage areas which protect the materials from contamination and deterioration. Store these materials only in dry areas of the processing room when staged for use during processing. Assure that packaging storage areas are adequately protected from the elements, rodents and other pests. Packaging materials which become food contact surfaces must be protected from dust and other contaminates while in storage. This can be accomplished by the use of plastic wrap or other means to protect the packaging material.
5.4.3.2 Light Fittings Light fittings shall comply with the requirements outlined in 5.2.5.2.	
5.4.3.3 Storage Racks Racks provided for the storage of packaging shall be constructed of impervious materials and designed to enable cleaning of the floors and the storage room. Storage areas shall be constructed to prevent packaging becoming a harborage for rats, mice or other vermin.	The racks provided for the storage of packaging are generally constructed of impervious materials and designed to be easy-to-clean. You must limit the use of wooden racks for storage of packaging and packing materials to dry areas only. For storage areas follow guidance under 5.4.3.1. Stands and the lower shelf of stands should be at least 6 inches (150 mm) above floor level to facilitate proper cleaning.
5.4.4 Storage of Equipment and Receptacles	Chemicals and toxic substances must not be co-mingled with processing utensils and Packaging and/or Packing Materials.
5.4.4.1 Storage Rooms Designed Storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the efficient storage of equipment and receptacles.	
5.4.4.2 Separation Processing utensils and packaging shall not be stored in areas used to store hazardous chemicals and toxic substances.	

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.4.5 Storage of Hazardous Chemicals & Toxic Substances	**What do I need to do?**
5.4.5.1 Storage of Hazardous Chemical and Toxic Substances Hazardous Chemicals and Toxic Substances shall be stored so as not to present a hazard to staff, product, packaging, product handling equipment or areas in which product is handled, stored or transported. *Note: 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 that storage facility is restricted to authorized personnel*	Hazardous Chemicals and Toxic Substances include rodenticides, fumigants, and insecticides, cleaning chemicals, oils, grease and other maintenance-related substances must be stored in designated, separately secure storage areas. Chemical delivery systems installed in processing areas that utilize cleaning chemicals and sanitizers will be clearly labeled to identify their use and all chemical containers connected to these systems will remain connected while in use and identified through proper labels. Only personnel who have been properly trained in the use of the system will be authorized for access and use of the system.
5.4.5.2 Separation Pesticides, rodenticides, fumigants and insecticides shall be stored separate from sanitizers and detergents. All chemicals shall be stored in their original containers.	There must be clearly visible means of separation of these groups of chemicals or toxic substances. They should not be stored on the same shelf or above each other on the same rack. Bulk containers of hazardous chemicals or toxic substances must have in effect sufficient spill-proof procedures that ensure that no cross contamination can occur. There must be signage indicating this area is a hazardous storage area.
5.4.5.3 Storage Facilities Hazardous Chemical & 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 the storage area; viii. Have emergency shower and wash facilities available in the event of an accidental spill; ix. In the event of a hazardous spill, be designed such that spillage and drainage from the area is contained; and x. Be equipped with spillage kits and cleaning equipment.	Refer to the Product Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for specifics relative to handling of hazardous chemicals under Section 5.4.5.3. See note under 5.4.5.1 for handling daily supplies of hazardous chemicals. Employee safety issues will defer to the local regulatory authority on employee safety for specific requirements. Ensure that MSDS are readily available and accessible to personnel handling or coming into contact with hazardous chemicals. Ensure that personnel have been trained in the safe handling and use of all hazardous chemicals in use in the facility, as required by legislation.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.4.6 Alternative Storage and Handling of Goods **5.4.6.1 Risk Analysis for Alternative Goods** Where goods described in 5.4.1 to 5.4.5 are held under alternative storage conditions a risk analysis shall be undertaken to ensure there is no risk to the integrity of those goods or contamination or adverse affect on food safety and quality.	**What do I need to do?** Risk analysis if applied using alternate methods shall be documented and made available for review upon request. See 5.0 note.

5.5 Separation of Functions.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.5.1 Process Flow	**What do I need to do?**
5.5.1.1 Process Flow to Prevent Cross Contamination The process flow shall be designed to prevent cross contamination and organized so there is a continuous flow of product through the process.	The cooking and preparation of product is to take place in separate rooms, serviced by staff dedicated to that function only, but who have access to separate amenities, where possible. If these are not possible, a written procedure based on risk analysis will be made available describing what controls are in place to reduce risk of contamination by staff. Efforts will be made to provide one way flow of product to minimize risk of contamination between raw materials and finished product. Process flow should be documented as part of the food safety and quality plans.
5.5.2 Receipt of Raw materials	
5.5.2.1 Raw Material Prevention of Cross Contamination Dry ingredients and packaging shall be received and stored separately from frozen and chilled Raw materials to ensure there is no cross contamination. Unprocessed Raw materials shall be received and segregated to ensure there is no cross contamination.	This requirement is provided to control the risk of cross contamination between raw foods that may contain harmful bacteria and raw, unprocessed fresh foods and packaging upon receipt. Raw unprocessed fresh meats, fish or vegetables and other unprocessed fresh foods are to be handled and stored so as not to pose a contamination risk. Separate storage areas with suitable environmental controls (i.e. chilled storage) are required and precautions taken to prevent seepage or spillage from faulty packaging (i.e. such as damaged cartons).
5.5.3 Thawing of Product	
5.5.3.1 Thawing of Product 5.5.3.2 Thawing of product shall be undertaken in equipment and rooms appropriate for the purpose.	Thawing of product, if necessary, must be accomplished under controlled conditions to prevent potential bacteria growth when the thawed food temperatures move into the Danger Zone (DZ) (typically above 40°F) and remain in the DZ for greater than 4 hours (or per time prescribed by applicable legislation for the commodity being thawed). All thawing processes require some form of time and temperature monitoring to control this risk.
5.5.3.2 Water Thawing Equipment for water thawing shall be continuous flow to ensure the water exchange rate and temperature does not contribute to product deterioration or contamination. Water overflow shall be directed into the floor drainage system and not onto the floor.	

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.5.3.3 Air Thawing Air thawing facilities shall be designed to thaw product under controlled conditions at a rate and temperature that does not contribute to product deterioration or contamination. **5.5.3.4 Used Cartons and Packaging** Provision is to be made for the containment and regular disposal of used cartons and packaging so that there is no risk to product.	**What do I need to do?** See guidance offered above under 5.5.3.1. Generally separate rooms or equipment are made available for air thawing. At no time will product be thawed over night in rooms where the temperature is >40°F. Packaging used for raw refrigerated products can be a contamination source that could result in re-contamination of product and premises and must be removed on a frequent basis to control risk.
5.5.4 High Risk Processes **5.5.4.1 Control of High Risk Processes** The processing of High Risk Food shall be conducted under controlled conditions such that: i. Sensitive areas in which High Risk Food has undergone a "kill" step, a "food safety intervention" or is subject to post process handling, are protected/segregated from other processes, Raw materials or staff who handle Raw materials to ensure cross contamination is minimized; ii. Areas in which High Risk Processes are conducted are only serviced by staff dedicated to that function; iii. Staff access points are located, designed and equipped to enable staff to don distinctive protective clothing and to practice a high standard of personal hygiene to prevent product contamination; and iv. Product transfer points are located and designed so as not to compromise high risk segregation and to minimize the risk of cross contamination.	The importance of preventing contamination of high risk processed food cannot be overstated. The requirements under 5.5.4.1 i. – iv. You must provide the minimum requirements should be part of your procedures and be included in your risk assessment in development of your food safety and food quality plan. High risk processes are identified elsewhere in SQF documentation usually along with the Food Sector Category (FSC) under which the products fall.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.5.5 Other Processes **5.5.5.1 Identity Preserved Foods** The processing of specialty foods shall be conducted under controlled conditions such that: i. Ingredients are physically separated from ingredients identified as incompatible with the speciality food; ii. Processing is completed in separate rooms; or scheduled as the first production run; or carried out after the completion of a thorough sanitation of the area and equipment; and iii. Finished product is stored and transported in separate units or isolated by a physical barrier from non-speciality product. *Note: The conditions outlined under 5.5.5 apply to specialty foods that require segregation. E.g. The segregation of Kosher foods from non-Kosher foods or Halal foods from non-Halal foods; or segregation of food and ingredients containing allergen causing agents; or segregation of organic foods; and segregation of foods that require the maintenance of their GMO free status.*	**What do I need to do?** Processing facilities that process specialty foods defined under this requirement (see Note under 5.5.5.1) shall ensure that they comply with all applicable legislation relating to the specialty food being processed. Copies of that applicable legislation should be available on-site, and you should be able to demonstrate through training records, policy/procedures, etc., that specialty products are processed in compliance with applicable legislation.

5.6 On-Site Laboratories.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.6.1 On-Site Laboratories **5.6.1.1 Location of On-Site Laboratories** On site laboratories shall be located separate from any food processing or handling activity and designed to limit access only to authorized personnel. **5.6.1.2 Laboratory Waste** Provision shall be made to isolate and contain all laboratory waste held on the premises. Laboratory waste water outlet shall as a minimum be down stream of drains that service food processing and handling areas. **5.6.1.3 Laboratory Signage** Signage shall be displayed identifying the laboratory area as a restricted area accessible only by authorized personnel.	**What do I need to do?** On site laboratories are an option based on cost and the needs of the processing facility. In many cases, outsourcing laboratory services is applicable and reduces the risk of having on-site laboratories. However, if the processing facility chooses to have on-site laboratories that handle or produce substances or waste that is hazardous to food manufacturing and may present an unsanitary condition or contamination threat. Signage shall be posted at laboratory entrance(s) restricting access. Signage may consist solely of "icons" published by the International Association for Food Protection to accomplish this requirement; with exception of restroom signage where other regulatory requirements must be applied. Example: 

5.7 Staff Amenities.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.7.1 General	**What do I need to do?**
5.7.1.1 Staff Amenities are Adequately Supplied Staff amenities supplied with appropriate lighting and ventilation shall be made available for the use of all persons engaged in the handling and processing of product.	You must provide adequate lunchroom and restroom facilities as appropriate for the number or employees in your operation based on applicable legislation appropriate to the commodity being processed.
5.7.2 Change Rooms (Locker Rooms)	Change rooms (locker rooms) will be provided with lockers for staff and visitor garments and personal items, when staff and/or visitors are required to change from street clothing to protective clothing when entering the food processing operation. Lockers will be designed so that non-personal items, etc. can be stored on top of the lockers and/or the area around or under lockers. Lockers should be fully sealed and easy to clean. It is generally recommended that lockers be fitted flush with the ceiling and placed on stands raised off the floor to allow for easy cleaning. Note guidance offered for high risk processes under 5.5.4.1 above.
5.7.2.1 Staff and Visitors Facilities shall be provided to enable staff and visitors to change into and out of protective clothing as required.	
5.7.2.2 Processing Personnel Change rooms shall be provided for staff engaged in the processing of High Risk Foods or processing operations in which clothing can be soiled.	
5.7.2.3 Storage of Clothing and Personal Items Provision shall be made for staff to store their street clothing and personal items separate from food contact zones and food and packaging storage areas.	Provide a designated area (locker room) for employee garments and personal items. See above guidance
5.7.3 Showers	Showers must be available in those food processing plants where legislation requires that they be available, or if a facility's risk assessment indicates they are required for high risk processes. The number of showers should be based on the number of staff likely to use the facilities at one time.
5.7.3.1 Sufficient Number of Showers Where required a sufficient number of showers shall be provided for use by staff.	
5.7.4 Laundry	See note. Change rooms would generally be required when clean laundry is brought on site and staff has to change into those garments. Restrooms are usually not adequate as change rooms for this purpose.
5.7.4.1 Laundering and Storage of Clothing Provision shall be made for the laundering and storage of clothing worn by staff engaged in High Risk Processes and for staff engaged in processing operations in which clothing can be heavily soiled. *Note: Clothing can be laundered either on the premises, by a contract laundry service or other suitable means. In circumstances where clothing is laundered off site the cleaned clothing is to be transported to the facility in clean containers.*	

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.7.5 Sanitary Facilities **5.7.5.1 Location and Design of Sanitary Facilities** Sanitary facilities shall be designed, constructed and located so that they are easily accessible to staff and separate from any processing and food handling operations. **5.7.5.2 Toilet Rooms** Toilet rooms shall be designed so that they: i Are not directly accessible from any processing or food handling area; *Note: Access to toilet rooms from the processing area is via an airlock vented to the exterior or through an adjoining room.* ii Cater for the maximum number of staff; and iii Are constructed so that they can be easily cleaned and maintained. **5.7.5.3 Sanitary Drainage** Sanitary drainage shall not be connected to any other drains within the premises and shall be directed to a septic tank or a sewerage system. **5.7.5.4 Hand Wash Basins** Hand wash basins shall be provided immediately outside or inside the toilet room and designed as outlined in 5.2.11.1. **5.7.5.5 Signage** Signage in appropriate languages advising people to wash their hands shall be provided in a prominent position at the exit of each toilet room and over each hand wash basin.	**What do I need to do?** Restroom facilities will preferably be located so that they do not open directly into the processing area. In existing facilities, an airlock vented to the exterior will be maintained (negative pressure). A basic requirement is that staff will enter toilet rooms from processing areas either through intervening change rooms or through an air lock which is ventilated to external air. Where restroom facilities are immediately accessible to the processing room, the light and exhaust fan shall be interwired to create negative pressure. Employee restrooms shall be properly equipped with exhaust fans and hand wash facilities. To eliminate the risk of airflow from restrooms moving into the processing room, exhaust fan off-switches may be on timer delay. The light and exhaust fan may be on a single switch located on the outside of the restroom Separate toilet rooms are generally provided for each gender and are typically located adjacent to and separate from the change room. The number of toilet bowls to be provided depends on the number of staff or be based on applicable legislation however, the following is a guide: Persons of the same sex / No. of bowls 1-15 / 1 16-35 / 2 36-55 / 3 56-80 / 4 >80 for each additional 30 persons / 1 In male toilets, urinals can substitute for up to one-third of the total number of bowls. Hands free taps include those than can be operated by foot, knee, or elbow or turned on/off via electronic sensing devices. Signage may consist solely of "icons" published by the International Association for Food Protection to accomplish this requirement; with exception of restroom signage where other regulatory requirements must be applied. Examples:  

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.7.6 Lunch Rooms	**What do I need to do?**
5.7.6.1 Separate Lunch Room Facilities Separate lunch room facilities shall be provided away from a food contact/handling zone.	You may provide additional outdoor lunchroom facilities (picnic tables) where they do not pose a dust or pest hazard to the processing area of the plant. Covered facilities and sealed paths are one way to address these hazards. Where hazards presented by such facilities are minimal, you may employ alternative controls, such as routine cleaning of tables and steps to minimize dust on non-sealed paths. Foot baths, where practical, also provide another means to ensure that foot traffic does not bring dust or other contaminants into the processing area.
5.7.6.2 Lunch Room Facilities Lunch room facilities shall be: i. Ventilated and well lit; ii. Provided with adequate tables and seating to cater for the maximum number of staff at one sitting; Note: *Patio style facilities are acceptable provided the area is sealed, protected from the weather and maintained to prevent contamination from birds and other vermin and access from the area to the processing room is via a sealed path.* iii. Equipped with a sink serviced with hot and cold potable water; and Equipped with refrigeration and heating facilities enabling them to store or heat food and to prepare non-alcoholic beverages if required.	Each facility shall be equipped with a ventilated and well-lit lunch/break room for employees. The room will be equipped with a sink serviced with hot and cold potable water, a refrigerator, and a microwave.
5.7.6.3 Signage Signage in appropriate languages advising people to wash their hands before entering the food processing areas shall be provided in a prominent position in lunch rooms and at lunch room exits.	Hand wash signage shall be posted in the lunch/break room. Signage may consist solely of "icons" such as those published by the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) to accomplish this requirement; with exception of restroom signage where other regulatory requirements must be applied. Examples: 

5.8 First Aid Facilities.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.8.1 Access to First Aid **5.8.1.1 First Aid Facilities are Available** First aid facilities shall be provided to treat minor injuries and suitable arrangements shall be provided in circumstances when a patient requires more specialized care.	**What do I need to do?** First Aid materials must be provided and made available to treat injuries involving minor burns, cuts, or wounds. Applicable phone numbers of contact persons or suitable arrangements made when a staff member requires more specialized care shall be listed in close proximity to the first aid facility. First aid kits should be placed so that they do not present a hazard to food or food contact surfaces of equipment. Typically they are made available outside the processing areas. Band-Aids should be color coded and be able to be detected by metal detection devices.

5.9 Waste Disposal.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.9.1 Dry and Liquid Waste Disposal	**What do I need to do?**
5.9.1.1 Waste Effectively Removed from Surroundings Waste shall be effectively, efficiently and regularly removed from the premises and the surrounds and not pose a threat to the hygienic operation of the premises.	See Food Safety Fundamentals Pre-requisite 6.12 for additional requirements dealing with waste removal.
5.9.1.2 Dry Waste Adequate provision shall be made for the disposal of all solid processing waste including trimmings, inedible material and disused packaging. Waste held on site prior to disposal shall be stored in a separate storage facility and suitably fly proofed and contained so as not to present a hazard.	On-site incinerators, compactors or other waste collecting/disposal equipment need to designed, sited, constructed and operated so as not to create a hazard to product or surrounding environment.
5.9.1.3 Liquid Waste Adequate provision shall be made for the disposal of all liquid waste from processing and food handling areas. Liquid waste shall be either removed from the processing environment continuously or held in a designated storage area in lidded containers prior to disposal so as not to present a hazard.	As with solid waste the safe disposal of liquid waste from processing and food handling areas is essential to the maintenance of a clean and safe working environment. Procedures should be in place to monitor the effective removal of liquid wastes per written plant procedures.

5.10 Exterior.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
5.10.1 Grounds and Roadways	**What do I need to do?**
5.10.1.1 Grounds & Areas Surrounding the Facility The grounds and area surrounding the premises shall be maintained to minimize dust and be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.	See guidance under 5.9.1 under solid and liquid waste removal. Unkempt surroundings (accumulation of unused equipment, pallets, bins, drums or waste) can provide harborage for vermin and other pests and, in turn, pose a serious hazard to the hygienic operation of a food premises.
5.10.1.2 Paths, Roadways, Loading & Unloading Areas Paths, roadways and loading and unloading areas shall be maintained so as not to present a hazard to the effective food safety operation of the premises. *Note: Surroundings are required to be kept neat and tidy and not present a hazard. Paths from amenities leading to facility entrances are required to be effectively sealed. It is common practice for surroundings associated with the storage of waste and loading and unloading areas to be sealed and properly maintained, graded and drained to allow for effective cleaning.*	The provision of lawn and landscaping is effective for sealing large non-traffic areas. High vehicle traffic areas are also required to be effectively sealed to prevent dusty conditions. Exterior construction projects that impact sealed areas should be reviewed, and controls established on a temporary basis during the project timeline.

SECTION 6: SQF 2000 SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Contents

Section 6.0 Food Safety Fundamentals – Pre-requisite Programs

This Section 6 provides detail of the Pre-requisite Programs referred to in 4.4.2.

Note: Exclusions to these requirements or alternative methods of control are permitted however they are to be supported by a detailed risk analysis outlining the basis for any exclusion or alternative control measure to demonstrate food safety is not compromised.

6.1 Personnel Practices

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.1.1 Personnel Practices Personnel engaged in the handling of product shall observe appropriate personal practices including:	**What do I need to do?** Where necessary, medical screening of staff and contractors must be undertaken to detect carriers of infectious diseases. Staff identified as carriers of infectious diseases are not be permitted to handle raw materials, work in progress, or finished product. Employees should be aware of risks to the food products from the potential transmission of pathogens from ill employees. An example of a control program would be the removal of an employee from direct food contact to non-food contact activities when the employee reports potential illness. Ideally, an employee should not be penalized for reporting illness to the facility.
6.1.1.1 Personal Health Personnel suffering from infectious diseases or are carriers of, any infectious disease shall not engage in product handling or processing operation. *Note: The employer and the employee are responsible for ensuring only healthy personnel are engaged in food handling activities. Where appropriate, personnel may be required to complete a health questionnaire and a medical screening test before appointment.*	
6.1.1.2 Handling Cuts and Lesions Personnel with exposed cuts, sores or lesions shall not be engaged in handling or processing product. Minor cuts or abrasions on exposed parts of the body shall be covered with coloured *band-aid containing a metal strip or* an alternative suitable waterproof and coloured dressing. *Note: The colour of the band-aid or dressing must be distinct from the colour of the product. In the case of hand injuries it is appropriate to use a single use glove in addition to the dressing.*	Staff with exposed cuts are not permitted to handle products unless suitable protective coverings are applied and these coverings monitored regularly by responsible personnel to ensure they remain effective. Band aids must be of a distinctive color (e.g. blue). Dressings on hands and fingers are required to be covered with a suitable glove. Another example of control would be having band aids with metal strips so that they can be detected by metal detector.
6.1.1.3 Personal Practices Smoking, chewing, eating, drinking or spitting is not permitted in any food processing or food handling areas. *Note: An exception for eating in a food processing or food handling area is described under 6.2.1.7.*	Where it is necessary to provide drinking water for staff in a product processing area, a risk analysis must be conducted and controls must be developed by the facility to minimize the risk to the food safety and quality of the product. Facility should be prepared to demonstrate controls to auditor.
6.1.1.4 Hand Washing Personnel shall have clean hands and hands shall be washed by all personnel: i. ON ENTERING FOOD HANDLING OR PROCESSING AREAS; ii. AFTER EACH VISIT TO A TOILET; iii. AFTER USING A HANDKERCHIEF; iv. AFTER HANDLING WASH DOWN HOSES OR CONTAMINATED MATERIAL; AND v. AFTER SMOKING, EATING OR DRINKING.	Personnel are required to have clean hands and wash hands as defined within the standard. During certification audit, the SQF auditor is to observe employees to verify that hand washing is occurring as defined by the facility's employee hygiene practices. SQF auditor is to question employees in employee hygiene practices to ensure that all elements of the requirements of the SQF System are understood by employees.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.1.1.5 Using Gloves i. When gloves are used, personnel shall maintain the hand washing practices outlined above.	**What do I need to do?** It is important that employees are aware of proper hand washing requirements even when gloves are utilized. Disposable gloves should be discarded regularly and not reused by employees. Reusable gloves should be properly cleaned and sanitized between uses. Proper hand washing must be conducted prior to employees putting gloves on.
6.1.2 Clothing	
6.1.2.1 Clothing Worn by Staff Handling Product 6.1.2.2 Clothing worn by staff engaged in handling food shall be maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as not to present a contamination risk to product. Staff engaged in the processing of High Risk Foods or processing operations in which clothing can be soiled shall not wear the clothing off the premises. *Note: Clothing includes work clothing, overalls, head coverings, hair nets, smocks, beard snoods and coats.*	Employees and Visitors must wear clean outer garments and footwear. Employees and Visitors with excessively soiled clothing will not handle products or Packaging Materials. Employees and Visitors working in product production areas (farm) should not handle processed product unless they have cleaned-up and changed their clothing. In high risks processes, employees must not wear processing uniforms off site. Employees who are not engaged in high risk processes can wear uniforms off site provided that they are properly cleaned at the beginning of their work operation. Clothing includes work cloths, overalls, boots, shoe coverings, head coverings, hair nets, smocks, frocks, beard snoods and coats.
6.1.2.2 Condition Clothing shall be clean at the commencement of each shift and maintained in a serviceable condition. Excessively soiled uniforms shall be changed where they present a product contamination risk.	When required, gloves and aprons shall be kept in an intact and sanitary condition. When not in use, store gloves and aprons in a designated area; not on product or equipment. Disposable gloves shall be changed after each break, upon re-entry into the processing area and when damaged. Comply with hand washing practices outlined above.
6.1.2.3 Using Gloves and Aprons Disposable gloves and aprons shall be changed after each break, upon re-entry into the processing area and when damaged. Non-disposable aprons and gloves shall be cleaned and sanitized as required and when not in use stored on racks provided in the processing area and not on product or machinery. *Note: Disposable gloves and aprons are designed to be single-use only and disposed of after each use.*	Any disposable clothing must be changed between breaks, upon entry into processing areas and when damaged. This can be aprons, frocks, smocks, boots, gloves, etc. When clothing is to be reused, it must be properly cleaned and stored on racks or hangers. It cannot be stored on boxes or product or packaging materials.
6.1.3 Jewelry and Personal Effects	
6.1.3.1 Jewelry & Personal Effects in Processing Areas Jewelry and other loose objects shall not be worn or taken into a food handling or processing operation or any area where food is exposed. *Note: The wearing of wedding rings and medical alert bracelets (plain bands with no stones) that cannot be removed can be permitted however the supplier will need to consider their customer requirements and the applicable food legislation.*	Jewelry and other loose objects worn, or carried must comply with local regulatory authority and proper employee hygiene practices. An example is from the "Code of Federal Regulation Title 21 Part 110" (b) (4) Removing all unsecured jewelry and other objects that might fall into food, equipment, or containers, and removing hand jewelry that cannot be adequately sanitized ensuring periods in which food is manipulated by hand. If such hand jewelry cannot be removed, it may be covered material which can be maintained intact, clean and sanitary condition and which effectively protects against the contamination by these objects of the food, food-contact surfaces, or food-packaging materials. Facilities can adjust their good employee hygiene practices based on customer requirements, risk to their product, product exposure, and processing conditions. When allowances are provided to employees, the facility must be prepared to demonstrate to the SQF auditor how risks are controlled. Visitors must remove jewelry and other loose objects that may fall into equipment. The SQF Auditor is to interview multiple employees to understand their awareness of the employee hygiene practices as well as their understanding of the clothing policy for the supplier.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.1.4 Visitors	**What do I need to do?**
6.1.4.1 All Visitors in Processing Area	All Visitors are required to wear clean clothing and foot wear. Visitors must remove jewelry and other loose objects that may fall into equipment. Facility should develop specific good hygiene practices for visitors, have a means to communicate those expectations to visitors and contractors, and monitor visitors, contractors and tours to ensure that they are in compliance with the company's good hygiene practices. Visitors shall enter and exit shell product processing areas through the designated staff entrance points and they must comply with all hand washing and personal requirements. Visitors must not be permitted to handle any product or equipment. Visitors shall sign in the Visitor Log and shall be accompanied at all time by company employee or have permission from plant manager to enter any processing or storage area. A visitor is considered a non-employee of the company or facility. Examples of visitors would be vendors, service providers, contractors, truck drivers, tours, guests. Some facilities may define visitors as only employees of that facility, thus corporate personnel would be considered visitors as well.
All visitors, including management and maintenance staff, shall wear suitable clothing and footwear when entering any food processing or handling area.	
6.1.4.2 Jewelry and Other Loose Objects	
All visitors shall be required to remove jewelry and other loose objects.	
6.1.4.3 Screening	
Visitors exhibiting visible signs of illness shall be prevented from entering areas in which food is handled or processed.	
6.1.4.4 Visitor Access	
Visitors shall enter and exit food handling areas through the proper staff entrance points and comply with all hand washing and personal practice requirements as outlined in 6.1.1.	

6.2 Personnel Processing Practices.

Note: Appropriate personnel processing practices employed by line operators, supervisory and other staff engaged in handling food are an essential part of any food processing operation.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.2.1 Staff Engaged in Food Handling and Processing Operations	**What do I need to do?**
6.2.1.1 Personnel Processing & Practices	Proper product handling practices combined with sanitary conditions help result in: • extended storage life of product; • reduced risk of product contamination; and • fewer product returns or complaints. While management has overall responsibility for ensuring that sanitary processing practices are adopted, line attendants are also responsible for ensuring these procedures are carried out properly and effectively. Management is to create a "good hygiene practices" list of dos and don'ts and this list must be consistent with sections 6.1 and 6.2 of this standard. A facility should have designated access points for personnel to enter and exit from key operations points within the facility. This includes the processing areas. Doors here are defined as dock doors, pedestrian doors (man doors), office doors, any door that is entering the facility from the outside. All processing areas must have areas for employees to be able to wash their hands upon entry in to processing and key sensitive handling areas. This should be at the entry area, but is not mandatory if the facility is able to develop a similar solution that will meet the intent of the standard. Appropriate containers are containers that are considered easily cleanable, properly labeled, not absorbable, and designed for the purpose. No packaging container should be used for the storage of waste or scrap. Waste containers should be appropriate containers as defined above and clearly labeled or designated as waste in languages necessary for employees to understand. Where sensory analysis is conducted within processing area, facility is to develop specific hygiene practices that are intended to control food safety and quality risk to the product and be consistent with those defined within this section. SQF auditor is to observed employees in sensitive areas of the process (ingredient mixing, formulation, processing, packing) to determine employee adherence and understanding with facility good hygiene practices. SQF auditor is to conduct employee interviews during the audit to verify understanding.
All personnel engaged in any food handling, preparation or processing operations shall comply with the following processing practices: i. Personnel entry to processing areas shall be through the personnel access doors only; ii. All doors are to be kept closed. Doors shall not be left open for extended periods when access for waste removal or product/ingredient /packaging retrieval is required; iii. All personnel shall wash their hands on entering the processing area; iv. The wearing of false fingernails or fingernail polish is not permitted when handling food; v. Packaging material, product, and ingredients shall be kept in appropriate containers as required and off the floor; vi. Waste shall be contained in the bins identified for this purpose and removed from the processing area on a regular basis and not left to accumulate; vii. *Staff shall not "eat" or "taste" any product being processed in the food handling/contact zone;* a. *In circumstances where it is necessary to undertake sensory evaluations in a food handling/contact zone the Supplier shall implement proper controls and procedures to ensure:* • *Food safety is not compromised;* • *Sensory evaluations are conducted by authorized personnel;* • *A high standard of personal hygiene is practiced by personnel conducting sensory evaluations;* • *Sensory evaluations are conducted in areas equipped for the purpose; and* • *Equipment used for sensory evaluations is sanitized, maintained and stored separate from processing equipment.*	
6.2.1.2 Wash Down Hoses All wash down hoses shall be stored on hose racks after use and not left on the floor.	

6.3 Training of Personnel.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.3.1 Training Requirements **6.3.1.1 Appropriate Training for SQF 2000** Appropriate training shall be provided for personnel carrying out the tasks critical to the effective implementation of the SQF 2000 System and the maintenance of food safety and quality.	**What do I need to do?** All company employees shall be trained in the standards and procedures that relate directly to their specific responsibilities, as well as those policies that affect product safety. Training may be completed on the job by qualified technical staff or, externally by recognized institutions. Records of who has been trained and the type of training they have received shall be documented. Once the training requirements are identified ensure staff is trained to competently carry out their duties and responsibilities. Employees can carry out these activities if they are given clear and concise instructions regarding how, when and where to record the information. Instructions can be provided in a number of ways such as: • Written work instructions may be useful when a particular task is complicated (requiring skilled operators) or repetitious (mundane work that generally results in a high turnover of staff and requires a constant training effort). These instructions can serve as a valuable training reference when staff needs to check the correct way of doing a task. Written instructions can be in the form of Pre-requisite programs (see element 4.3.1(i)) and will be available (if practical) where the task is performed. • Photos and diagrams can be particularly useful to overcome language barriers or when a task involves a number of different steps. A Supplier is required to prepare Staff Training Register and document who is trained and when they were trained to do a particular task. This can be accomplished in several ways as shown in the following examples: **Examples:** • A formal training register which is a permanent record of training undertaken by employees is signed or initialed by the employee. Formal training registers are best suited for small or permanent staffing situations. **Employee: David Smith** Description of Training | Dates completed | Trainer | Signed Plant sanitation | 15/12/01 | Bill Davis | W Davis Safe use of Chemicals | 05/12/01 | Phil Smith | P Smith • A training matrix may also be used to keep track of large or rotational labor forces. In a training matrix, the critical jobs are listed horizontally along the top; with the trainee's names listed vertically down the side. Dates of training and trainer's initials to be place in the corresponding cells. **Example training matrix** Name | Fork Lift Op. | Ingredient Prep. | Packing | Cooker operation Mary Davis | | 13/09/04 BS | | 02/04/05 BP Jill Powell | | | 26/01/05 BS | John Mills | 24/03/05 PS | | |
6.3.2 Training Program **6.3.2.1 Elements of the Employee Training Program** An Employee Training Program shall be documented and implemented. It shall outline the necessary competencies for specific duties and the training methods to be applied for those staff carrying out tasks associated with: i. Developing and applying Good Manufacturing Practice and Pre-requisite Programs; ii. Applying food regulatory requirements; iii. Critical steps identified by the hazard analysis and other instructions critical to effective implementation of the Food Safety Plan and the maintenance of food safety; and iv. Tasks identified as critical to meeting customer specifications and process efficiency and the effective implementation and maintenance of the SQF 2000 System.	
6.3.3 Instructions **6.3.3.1 Task Instructions** Instructions shall be available setting out how all tasks critical to meeting customer specifications, the maintenance of food safety, quality and process efficiency is to be performed.	
6.3.4 HACCP Training Requirement **6.3.4.1 HACCP Training of Appropriate Employees** HACCP training shall be provided for staff involved in developing & maintaining Food Safety & Food Quality Plans.	
6.3.5 Language **6.3.5.1 Training Materials in Appropriate Languages** Training materials and the delivery of training shall be provided in language understood by staff.	
6.3.6 Refresher Training **6.3.6.1 Refresher Training Defined** The training program shall include provision for identifying and implementing the refresher training needs of the organization.	

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.3.7 Training Skills Register **6.3.7.1 Training Skills Register** A training skills register, describing who has been trained in relevant skills, shall be maintained. The register shall indicate the: i. Participant name; ii. Skills description; iii. Description of the training provided; iv. Date training completed; v. Trainer or training provider; and vi. Supervisor's verification the training was completed and that the trainee is competent to complete the required tasks.	**What do I need to do?** The following programs are considered the minimum required elements for employee training. Type and depth of training will depend upon the employee's Work Designation. Minimum Requirements: • Job/Task Performance • Company Safety and Quality Policies and Procedures • Good Manufacturing Practices • Cleaning and Sanitation procedures • HACCP • Bio security and Food Defense • Product Quality and Grading • Chemical Control • Hazard Communication • Blood borne Pathogen • Emergency Preparedness • Employee Safety • Safety Regulatory Requirements/Quality Regulatory Requirements Annual refresher training shall be conducted for Retained Employees. Training is to be documented and maintained for at least two years.

6.4 Calibration of Equipment.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.4.1 Calibration Methods **6.4.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities of Calibration of Key Equipment** The methods and responsibility for the calibration and re-calibration of measuring, test and inspection equipment used for monitoring activities outlined in Pre-requisite Program, Food Safety Plans and Food Quality Plans and other process controls, or to demonstrate compliance with customer specifications shall be documented and implemented. **6.4.2 Calibration Standards** **6.4.2.1 Equipment Calibrated Against Referenced Standards** Equipment shall be calibrated against national or international reference standards and methods or to accuracy appropriate to its use. In cases where standards are not available the Supplier shall provide evidence to support the calibration reference method applied. **6.4.3 Calibration Schedule** **6.4.3.1 Maintenance of a Calibration Schedule** Calibration shall be performed according to regulatory requirements and/or to the equipment manufacturers recommended schedule. **6.4.4 Records** **6.4.4.1 Records of Calibration** Calibration records shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** Some equipment must be calibrated against a national or international standard, such as weight scales. In cases where a national or international standard does not exist or is not warranted, a reference standard can be purchased or created and/or a standard method used. • pH meters are calibrated against reference buffer solutions according to the manufacturer instructions. • Thermometers can be calibrated against boiling water or ice-water if these approximate the temperatures the thermometer is required to measure when in use. To ensure that measuring equipment gives reliable results you must: • Identify all the equipment that requires calibration (thermometers, scales, pH meters etc.). • Ensure the equipment, once calibrated, is protected so that measurements remain accurate (the equipment manufacturer will provide instructions for the proper use, storage and maintenance of the equipment). • Determine how accurate the measurements need to be. Do you need to comply with industry or national standards? If the calibration is designed to check measurements implemented to improve a process you may determine the level of measurement required and apply calibration parameters to ensure consistent measurement. • Calibrate equipment regularly. The calibration frequency will vary depending upon the type of equipment and its usage. Calibration frequency must be adjusted in light of experience or manufacturer's instructions. • Develop a procedure to address products produced between the time an equipment "out -of – calibration" is discovered and the last calibration check with normal tolerances recorded. • Clearly identify who is responsible for undertaking calibration, recording the results of all calibrations, labeling equipment to indicate when it was last calibrated and when recalibration is due.

6.5 Management of Pests and Vermin.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.5.1 Management of Pests & Vermin Requirements **6.5.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities for Integrated Pest Management** The methods and responsibility for integrated pest management shall be documented and implemented. The premises, its surrounds, storage facilities, machinery and equipment shall be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin. **6.5.2 Pest & Vermin Management Program** **6.5.2.1 Elements of Pest & Vermin Management Program** The pest and vermin management program shall: i. Describe the methods and responsibility for the development, implementation and maintenance of the pest and vermin management program; ii. Identify the target pests for each pesticide application; iii. Outline the methods used to prevent pest problems; iv. Outline the methods used to eliminate pests when found; v. Outline the frequency with which pest status is to be checked; vi. Include on a site map the identification, location, number and type of bait stations set; vii. List the chemicals used (they are required to be approved by the relevant authority and their Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) made available); viii. Outline the methods used to make staff aware of the bait control program and the measures to take when they come in contact with a bait station; and ix. Outline the requirements for staff awareness and training in the use of pest and vermin control chemicals and baits. **6.5.2.2 Inspections** Inspections for pest activity shall be undertaken on a regular basis by trained personnel and the appropriate action taken if pests are present. **6.5.2.3 Records** Records of all pest control applications shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** Your documented pest and vermin control program must address each of the requirements in Section 6.6 of the CODE; with special attention to the following areas: Dogs, cats, birds and other animals are classified as pests and vermin and must not be permitted in any shell product processing area or on the premises or surrounds. Methods should include control measures for the minimizing the risk from vermin in the management of the exterior of the facility and any storage facilities (packaging or product storage) of a pest harborage areas. Specific attention should be paid to external and internal equipment storage locations (bone yards). Weeds and waste are to be controlled to prevent the harborage and attraction of pests. For facilities which use a contract service for pest control, that program must be available to be reviewed by the SQF auditor to ensure that all elements are defined per the SQF program requirements. A fully maintained pest and vermin control program is essential to the smooth function of any general processing operation. The pest and vermin control program must: • Identify the target pests for each pesticide application. • Outline the frequency with which pest status is to be checked. • Identify the location of bait stations / chemical sites for ease of checking. • Outline the methods used to prevent pest problems (proactive). • Outline the methods used when pests are found. • Maintain licenses and credentials of Pest Control Operator. • List the chemicals used (they must be approved by the relevant authority and their MSDS accessible); and • Outline the requirements for staff awareness and training in the use of chemicals. Location of internal and external pest control devices must be completed based on the risk to the facility and the product. Factors that can affect this include product type, processing type, location of facility, surrounding environment, types of facilities, external storage of equipment (bone yards). Pest control devices should be located at all product storage, packaging storage facilities in addition to main facility. Facility should be prepared to demonstrate adequate control throughout entire facility to SQF auditor based on this risk assessment. Inspections for pest activity must take place on a regular basis, the results recorded, and the actions taken if pests are present. This can be incorporated into the internal audit program for the facility. Examples of records of pest control applications would be service reports, pesticide usage logs, pest sighting logs, corrective action reports, trending of activity by service provider. SQF auditor is to verify pest control devices during audit, ensuring that pest control devices are being serviced regularly. This would include walking interior and exterior perimeter locations of all external storage facilities that contain product or packaging and external equipment storage locations, in addition to the main processing facility to verify no pest harborage or attractant areas exist within facility location.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.5.3 Using Pest Control Chemicals **6.5.3.1 Handling of Pest Control Chemicals** Pesticides and other toxic chemicals shall be clearly labeled and stored as described in 5.4.5 and handled and applied by properly trained personnel. They shall be used by or under the direct supervision of trained personnel with a thorough understanding of the hazards involved, including the potential for the contamination of food and food contact surfaces. **6.5.4 Pest Control Contractors** **6.5.4.1 Criteria for Pest Control Contractors** Pest control contractors shall be: i. Licensed and approved by the local relevant authority; ii. Use only trained and qualified operators who comply with regulatory requirements; iii. Use only approved chemicals; iv. Provide a pest control management plan (see Contract services 4.3.2) which will include a site map indicating the location of bait stations and traps; v. Report to a responsible Senior Management person on entering the premises and after the completion of inspections or treatments; and vi. Provide a written report of their findings and the inspections and treatments applied. **6.5.5 Disposal of Unused Pest Control Chemicals** **6.5.5.1 Disposal of Unused Pest Control Chemicals** The Supplier shall dispose of unused pest control chemicals and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that: i. Empty chemical containers are not reused; ii. Empty containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and iii. Unused and obsolete chemicals are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.	**What do I need to do?** Pesticides must be clearly labeled and stored in secured areas or locked cabinets used only for that purpose when stored on-site. Pesticides shall be handled or used only by, or under the direct supervision of a licensed pest control operator. Pesticides must at all time be handled in a manner that prevents product contamination. No pesticide shall be used inside the processing plant unless specifically allowed for under applicable federal, state or local regulation. Pesticide shall be used per label instructions only. Only personnel trained in the application of pesticides shall apply pesticides within facility, as consistent with local regulatory authority. When pest control contractors are utilized, facility must maintain verification of qualifications for pest control contractors on-site. Examples of verification of certification and qualifications could include certification of insurance, applicators license, required training certification. Integrated pest management plan that is developed by pest control contractor must be consistent with 6.5.2.1 of this section of the standard.

6.6 Premises and Equipment Maintenance.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.6.1 Maintenance Program **6.6.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities for the Maintenance Program** The methods and responsibility for the maintenance and repair of plant, equipment and buildings shall be documented planned and carried out in a manner that minimizes the risk of product, packaging or equipment contamination. **6.6.2 Instructions to Maintenance Personnel and Contractors** **6.6.2.1 Practice for Maintenance Staff & Contractors** Maintenance staff and contractors shall observe the following practices when undertaking maintenance and repairs in any food processing, handling or storage area: i. Routine maintenance of plant and equipment shall be performed according to a maintenance-control schedule and documented; ii. Failures of plant and equipment shall be documented, reviewed and their repair incorporated into the maintenance control schedule; iii. Compliance with the personnel and process hygiene requirements (see 6.1 and 6.2) by maintenance staff and contractors; iv. Ensure facility supervisors are notified when maintenance or repairs are to be undertaken in any food handling area; v. Remove all tools and debris from any maintenance activity once it has been completed and inform the area Supervisor so appropriate hygiene and sanitation can be completed; vi. Inform the maintenance supervisor and the facility supervisor if any repairs or maintenance pose a potential threat to product safety i.e. pieces of electrical wire, damaged light fittings, and loose overhead fittings. When possible, maintenance is to be conducted outside processing times; vii. Notify the maintenance supervisor and the facility supervisor in the event of any breakage or damage that could cause a food safety risk; and viii. Notify the maintenance supervisor when work has been completed to enable appropriate and effective clean up measures prior to the commencement of facility operations.	**What do I need to do?** The protocol will outline that maintenance staff must observe the personnel and process hygiene requirements and Service Contractors engaged to complete work in food production areas must also be made aware of these requirements by the Maintenance Supervisor. Service Contractors must be provided with protective clothing as required. The policy will describe the practices under which repairs are completed in any shell product handling or storage area including the following requirements that maintenance staff must observe: • Maintenance of equipment or building structures must be completed so there is no risk to the product; • The Maintenance Supervisor must ensure they are notified by all contractors engaged to complete work in any shell product handling area. They must ensure that all Service Contractors are aware of the Supplier's personnel hygiene requirements and that they are provided with appropriate protective clothing; • Maintenance staff and Service Contractors are to ensure that they remove all tools and debris from any maintenance activity once it has been completed in any shell product handling area and inform the area Supervisor so appropriate hygiene can be completed; • Service Contractors are to inform the Maintenance Supervisor if any required work poses a potential threat to product safety i.e. pieces of electrical wire, damaged light fittings, loose fittings overhead. If necessary, maintenance must be conducted outside processing times; • Service Contractors shall notify the Maintenance Supervisor in the event of any breakage or damage that could expose products to contamination; • Service Contractors must notify the Maintenance Supervisor when work has been completed; • Plant Supervisors will ensure appropriate and effective clean up measures are taken once all maintenance or Service Contractor activity is completed and prior to the commencement of Plant operations. It is essential staff, maintenance personnel and Service Contractors adhere to the correct procedures when completing maintenance on packing Plant premises. Equipment must be checked before use including reporting of missing parts (e.g. nuts & springs). Those responsible for reporting and completing repairs and cleaning the equipment after repairs must be specified. Staff must also be instructed to not perform temporary repairs with unauthorized materials (wood, strings. cardboard, and tape) that could compromise the safety of the product, impede routine cleaning procedures or provide harborage for vermin.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.6.3 Maintenance Schedule **6.6.3.1 Maintenance Schedule to Cover Critical Areas of Facility** The maintenance schedule shall be prepared to cover building, equipment and other areas of the premises critical to the maintenance if product safety and quality. **6.6.4 Equipment Lubrication and Paints** **6.6.4.1 Lubricants** Equipment located over product or product conveyors shall be lubricated with food grade lubricants. *Note: It is good practice to fit drip trays under equipment to collect lubricant that may drip from machinery.* **6.6.4.2 Paints** Non toxic paint shall be used in a food handling or contact zone and not on any product contact surface.	**What do I need to do?** The processing of products must be undertaken in premises that are well maintained at all times. Preventative maintenance schedules must cover all areas of the premises including: • Exterior (building surrounds, waste management areas) • Building and building interior (the construction) • Processing equipment • Dry storage areas • Coolers • Loading/unloading bays • Sanitary facilities & staff amenities including: 1. Changing rooms 2. Toilets 3. Hand Wash basins 4. Foot baths 5. Lunch rooms Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for food grade lubricants must be kept on file. If non-food grade lubricants are used in the facility, they must be physically separated from food grade lubricants. All oils, lubricants and cleaners used in the facility must be approved, properly labeled and stored.

6.7 Cleaning and Sanitation

SQF Requirement	Guidance

6.7.1 Cleaning and Sanitation Program
6.7.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities for Sanitation
The methods and responsibility for the cleaning of the food handling and processing environment, storage areas, staff amenities and toilet facilities shall be documented and implemented. Consideration shall be given to:
i. What is to be cleaned;
ii. How it is to be cleaned;
iii. When it is to be cleaned;
iv. Who is responsible for the cleaning; and
v. The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning and sanitation program.
6.7.2 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Cleaning
6.7.2.1 Pre-operational Hygiene Inspections
Pre-operational hygiene and sanitation inspections shall be conducted by qualified personnel to ensure food processing areas, product contact surfaces, equipment, staff amenities and sanitary facilities and other essential areas are clean before the commencement of production.
6.7.2.2 Verifying the Effectiveness of Cleaning
The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning procedures shall be documented and implemented. A verification schedule shall be prepared.
6.7.3 Purchasing, Storage and Use of Detergents and Sanitizers
6.7.3.1 Detergents and Sanitizers
Detergents and sanitizers shall be purchased in accordance with applicable legislation. The organization shall ensure:
i. An inventory of all chemicals purchased and used shall be maintained;
ii. Detergents and chemicals are stored as outlined in 5.4.5;
iii. Material safety data sheets are provided for all detergents and sanitizers purchased; and
iv. Only trained staff shall handle sanitizers and detergents.
	What do I need to do?
	Cleaning and Sanitation protocol will include the following detail:
	• List all the areas and equipment to be cleaned
	• Cleaning schedule (the cleaning frequency for cleaning and sanitizing different areas of the premises and all associated equipment including pre-operative cleaning and cleaning between breaks)
	• Provide a full description of the cleaning procedures:
	• Chemicals must be
	  ○ Dry clean – physically remove solid particles by sweeping or wiping
	  ○ Wash equipment and surfaces with a hot water detergent mix to remove grease and other food residues.
	• Only trained operators are used.
	• Chemicals must be approved for use by the appropriate authority [maintain on file Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each chemical used]. Describe the chemicals used, their dilution rate, and method of application.
	• Chemical cleaners and sanitizers must be used and store in an approved manner (as outlined in 5.4.5).
	• Evaluation of cleaning. Monitor the effectiveness of cleaning and keep records of all inspections implemented to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning program.
	• Maintain an inventory of chemicals purchased and used.
	• Outline requirements for the disposal of unused compounds and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements.
	
	To verify the effectiveness of sanitation, a visual Pre-Operational Inspection of equipment and facility will be conducted prior to the start of operations.
	
	To verify the Plant is operating in a sanitary manner throughout the shift, Plant sanitation will be monitored and documented regularly by the shift supervisor or a designated employee.
	
	Any corrective actions taken when inspection reveals a problem must be recorded.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.7.4 Disposal of Unused Detergents and Sanitizers **6.7.4.1 Disposal of Unused Detergents and Sanitizers** The Supplier shall dispose of unused detergents and sanitizers and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that: i. Empty detergent and sanitizer containers are appropriately cleaned, treated and labeled before use; ii. Empty detergent and sanitizer containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and iii. Unused and obsolete detergents and sanitizers are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.	**What do I need to do?** If a pest control service provider is utilized, then they should remove empty pest control containers from the location. If empty containers are to be disposed at the facility, then requirements within the standard must be followed. For facilities that apply their own pesticides, these standard requirements and local regulatory authority must be complied with for the disposal of empty chemical containers.

6.8 Monitoring Water Microbiology and Quality Standard.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.8.1 Standard **6.8.1.1 Water:** i. used for washing, thawing and treating food; ii. used as an ingredient or food processing aid; iii. for cleaning food contact surfaces; iv. for the manufacture of ice; and v. for the manufacture of steam that will come in contact with food or used to heat water that will come in contact with food; shall comply with national or internationally recognized potable water microbiological and quality standards as required. **6.8.2 Water Treatment** **6.8.2.1 Monitoring of Water Treatment Equipment** Water treatment equipment shall be monitored regularly to ensure it remains serviceable. **6.8.2.2 Monitoring of Treated Water** Treated water shall be regularly monitored to ensure it meets the indicators specified. **6.8.3 Analysis** **6.8.3.1 Microbiological Analysis of Water and Ice** Microbiological analysis of the water and ice supply shall be conducted to verify the cleanliness of the supply, the monitoring activities and the effectiveness of the treatment measures implemented. **6.8.3.2 Monitoring of Treated Water** Water and ice shall be analyzed using reference standards and methods.	**What do I need to do?** Any water that is used in the process that will come into contact with the product, or could come in contact with the product, must be verified to be in compliance with local and national standards. In the US for example, the potability standard for drinking water is <1 coliform / 100 mls water and membrane filtration is the preferred method. Even though the water supply may come from the town or regional water supply in which the water is treated, safety tested and maintained by the local authority, it is required general processers implement their own monitoring of the safety of the potable water quality used. The monitoring may involve one or a number of the following: • Regular testing of water (pH, turbidity) • Checking filtration apparatus and changing it as required (refer to Supplier specifications) • Regular cleaning of water holding tanks and reservoirs • Regular monitoring of sanitizer levels in water (level normally tested at various sites in the food handling and processing areas) All water systems must be protected against backflow. Water and boiler (or water heater) treatment chemicals must be approved for such use, and properly stored. Water should be tested at least every 12 months for potability and any additional quality or safety attribute. When utilizing an outside laboratory, seeking a laboratory that is properly certified to complete the desired analysis is preferred. The water should be retested any time the water source is changed or when equipment is added to treat the water system. If ice is supplied by an outside source, the facility must have a current analysis of potability on file. Any treatment of water on-site, either prior to usage, as a treatment of waste water, the treatment should have applicable analysis verifying the efficiency of the treatment.

6.9 Control of Physical Contaminants.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.9.1 Foreign Matter **6.9.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities to Prevent Foreign Matter** The responsibility and methods used to prevent foreign matter contamination of product shall be documented, implemented and communicated to all staff. *Note: All personnel are to be encouraged to report sources of potential physical contaminants to management.* **6.9.1.2 Prevention** Inspections shall be performed to ensure plant and equipment remains in good condition and potential contaminants have not detached or become damaged or deteriorated. The use of temporary fasteners such as string, wire or tape to fix or hold equipment shall not be permitted. **6.9.1.3 Glass** The following preventative measures shall be implemented: i. All glass objects or similar material in food handling/contact zones shall be listed in a glass register including details of their location; ii. Doors and offices within or adjacent to food handling and contact zones shall be fitted with shatterproof glass or have glass panels covered with a protective film to prevent shatter if broken; iii. Containers, equipment and other utensils made of glass, porcelain, ceramics, laboratory glassware or other like material (except where product is contained in packaging made from these materials, or measurement instruments with glass dial covers or MIG thermometers required under regulation) shall not be permitted in food processing/contact zones; iv. Conduct regular inspections of food handling/ contact zones to ensure they are free of glass or other like material and to establish no changes to the condition of the objects listed in the glass register; and v. Inspect glass instrument dial covers on processing equipment and MIG thermometers at the start and finish of each shift to confirm they have not been damaged.	**What do I need to do?** Consumers can see and feel a foreign matter contaminant and therefore foreign matter contamination must be given a very high priority in the Supplier's food safety and quality management system. The Foreign Matter and Glass Protocol will outline the sources of foreign matter, the methods of control and the responsibility for taking action when foreign matter or glass is detected in the manufacturing environment. Foreign Matter can originate from: • external sources such as pests, Raw Material, Packaging Material (plastic and/or cardboard embedded in product by the Supplier); • internal sources of foreign matter include, the building (rust, insects, insulation), surface coatings (flaking paint, damaged render), equipment (nuts, pins, screws, washers, etc.). Protocol to remove all tools and machine parts from the processing areas, once the job at hand is completed, must be documented. Plant and equipment must be inspected regularly to ensure it remains in good condition so that nothing has detached, damaged or deteriorated. Personnel must be encouraged to report all recognized sources of potential contaminants. Fabricated equipment covers shall be used where ever possible to prevent potential contamination from nuts, bolts, etc. Temporary repairs are not to be utilized within general processing facilities. The use of plastic, tape, string, cardboard, or other non-permanent materials as a means to repair or alter the facility or equipment must be avoided. The facility should have included within its maintenance process (section 6.6) control measures to be taken when repairs are needed during process to protect product from foreign materials that could impact food safety and quality. Containers, equipment and other utensils made of glass, porcelain, ceramics or other like material should not be permitted in any processing or food handling area. QC staff must, where possible, replace all laboratory glass containers with plastic containers, and should avoid using glass instruments in Fresh Shell Product processing areas. Regular inspections must be made to ensure that these areas are free of glass and staff must be made aware of their responsibility to adhere to the company Foreign Matter and Glass Protocol. All overhead lighting must be protected and shielded. The risk assessment of foreign material contamination and preventative controls should be included within the food safety plan (4.4.3) and food quality plan (4.4.4) development. Each facility must assess its risks of foreign material contamination to product and develop specific controls within its environment. SQF Auditor should review processing facility for the use of temporary repairs. Also Auditor should interview personnel, including maintenance personnel on the control of foreign materials.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.9.1.4 Wood Wood pallets used in food handling/contact zones shall be dedicated for that purpose, clean, maintained in good order and their condition subject to regular inspection. *Note: The use of clean slip sheets to cover wood pallets and plastic pallets is recommended in high risk food handling areas and "wet processing" areas.* **6.9.1.5 Metal** Loose metal objects on equipment, equipment covers and overhead structures shall be removed or tightly fixed so as not to present a hazard. **6.9.2 Detection of Foreign Objects** **6.9.2.1 Responsibility and Methods** The responsibility, methods and frequency for monitoring, maintaining, calibrating and using screens, sieves, filters or other technologies to remove or detect foreign matter shall be documented and implemented. **6.9.2.2 Metal Detectors** Metal detectors or other physical contaminant detection technologies shall be routinely monitored, validated and verified for operational effectiveness. The equipment shall be designed to isolate defective product and indicate when it is rejected. **6.9.3 Managing Foreign Matter Contamination Incidents** **6.9.3.1 Items Evaluated** In all cases of foreign matter contamination the affected batch or item shall be isolated, inspected, reworked or disposed of. **6.9.3.2 Glass Breakage** In circumstances where glass or similar material breakage occurs the affected area is to be isolated, cleaned and thoroughly inspected and cleared by a suitably responsible person prior to the commencement of operations.	**What do I need to do?** Wood pallets are part of the food industry and are not expected to be banned from processing environments. Depending on the type of facility and the products being produced, the types of controls for the management of pallets can vary from one facility to another. At a minimum, all general processing facilities should have a pallet management program in place where pallets undergo inspection for broken slats or wood pieces protruding which could pose a risk to pallets. Also, if pallets are stored for prolonged periods outdoor, then the pallets may need to be cleaned and inspected for vermin prior to entry into the processing facility. For high risk operations and wet processing environments, the use of clean slip sheets or plastic pallets should be utilized to help to minimize the risk of foreign material or microbiological contamination to the products. Specific work instructions should be written on the monitoring of foreign material detection and prevention devices. The frequency of monitoring such devices, the criteria used in monitoring, and the correction actions to take when foreign materials are discovered, or issues are discovered with the effectiveness of the prevention device must be defined within methods. For example, if a metal detector must reject 3 wands (2.0 Fe, 2.5 non Fe, 3.0 SS) to "pass" then when all 3 wands are not rejected, the facility must have defined criteria for how such an incident will be handled, including product identification and disposition (example: detector would fail, all product since last "good" check is placed on hold and must be re-run through a working metal detector) Some examples of frequency of monitoring would be hourly metal detector checks, screen checks once per shift, tailings check daily, filter check once per shift or once per load. Metal detectors, x-ray, color sorters (if used for defects or foreign material) must be validated to ensure that they can effectively detect a foreign object within the packaged product that is passed through the device. Validation is not the passing of wands through the device to ensure that it is working, this is verification. An example of a means for validation of a metal detector would be the placing of a piece of metal within the package of product (Product would be properly labeled to ensure it does not enter market). All types of packaging and sizes of product that are passed through the device must be validated. Any new packaging or size of product must be validated. When a foreign material issue is detected, the facility must have established criteria for the identification, isolation and disposition of product affected. Facility should manage incident with established procedures consistent with section 4.4.6 (Corrections and Preventative Actions) SQF Auditor should ensure that there is a schedule, with criteria and responsibility defined for monitoring. Auditor should interview monitor to ensure that there is understand of the program and activity if verified and consistent with methods defined. Auditor should also thoroughly review facility for signs of glass and ensure that any and all glass found is located on glass register.

6.10 Supplier Approval.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.10.1 Selecting and Approving Suppliers **6.10.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities for Approving Suppliers** The responsibility and methods for selecting, evaluating, approving and monitoring an Approved Supplier shall be documented and implemented. A register of Approved Suppliers and records of inspections and audits of Approved Suppliers shall be maintained. **6.10.2 Approved Supplier Program** **6.10.2.1 Elements of an Approved Supplier Program** The Approved Supplier Program shall contain as a minimum: i. Agreed specifications; ii. Reference to the rating of the level of risk applied to a Raw Material and the Approved Supplier; iii. A summary of the Food Safety Plan and 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 analysis if required; vii. A contingency plan for dealing with emergency/ unforeseen situations when a Raw Material cannot be sourced from an Approved Supplier ; and viii. Methods and frequency of reviewing Approved Supplier performance and status. **6.10.3 Monitoring Approved Suppliers** **6.10.3.1 Monitoring & Assessment of Suppliers** The monitoring of Approved Suppliers shall be based on the prior good performance of a supplier and the risk level of the Raw materials supplied. *Note: The monitoring and assessment of Approved Suppliers can include:* i. *The inspection of Raw materials received;* ii. *The provision of certificates of analysis;* iii. *Third party certification of an Approved Supplier; or* iv. *The completion of 2nd party supplier audits.*	**What do I need to do?** It is essential that a Raw Material Supplier is capable of supplying product or services as specified. The quality of the Raw materials purchased and/or identity of the suppliers who are capable of meeting specified requirements need to be verified. Simply placing a Supplier's name on an approved Supplier list will not automatically mean that Raw materials will be delivered trouble free. If the Supplier does not have a food safety and quality management system in place, a manufacturer must decide whether to retain the Supplier. Ensuring Raw materials do not adversely impact on the quality or safety of a Supplier's final product requires that the Supplier put into place a system of checking that what is being supplied has been delivered according to specification. This can be carried out as below: 1. Checking the product when it is delivered and prior to use. If a Raw Material Supplier is not on the approved Suppliers list, a record that the product has been checked against specification at receipt and/or prior to use must be kept. The easiest way to do this is after inspecting the Raw Material, sign and date delivery dockets, alternatively a business can create an incoming goods inspection and receipt record. This record may include what was delivered, quantity, quality, when (date and time), who delivered it, who inspected it and did it pass an inspection against the Raw Material specification. 2. Use of Suppliers who are approved by the Supplier, i.e. those consistently supply a product or service to specification, consistently "on time every time" i.e., those who have demonstrated a good supply history. An Approved Supplier Program contains as a minimum: • agreed specifications • risk analysis of Raw materials • requirement for GMPs and SSOPs at the Supplier's premises • receipt of Raw materials only from approved Suppliers • methods for granting Approved Supplier status The Raw materials and services a Supplier purchases can affect the safety and quality of its own Finished products. If Raw Material requirements are not clearly communicated with Suppliers then it is not realistic to expect that goods or services will be provided consistently and as expected. Examples of monitoring and assessment of Approved Suppliers could be requiring suppliers to be SQF certified, requiring that suppliers provide an annual recognized third party audit, requiring suppliers undergo an annual second party audit, having suppliers complete a questionnaire, or have supplier complete an annual letter of guarantee. The strategy of monitoring should be determined by the type of product that is being supplied. The methods established should include the type of monitoring required, the criteria required to remain in good standing and include criteria for the disapproval of suppliers as well.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.10.4 Register **6.10.4.1 Register of Approved Suppliers** A register of Approved Suppliers shall be maintained. **6.10.5 Records** **6.10.5.1 Records of Audits & Assessments** Records of inspections and audits of Approved Suppliers shall be maintained.	**What do I need to do?** The Raw Material Suppliers that meet these conditions will become known as an Approved Suppliers and details of Approved Suppliers are listed on an "Approved Supplier List". Approved Suppliers must be documented in an Approved Supplier register detailing their company name, contact details, and the product or service they supply. SQF auditor is to verify the Approved Supplier list is current. Auditor should also interview an employee in receiving to demonstrate how facility verifies that products coming into the facility are from approved Suppliers, ask for example of product that was received from unapproved Supplier, review records of approvals, and look for product in raw material receiving and cross check against approved Supplier list to ensure products are received from approved Suppliers.

6.11 Transport and Delivery.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.11.1 Loading, Transport and Unloading Practices **6.11.1.1 Practices Documented** The practices applied during loading, transport and unloading of food shall be documented, implemented and designed to maintain appropriate storage conditions and product integrity. Foods shall be transported under conditions suitable to prevent cross contamination. **6.11.2 Loading** **6.11.2.1 Transport Vehicle Condition** Vehicles (trucks/vans/containers) used for transporting food shall be inspected prior to loading to ensure they are clean, in good repair, suitable for the purpose and free from odors or other conditions that may impact negatively on the product. **6.11.3 Transport (Temperature Requirements)** **6.11.3.1 Management of the Refrigeration Unit** Refrigerated units shall maintain the food at required temperatures and the unit's temperature settings shall be set, checked and recorded before loading and core product temperatures recorded at regular intervals during loading as appropriate. *Note: Use clean equipment when taking core product temperatures and open outer packaging to access units in the middle of larger cartons. In circumstances where it is difficult to core test product, or if core testing destroys the serviceability of the packaging, alternative methods of determining a products temperature can be used. Prior to loading it* is *good practice to pre-chill refrigeration units.* **6.11.3.2 Operation of the Refrigeration Unit** The refrigeration unit shall be operational at all times and checks completed of the unit's operation, the door seals and the storage temperature at regular intervals during transit. *Note: Care should be taken to transport food at its appropriate storage temperature. It is recommended that the refrigeration units air temperatures be recorded at regular intervals during shipment and this can be accomplished by the use if data logger temperature recording devices. Appropriate temperature requirements for chilled food range between 0°C – 4°C (32°F – 40°F) and for frozen foods ≤ -18°C (≤ 0°F).*	**What do I need to do?** Proper care for the food safety and quality of your product does not end when the Finished product is placed into storage awaiting delivery. Temperature abuse during delivery and transport can be compromised. The Transport and Delivery Protocol will cover those aspects necessary to ensure product is protected during loading, transport and unloading. Loading: Prior to loading, vehicles should be pre-chilled. Refrigerated units are capable of cooling and maintaining Finished product at ambient temperature of 45°F below at point of origin. Conduct visual inspection for cleanliness, pest infestation, structural conditions, and ability to cool and maintain temperatures (where applicable) on all outbound trucks/trailers. Inspection should verify the setting of the refrigeration unit of the trailer (when applicable) Verify that all trucks/trailers are free of offensive odors (applicable to the Raw Material/Finished product being transported). All inspection findings are to be maintained in records. Transport: On long haul journeys, the driver must ensure that the refrigeration unit is operational at all times. Facilities may choose to verify transportation with regular monitoring of temperature during transport by means of devices similar to a time –temperature recorder (TTR) Use clean equipment when taking core product temperatures and open outer packaging to access units in the middle of larger cartons. In circumstances where it is difficult to core test product, or if core testing destroys the serviceability of the packaging, alternative methods of determining a products temperature can be used. Prior to loading it is good practice to pre-chill refrigeration units Care should be taken to transport food at its appropriate storage temperature. It is recommended that the refrigeration units air temperatures be recorded at regular intervals during shipment and this can be accomplished by the use if data logger temperature recording devices. Appropriate temperature requirements for chilled food range between 0°C – 4°C (32°F – 40°F) and for frozen foods ≤ -18°C (≤ 0°F).

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.11.4 Unloading **6.11.4.1 Practices of Unloading** Prior to opening the doors the refrigeration unit's storage temperature settings and operating temperature shall be checked and recorded. Unloading shall be completed efficiently and core product temperatures shall be recorded at the commencement of unloading and at regular intervals during unloading. *Note: Prior to unloading the load is to be checked for signs of temperature abuse (thawing and refreezing), damage or shifting during transport.*	**What do I need to do?** Proper care for the food safety and quality of your product does not end when the Finished product is placed into storage awaiting delivery. Temperature abuse during delivery and transport can be compromised. The Transport and Delivery Protocol will cover those aspects necessary to ensure product is protected during loading, transport and unloading. Unloading: Verify all incoming shipments are from approved Suppliers; or shipments under prior arrangements made by Plant management. Visual inspection and documentation of all incoming shipments of Raw materials is required. Verify that all incoming carriers are in good repair, clean and free of offensive odors. Proper securing of all shipments at delivery shall be checked. When used, all seal numbers are recorded on shipping documents before seal is broken. Document receiving temperatures. Inspect of all incoming materials. Document Supplier codes on inbound Raw materials for traceability purposes. SQF Auditor should observe the loading and receiving practices of facility as practical. In addition, SQF auditor should interview loading and receiving personnel on the loading and receiving practices of the facility to verify their awareness and understand of the documented programs.

6.12 Waste Management and Disposal.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.12.1 Dry, Wet and Liquid Waste **6.12.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities to Collect & Handle** The responsibility and methods used to collect and handle dry, wet and liquid waste and store prior to removal from the premises shall be documented and implemented.	**What do I need to do?** At the end of the each shift, or each day, depending on the facility and operation, all office trash, processing facility trash, packaging material trash, etc. is to be removed by a designated employee and disposed of in the trash receptacle.
6.12.2 Removal From Food Handling and Processing Areas **6.12.2.1 Waste Removal** Waste shall be removed on a regular basis and not build up in food handling or processing areas. Designated waste accumulation areas shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition until such time as external waste collection is undertaken.	All trash generated in the processing and storage rooms, with the exception of inedible products and corrugated cardboard, are placed in paper/plastic bags or plastic containers. Empty chemical drums will be collected and transported to a secured storage or triple rinsed.
6.12.3 Maintaining Waste Removal Equipment and Areas **6.12.3.1 Containers for Handling Waste Materials** Trolleys, vehicles waste disposal equipment, collection bins and storage areas shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and cleaned and sanitized regularly so as not to attract flies and other vermin.	Exterior waste containers may need coverage or lids to prevent attracting flies or vermin. It is also advisable to secure waste containers in regards to Site Security requirements (session 4.7) Inedible products must be labeled and handled in accordance with regulation. Review of the waste collection and handling system should be incorporated as part of the internal audit program of the facility.
6.12.4 Monitoring Waste Removal **6.12.4.1 Review of Waste Management** Reviews of the effectiveness of waste management will form part of daily hygiene inspections and the results of these inspections shall be included in the relevant hygiene reports.	SQF Auditor should verify the waste collection and storage containers and locations within the facility. Auditor should observe that all waste containers are properly labeled, properly maintained, properly serviced (not overflowing), cleaned as necessary and do not present an opportunity to attract vermin or other pests. Daily hygiene inspections should defer back to the internal auditing program and be incorporated into that program.

6.13 Allergen Control.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.13.1 Allergen Control Program **6.13.1.1 Methods & Responsibilities for Allergen Program** The responsibility and methods used to control allergens and to prevent sources of allergens from contaminating product shall be documented and implemented. The allergen control program shall include the following detail. **6.13.2 Risk Assessment** **6.13.2.1 Raw Material Risk Assessment** Those Raw materials that contain allergen causing agents shall identify through a risk analysis and included on a list which is accessible by relevant staff. **6.13.2.2 Allergen Hazards in Food Safety Plan** The hazards associated with allergens and their control shall be incorporated into the Food Safety Plan. **6.13.3 Receiving and Storing Raw materials** **6.13.3.1 Instructions for Storing Allergen Containing Raw materials** Instructions on how to identify, handle store and segregate Raw materials containing allergen causing agents shall provided to staff responsible for receiving those target Raw materials. **6.13.4 Storing Product Containing Allergen Causing Agents** **6.13.4.1 Provision for Allergen Causing Agents** Provision shall be made to clearly identify and segregate foods that contain allergen causing agents.	**What do I need to do?** The identification of an allergen is generally specific to the country of the processing facility. In the US, there are 8 identified allergens; wheat, soy, milk, peanut, tree nut, egg, fish and crustacean (shellfish). In Australia, in addition to those 8, sesame is also included. In Canada, in addition to those listed, sulfites are considered allergens as well. The definition of what should be considered an allergen from a management control standpoint should take into account customer expectations and local regulatory authority. An allergen control program should include the following elements • Identification of ingredients and processing aids which are considered allergens. • Formulations identified in which allergenic ingredients are utilized • Identification of allergens within the facility upon receipt, during storage, during formulation and mixing, during work in progress, during packaging, and during finished product storage. • Control measures to prevent "cross contact" or the cross contamination of an allergen containing product with a non-allergen containing product. These control measures could include the following for prevention of cross contact on processing equipment ○ Allergen containing products are only run on dedicated lines in which non-allergen containing products are not run ○ Production scheduling in which products with allergens are run with non-allergens run first, then sequentially products are processed with more allergens present in formulations ○ Sanitation controls necessary to processing equipment when a change is to be made from an allergen to a non-allergen, including verification of sanitation • Segregation controls in storage should included separation of allergens from one another as necessary. • Other controls could be dedicated utensils for allergen handling only, brushing of bulk mix ingredients, peeling outer bags, etc. • All allergens should be clearly stated on finished product label and appear per customer specification or regulatory requirement A facility is able to develop alternative or additional controls as determined by risk assessment used to determine the risk of allergens within the facility. For facilities in which an allergen is included in all formulations, the only required control measure would be to ensure that the allergen is properly listed in the finished product ingredients, as per customer specification and regulatory requirement.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
6.13.5 Sanitation of Processing Area and Equipment **6.13.5.1 Sanitation Between Changeovers** Cleaning and sanitation of product contact surfaces between line changeovers shall be effective and sufficient to remove all potential allergens from product contact surfaces, including aerosols, to prevent cross contamination. **6.13.5.2 Verification of Sanitation Between Changeovers** Verification of the effectiveness of the cleaning and sanitation of areas and equipment in which allergen causing agents are used shall be part of the requirements outlined in 6.7.2.2. *Note: The practice of dedicating sanitation equipment for cleaning of areas and equipment used for the manufacture of allergen containing product is recommended to minimize cross contamination.* **6.13.5.3 Separate Handling & Processing Equipment as Necessary** Separate handling and production equipment shall be utilized where satisfactory line hygiene and cleanup or segregation is not possible. **6.13.6 Batch Identification and Trace** **6.13.6.1 Product Identification System Addressing Allergens** The product identification system (see 4.6.1) shall make provision for clear identification and labelling (in accordance with regulatory requirements) of those products produced on production lines and equipment on which foods containing allergen causing agents were manufactured. **6.13.6.2 Trace System Addressing Allergens** The product trace system (see 4.6.2) shall take into consideration the conditions under which allergen containing foods are manufactured and ensure full trace back of all ingredients used. **6.13.7 Re-working Product Containing Allergen Causing Agents** **6.13.7.1 Re-work of Product that Contains Allergens** Re-working of product containing allergen causing agents shall be conducted under conditions that ensure product safety and integrity is maintained. Re-worked product containing allergen causing agents shall be clearly identified and traceable.	**What do I need to do?** SQF Auditor is to review the allergen control program for facility, and be sure to observe product storage conditions, how allergens are identified, how allergens are managed in formulation and mixing areas, how work in progress is identified, tracked, and added back into product. Also verify the change over process and interview production personnel to ensure understanding of the allergen control program and controls used within the facility.

SECTION 7: REQUIREMENTS FOR FOODS CONTAINED IN HERMETICALLY SEALED RIGID, FLEXIBLE OR SEMI RIGID CONTAINERS

Contents

SECTION 8: IMPLEMENTING AN SQF SYSTEM

Contents

Section 7.0 Requirements for Foods Contained in Hermetically Sealed Rigid, Flexible or Semi Rigid Containers

Note: Exclusions to these requirements or alternative methods of control are permitted however they are to be supported by a detailed risk analysis outlining the basis for any exclusion or alternative control measure to demonstrate food safety is not compromised.

7.1 Canning Operations

SQF Requirement	Guidance
7.1.1 Canning Equipment The following section outlines additional requirements for premises manufacturing foods packed in hermetically sealed rigid, semi-rigid or flexible container. **7.1.1.1 Closers** Closing and seaming equipment for rigid, semi-rigid or flexible containers shall be designed, built, installed, maintained and operated to ensure: i. That each unit is sealed to the container makers specification; and ii. Seaming and sealing overhauls and rebuilds are performed to the manufacturer's specifications and procedures using only genuine or equivalent fabricated parts. **7.1.1.2 Sterilizing and Pasteurizing Equipment** Sterilizing and pasteurizing equipment shall be designed, built, installed, maintained and operated to ensure: i. That product and each unit in the batch receives the same sterilizing treatment; ii. The heating medium is delivered uniformly to all units in the batch and its composition and temperature must be known; iii. Individual equipment is equipped with appropriate pressure gauges and temperature recording equipment; and iv. Sterilizing equipment shall be equipped with an Indicating Mercury-in-Glass thermometer with gradients in 0.5deg C (1.0deg F) or an equivalent Temperature-Indicating Device; an accurate timing device easily observed by the operator; and a continuous recording device to record the scheduled process applied to each batch.	**What do I need to do?** The equipment and procedures used for retorting must be designed to ensure each unit in a batch receives the same sterilizing treatment. To achieve this, the heating medium must be delivered uniformly to all units in the batch and its composition and temperature must be known and controlled. Safe processing depends on the equipment and instrumentation being properly built, installed, maintained and operated to produce product that is commercially sterile.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
7.1.2 Establishing the Scheduled Processes **7.1.2.1 Competent Person** Scheduled processes shall be determined by competent persons having expert knowledge of pasteurization or thermal processing as the case may be and who have access to appropriate facilities and equipment for making measurements and calculations. Scheduled processes shall be based on: *i.* The temperature history of the slowest heating point in the container as determined when establishing the scheduled process; *ii.* The composition of the food; *iii.* The likely number and type of possible spoilage micro-organisms; *iv.* And the conditions the product is likely to encounter during storage and distribution. **7.1.2.2 Records of Scheduled Processes** Detailed records of the establishment of all scheduled processes shall be maintained. **7.1.2.3 Critical Factors for Determining Scheduled Processes** The scheduled process shall take into account established critical factors. For conventionally sterilized canned foods the scheduled process shall include: i. The product code, name, form or style and packing medium; ii. The composition, type, size and internal dimensions of the container; iii. The product formulation, weight distribution and viscosity of components; iv. Net weight and volume of contents including liquor where appropriate; v. Gross weight of container; vi. pH of solid and liquid components; vii. Matting tendency; viii. Rehydration of components where appropriate; ix. Minimum initial temperature (not frozen or containing ice crystals); x. The type and characteristics of the sterilizing or pasteurizing system; xi. The process temperature and time; and xii. The method of cooling the containers.	**What do I need to do?** Variations in any of these factors may render the scheduled process inadequate and result in the growth of micro-organisms that survive the process resulting in potential food safety risk or food spoilage.

7.1.3 Thermal Processing

7.1.3.1 General

Only properly determined scheduled processes shall be used to complete sterilization or thermal processing of foods. In addition:

i. Scheduled processes and venting procedures for each product and container shall be displayed in a prominent position in the retorting area and easily accessible to the retort operator; and
ii. Thermal processes and associated processes shall be performed and supervised only by suitably trained personnel.

7.1.3.2 Application of Thermal Processes

Frequent process control checks shall be completed of those critical factors, characteristics of the product that may influence the temperature history of the slowest heating point in the container to ensure they are within the limits specified in the scheduled process. Those critical factors include but are not limited to:

i. The products initial temperature;
ii. Maximum net or drained weight;
iii. Minimum headspace;
iv. Consistency of the product;
v. The style of the product; and
vi. Minimum closing vacuum (in vacuum-packed products).

7.1.3.3 Retorting

Retorting procedures shall include the following:

i. Retorting shall be commenced as soon as possible after can closure;
ii. A container on the top of baskets or crates of un-retorted product shall be clearly marked with a heat sensitive indicator;
iii. Vents shall be fully opened to permit the rapid and total removal of air from steam processing equipment before the pressure vessels are brought to operating temperatures;
iv. Retorts shall be operated according to the makers specification;
v. All scheduled process times shall be taken from the clock in the processing area;
vi. After completion of the scheduled process, containers shall be rapidly cooled **through** the range of 60deg. C (140 deg. F) to 40deg. C (104 deg. F); and
vii. Cooling water shall be introduced in a manner that minimizes the risk of deformation, breakage (glass jars) and leakage of containers.

What do I need to do?

Instances where stratification or layering of components in the container affects the rate of heat penetration during thermal processing must be considered

Prolonged exposure of canned product within the temperature range (60deg. C to 40deg. C) can compromise product safety and promote the development of heat resistant thermopiles resulting in product spoilage.

SQF Requirement	Guidance
7.1.3.4 Cooling Water Cooling water shall be of suitable microbiological quality, chlorinated and maintained at a measurable level of residual chlorine or otherwise suitably treated to render the water acceptable for container cooling operations. In addition: i. Re-circulated cooling water shall be filtered and suitably treated or re-chlorinated; ii. Chlorinated cooling water shall be tested after each cooling cycle to verify the existence of a residual chlorine level in the cooling water; iii. In circumstances where cooling water is treated by other means the water treatment methods, equipment and materials shall comply with 5.3.4 and the cooling water microbiology and quality monitored as outlined in 6.8; and iv. Records of cooling water treatment tests shall be maintained. 7.1.3.5 Post Processing Operations Container cooling and drying practices shall be designed, implemented and maintained to prevent post process contamination. After completion of the scheduled process the following practices shall be observed as a minimum: i. Thermally processed product shall be handled so as not to compromise product safety while seams and seals are wet; ii. Manual handling of containers shall be avoided and the containers protected from mechanical shock; iii. Conveyors used for handling thermally processed containers shall be kept clean, disinfected and dry; iv. Where it is not possible to keep conveyors dry they shall be disinfected on a continuous or semi-continuous basis; and v. Heat sensitive indicators shall remain attached to baskets or crates and removed when the product is decrated.	**What do I need to do?**

7.1.4 Seam and Seal Integrity	**What do I need to do?**
7.1.4.1 Seams and seals shall be examined by a competent person at regular intervals during can closing operations. 7.1.4.2 Records of all seam and seal evaluations, and Corrections and Corrective Actions taken, shall be maintained	
7.1.5 Quality Assurance	
7.1.5.1 Procedure The methods and responsibility for ensuring thermal processes are properly established, documented, correctly applied and supervised shall be documented.	
7.1.5.2 Verification of the Scheduled Process Verification of scheduled processes shall comply with the requirements outlined in 4.5 and no later than the next working day after processing include: i. The review and verification of all relevant production and processing records, tests, inspections, analyses and the scheduled processes applied to ensure they are complete and that all products received the correct scheduled process.	
7.1.5.3 Dealing With an Incomplete Scheduled Process Where an incomplete scheduled process has been detected the SQF Practitioner shall ensure that any amendment to the scheduled process is determined by an approved person and detailed records of all amended scheduled processes are maintained. Product suspected of being under processed shall be: i. Segregated and retained for further evaluation; and ii. Where is established a safe thermal process has not been applied, under processed product shall be destroyed under supervision by physical means.	
7.1.5.4 Records Records of all relevant production activities, tests, inspections, analyses, incubations, evaluations and records of all scheduled processes applied to each batch and actions taken in relation to under processed foods shall be maintained.	

Section 8.0 Implementing an SQF 2000 System

8.2 SQF Practitioner

SQF Requirement	Guidance
8.2.1 SQF Practitioner The SQF Practitioner is an individual, designated by a Supplier who is responsible for the validation and verification of the Suppliers own SQF 2000 System. The SQF Practitioner details shall be verified by the SQF Auditor at each Audit as meeting the following requirements: i. Be employed by the Supplier as a permanent full time company employee and hold a position of responsibility in relation to the management of the Suppliers SQF 2000 System; ii. Have completed a HACCP Training Course and be experienced and competent to implement and maintain HACCP based Food Safety Plans; and iii. Have an understanding of the SQF 2000 Code and the requirements to implement and maintain SQF 2000 Systems relevant to the Suppliers Scope of Certification.	**What do I need to do?** The SQF Practitioner's responsibilities within the SQF System are defined within sessions 4.1.2.2. The Practitioner must be an employee of the company. The Practitioner can be an employee of the facility or an employee of the corporate entity of the company. The HACCP course attended by the SQF Practitioner must be a formal structured Classroom or on-line training course in which a certificate is obtained. The course should have an exercise of the development of a sample food safety plan. The SQF Practitioner must be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the SQF 2000 Standard. It is highly recommended that the SQF Practitioner attend a Implementing SQF 2000 Systems course, if possible a classroom session. SQF offers an on-line exam to demonstrate knowledge of the standard that is accessible for any participants. The training and exam are voluntary and not mandatory, but are available for supporting the SQF Practitioner. The SQF Auditor must verify the qualifications of the SQF Practitioner during the audit. The auditor should ensure that the Practitioner is an employee of the company, observe a HACCP certificate verifying training and verify knowledge and understanding of the SQF 2000 standard. This can be through a training certificate, a certificate of successful completion of SQF exam, or interview of SQF Practitioner and review of SQF Programs developed. The SQF Auditor must collect the following information regarding the SQF Practitioner: • SQF Practitioner name • Position title • Company name • Company site address • Individual email address • Details of HACCP training and experience • Evidence of knowledge of SQF 2000 Systems