

Control safety

SQF (Safe Quality Food) overview guide

Managing food safety and quality with SQF certification

LRQA

Managing food safety and quality with SQF (Safe Quality Food) Certification

Safe Quality Food (SQF) is a food safety and quality management system designed to ensure that food products are safe, of high quality, and meet regulatory requirements. The SQF program was developed by the Safe Quality Food Institute (SQFI) and is based on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

The SQF program involves a rigorous system of documentation, verification, and validation to ensure that food products are produced, processed, and handled in a safe and sanitary manner. The program provides a set of standards and guidelines that cover all aspects of food production and processing, from the sourcing of raw materials to the delivery of finished products.

SQF certification is recognized by retailers, food service providers, and regulatory agencies around the world as a benchmark for food safety and quality. SQF certification can help food companies reduce risk, improve efficiency, and enhance customer confidence in their products.

The SQF Edition 9 certification program promotes safe quality food from farm to fork and is comprised of the following:

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Primary plant production



Primary animal production



Aquaculture



Food manufacturing



Animal feed manufacturing



Quality



Manufacture of food packaging



What's new in SQF Edition 9?

SQF version 9 was published in October 2020. Since May 24, 2021, all initial certification audits, re-certification, and unannounced re-certification audits must be delivered against the SQF Code Edition 9. Some of the main changes include:

SQF VERSION 9.

Scoring changed from 10 points for a major nonconformity to 5 points

SQF VERSION 9.

Includes the option for remote activities

SQF VERSION 9.

The addition of a food safety culture requirement



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SQF is managed by the Safety Quality Food Institute (SQFi), a division of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and is one of the largest GFSI-recognised food safety certification programs. Developed on Australian shores in 1994, the Safe Quality Foods (SQF) certification has been designed as a rigorous and credible international food safety standard. The SQF certification program is on its 9th Edition.

There are several benefits of SQF certification, including:

1.

Improved food safety

SQF certification demonstrates that a food manufacturer or supplier has implemented a comprehensive food safety management system, including HACCP principles, to identify and control food safety hazards.

2.

Enhanced product quality

SQF certification requires a focus on product quality and consistency, which can help improve customer satisfaction and increase brand reputation.

3.

Increased efficiency

SQF certification requires a focus on continuous improvement and operational efficiency, which can help reduce waste, streamline processes, and improve overall performance.

4.

Expanded market access

Many retailers and food service providers require their suppliers to be SQF certified, so certification can help food manufacturers and suppliers expand their market access.

5.

Regulatory compliance

SQF certification helps ensure compliance with food safety regulations and can help prevent costly recalls or fines.

6.

Competitive advantage

SQF certification can help food manufacturers and suppliers stand out from their competitors and attract new customers.

Overall, SQF certification is a valuable tool for improving food safety, quality, and efficiency, and can help food companies achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Why work with LRQA?

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We are at the forefront of food safety standards development. We support the GFSI and as a market leader and highly recognized and trusted provider of food safety assurance, certification and training for decades, and we serve over 33,000 food and drink organizations around the world.

Gap analysis

We provide an SQF gap analysis before your official SQF audit and certification, during which an LRQA food safety assessor will review how your system has addressed or plans to address the requirements of the SQF standard. It will give your organization the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have about your system, or the SQF assessment process, with us. The gap analysis does not result in certification but instead helps identify any weaknesses before the actual SQF certification audit takes place.

SQF audit and certification

At LRQA, we specialize in helping to provide food safety assurance across the food supply chain. Our SQF audits and certification will help assure your organization is delivering safety quality food no matter where you are in the food supply chain. Once your organization has successfully completed an SQF audit and technical approval is given, you will be awarded SQF certification, providing credibility for your stakeholders through the globally recognized LRQA brand.

Customized assurance and second-party assessments

In addition to being certified to a GFSI-recognized food safety standard, many customers may also require assessment against their own company-specific standard or criteria.

We can help to combine your SQF certification with a second party, company-specific or customized assurance program. In addition, if your organization needs help to develop its own solution, we can work with you, delivering value by understanding your assurance needs, expectations and requirements. We'll then work together to assure you have the right program in place to meet these assurance needs, identifying a suitable approach to assessment, criteria, methodology and reporting.



Why work with LRQA?

Beyond food safety

Don't let your certification journey stop with food safety. We deliver certification, validation and verification assessment services to all of the world's leading standards and schemes including quality, health and safety, environmental, sustainability, energy management, business continuity, cyber security and many more.

Knowledge and experience

Our SQF and GFSI food safety teams understand the complex nature of food safety requirements. We have proven experience supporting clients across the supply chain with GFSI, FSMA and customized assurance programs to help assure food safety and quality. Our assessors are required to meet some of the highest qualifications in the industry, and all have extensive experience working across the food and drink supply chain.

Licensed and accredited

LRQA is now accredited to SQF Edition 9 and was among the first licensed BRCGS and FSSC 22000 certification. We're also independently accredited for FSSC 22000, BRCGS, ISO 22000 and HACCP.

Robust, risk-based approach

Our team of experts know the SQF requirements inside and out and are therefore best suited to assess your system with a robust risk-based approach to help protect your brand and reputation. We focus on the areas that matter most and which often present the highest risks for your organization. We provide thorough assessments that help build confidence with your customers and key stakeholders.



Fresh thinking

About LRQA:

Bringing together unrivaled expertise in certification, brand assurance and training, LRQA is one of the world’s leading providers of food safety and assurance solutions. Working together with farms, fisheries, food manufacturers, restaurants, hotels, and global retailers, we help manage food safety and sustainability risks throughout supply chains and have become a leading global assurance provider.

We’re proud of our heritage, but it’s who we are today that really matters, because that’s what shapes how we partner with our clients tomorrow. By combining strong values, decades of experience in risk management and mitigation and a keen focus on the future, we’re here to support our clients as they build safer, more secure, more sustainable businesses.

From independent auditing, certification and training; to technical advisory services; to real-time assurance technology; to data-driven supply chain transformation, our innovative end-to-end solutions help our clients negotiate a rapidly changing risk landscape – making sure they’re shaping their own future, rather than letting it shape them.

Get in touch

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