What's new in IFS Food V7?

Prepare for change

A worldwide acknowledged standard for assessing food manufacturers, International Featured Standards Food has a strong focus on safety and process and product quality.

IFS Food Version 7 (V7) of the standard features some key improvements and updates, bringing additional benefits for organisations looking to continually improve.

This latest version provides further clarity for auditors and their customers when carrying out audits. With more emphasis on on-site evaluation and less on documentation, the assessment checklist has been aligned with the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements version 2020.1, FSMA, and EU regulations. IFS Food V7 audits can be carried out from 1 March 2021 and is mandatory for all certified companies from 1 July 2021.

Three key changes to note

1 — Embedding a Food Safety Culture across your organisation

2 — New scoring system to help drive continuous improvement

3 — More focus on on-site assessments

Embedding a Food Safety Culture across your organisation

IFS Food V7 puts an emphasis on the importance of having a deep-rooted food safety culture in companies. Employees who work to drive food safety as part of their behaviours are more likely to produce safe, quality products.

Embedding a strong safety culture in your organisation will help to prevent and detect nonconformities in any process impacting the safety, quality, and legality of your products.

New scoring system to help drive continuous improvement

The new scoring system gives both the assurance company and its customer a clear overview of performance, to help drive continuous improvement.

It enables you to standardise reports and audit results, while providing a comprehensive action plan to work through with clear explanations about nonconformities, so you're able to put corrective actions in place and continue striving for excellence.

More focus on on-site assessments

Organisations can now focus more on the practical elements of the on-site assessment and less on completing multiple documentations.

Many requirements relating to documentation have been removed or merged. For example, food safety and product quality, customer focus and food safety culture, have been merged into a single requirement.

For some sections, documentation still needs to be provided, such as HACCP, food fraud and food defence.

Key features

IFS Food V7 takes a risk-based approach and identifies company-specific risks and hazards.

Based on ISO/IEC 17065:2012, the standard is accepted by retailers and brand owners worldwide.

The requirements were developed by food industry experts, certification bodies and retailers, and covers legislation, food safety and quality, and customer specifications.

Additional changes that will make the IFS Food V7 assurance process easier for organisations:

- New wording that highlights the product and process approach of IFS, in keeping with ISO/IEC 17065

- 15% less requirements – streamlining many of the processes to make auditing more efficient

- Improved structure of the certification protocol, tailored to IFS stakeholders' needs

- Clearly structured assessment report with standardised sections

- Every third IFS certification assessment will be unannounced

- New definitions on outsourcing that clarify different management modalities

- A valid Global Location Number (GLN) is now mandatory for suppliers in the European Economic Area (EEA) and the UK

- Additional tools now available to support quality managers of certified companies

LRQA

Benefits of being IFS Food V7 certified

Certification to IFS Food V7 standard reduces the frequency of retailer audits, improving your brand reputation and giving your clients confidence in their supply chain, as well as improving relationships with customers and authorities, and unlocking new business opportunities.

It also demonstrates that you have consistent food safety and quality assurance, meaning fewer product recalls and improved productivity.

Continuous improvement: The IFS Scoring System indicates how an assessed business can further improve its performance, helping to reach the next level in product safety and quality assurance management.
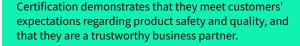
Non-prescriptive approach allowing custom-made solutions: It enables companies to determine methods for controlling hazards that are best suited to their individual conditions.

Requirements that reduce operating costs and increase efficiency: By implementing the IFS requirements, companies can improve their processes; reducing waste and costs related to recalls, complaints, or rejected products and rework.

Business growth: Certified companies retain existing customers and gain new ones with IFS Food V7.

Certification demonstrates that they meet customers' expectations regarding product safety and quality, and that they are a trustworthy business partner.

Trust LRQA to deliver your IFS Food V7

LRQA is a market-leading provider of IFS Food assessment.

Our food safety specialist auditors examine everything from your resource management and senior management responsibility to your planning and measurement processes.

Whether you have multiple sites or require a combined audit, our IFS Food audit and training services deliver value in a practical, cost-effective way.

Through working with LRQA, you will have peace of mind that your audit is carried out by a highly experienced, independent team which understands both your sector and your specific business needs.

IFS Food V7 training with LRQA

Our IFS Food V7 Industry Training course, delivered in house or as a virtual, instructor led training course, is now available for anyone wishing to know more about the changes from version 6.1 as well as the requirements of IFS Food version 7. With practical examples, and guidelines for certification, this course provides clarity and insightful information, delivered by industry experts.