

## Guide to certification of food safety management systems in processing and distribution

This guide is designed for companies that are considering certification of one or more food safety management systems and clearly outlines the different steps in Integra's certification procedure.

### 1. The different standards : which system(s) to choose ?

Companies in the processing and distribution sectors are increasingly faced with the demand for a certified food safety management system.

Today, a number of different systems are available, all based on the same principles:

- ✓ the introduction of the basic principles of GHP (Good Hygiene Practices) and GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) (in ISO 22000 the term PRP (Prerequisites Programme) is used): the basic conditions programme
- ✓ the introduction and implementation of the HACCP principles
- ✓ the introduction and implementation of the principles of a quality management system
- ✓ guidelines for the production environment, processes, products and personnel
- ✓ traceability and a possibility for recall

All systems are based on the principles of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, document CAC/RCP 1: General Principles of Food Hygiene (see [www.codexalimentarius.net](http://www.codexalimentarius.net)).

Integra offers certification for :

- ✓ BRC Global Standard Food
- ✓ BRC Global Standard Storage and Distribution
- ✓ IFS International Food Standard
- ✓ IFS Logistic Standard
- ✓ ISO 22000

We can also offer certification for HACCP related to Codex Alimentarius.

### **How to choose the right system?**

The principles of the BRC, IFS standards are set out in detail, whereas the ISO 22000 standard is, just like the other ISO standards, more vague and leaves room for personal interpretation of the systems. Therefore, that is also why ISO 22000 offers slightly less certainty. The basis for HACCP certification under the system of the Dutch national board of experts is much the same as for ISO 22000.

While HACCP, BRC, IFS focus on the practice of your company, ISO 22000 starts more from a chain concept.

Another important factor for choosing the appropriate system, is the existing or future demand of your clients for specific certificates.

An example of that is the BRC system, which was developed by British supermarkets for their private label suppliers and IFS was set up by German and later also French supermarkets as a reaction to the British initiative.

Our qualified auditors will be happy to help you make the right choice.

### **Where can I find the requirements?**

The first step towards certification is the obtainment of the standards of your choice.

For the BRC Food standard, you can obtain the Integra checklist at your request.

The International Food Standard (IFS) and the IFS Logistic Standard are only available on payment of a fee, on the IFS web site ([www.food-care.info](http://www.food-care.info)), where you can download an order form. The IFS Standard is available in the following languages: Dutch, English, French and German.

The same goes for the ISO 22000 standard, available on [www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch).

Also the complete BRC Global Standard Food and BRC Global Standard Storage and Distribution are only available on payment of a fee ([www.brc.org.uk](http://www.brc.org.uk)).

## **2. Request for quotation**

A company considering certification under a food safety management system can request a quotation from Integra. The info package you receive from Integra contains a quotation request form. If you wish to receive a quotation, you simply fill out this form and forward it to Integra. This document will provide us with all information regarding your company, necessary for a correct quotation. The more detailed your info, the better our quotation will fit your needs.

## **3. Quotation**

Integra will send you a quotation mentioning prices for an initial audit, surveillance audits and possible preaudit. The quotation also contains all details regarding additional costs and expenses. The quotation also specifies the possible surveillance audit frequency.

Integra will also enclose 2 copies of the certification agreement(s) for the food safety management system(s) of your choice.

## **4. Request for certification and certification agreement**

If you accept our quotation, you can sign and return the quotation to Integra, together with two copies of the certification agreement(s) signed by a company representative.

One copy of the agreement(s) is signed by Integra and is returned to you.

These agreements remain valid for 3 years.

## **5. Preaudit**

If you wish you can first book a preaudit, allowing the auditor to verify to what extent the standards are already being applied at your company and if you are ready for the initial audit.

At the end of the preaudit you receive a list with the nonconformities.

If required, this report can be extended to include a full company assessment. However, in that case additional reporting time will be charged.

## **6. Initial audit**

The next step is the initial audit; the auditor will set a date in consultation with you.

In case you object to the choice of auditor you may direct your concerns to Integra in writing.

All criteria of the relevant standards will be audited.

To facilitate the procedure, we ask you to forward your quality manual and HACCP studies beforehand, so that the auditor can examine them at his office and use them for a targeted preparation.

If you choose not to provide these documents beforehand, they will be examined during the audit. In that case the auditor may decide to add additional audit time on site.

Next comes the actual audit on site. This includes the following steps:

- ✓ opening meeting
- ✓ short company visit to get acquainted with products and processes
- ✓ documentation audit

- ✓ inspection and audit of the company: infrastructures, operating procedures, etc. are assessed by means of visual inspections, document evaluation and inspection and interviews
- ✓ processing of audit data by the auditor
- ✓ closing meeting during which any nonconformities are presented and the corrective measures to be taken by you are discussed

For ISO 22000, the initial audit will be divided into two parts to be conducted on-site at your company:

- the first phase will evaluate the degree to which the system is certifiable, whether correct PRP and CCP are indicated, relevant activities, ...
- the second phase will review whether the described system has actually been implemented

If results from the first phase are positive, the second phase can be carried out directly after the first one. If this is not the case, the second phase will be conducted at a later time. Duration for both phases will be negotiated between the parties but may not last longer than six months.

The various standards' requirements are assessed and marked during the audit. The scoring system differs for each certification system.

At the end of the initial audit, you will receive a provisional audit report containing all nonconformities and the terms for corrective action.

## 7. Correction of nonconformities

For all systems you should present your corrective measures after the audit, based on analysis of possible causes of the observed shortcomings.

Also here there are some differences between the various systems.

	<i>Period</i>	<i>What to deliver</i>
BRC (both standards)	28 days	Proof of corrective measure
IFS (both standards)	28 days	Action plan
ISO22000	28 days	Action plan
HACCP	28 days	Action plan

The information provided by you, will be examined by the auditor. When needed, he will contact you for further details.

If the auditor agrees with the corrective measures proposed by you, the report is completed and forwarded to the person in charge at Integra.

## **8. Post-audit**

Depending on the audit results, it may be necessary to evaluate the corrective measures on site during a post-audit.

The extent of this audit will depend on the standard and the audit score, and can go from verifying the major (or more serious) nonconformities to performing an entirely new audit.

The post-audit and the extent thereof will be communicated within 5 days from the audit it refers to.

## **9. Audit report and certification**

Based on the audit report, Integra will decide on the issuance or refusal of the certificate.

The rules for certification are defined in the standard itself, as well as the term for the certification decision.

## **10. Invoicing and payment**

After each audit, the man-days are invoiced in accordance with the quotation, as well as travel and other expenses.

These invoices must be paid before a certificate is issued.

## **11. Certificate**

If all afore-mentioned requirements are met, a certificate is issued together with the final audit report.

The validity of the certificates is not the same for all systems.

## **12. Surveillance audits**

In accordance with the frequency specified in the standards and the quotation, surveillance audits will be performed on a regular basis (every 6, 12 or 24 months). Special attention will be paid to the correct follow-up of the nonconformities established during the previous audit.

With the exception of ISO 22000 and the HACCP system, these audits are again full audits, examining all requirements.

For surveillance audits it is not necessary to forward the quality manual and HACCP study beforehand.

For the performance of these audits, you will have to consider the date of the previous audit, not the certificate expiry date. We will make sure to send you a reminder.

### **13. Appeal and complaints**

If you do not agree with the decision of Integra, you may appeal this decision in writing explaining your concerns and submitting the appeal by registered mail. The procedure to be followed in this situation is explained in the agreement you conclude with Integra.

Complaints about the audits, decisions, or other steps in the certification process must be delivered in writing, including your concerns, within one month after a report was delivered or a decision was notified. Integra's complaint handling procedure is available upon request.