



SQF Program Food Sector Categories

4th Edition

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Preface

The following document provides a list of Food Industry Categories to be used in conjunction with the relevant publications within the SQF program. The list is to be used as a guide only. Examples are included in each industry group.

A Technical Committee reviews and makes recommendations on changes to the “SQF Program: Food Sector Categories” in line with the current requirements and expectations of the global food sector. Amendments are posted on the SQF web site. The document is reissued when warranted.

Suggestions for improvements to “SQF Program: Food Industry Categories” are encouraged from all users. They should be submitted in writing and be sent to the Technical Manager, SQF Institute, 2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22202, USA.

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Care should be taken to ensure that material used is from the current edition of the “SQF Program Food Sector Categories” and that it is updated whenever the document is amended or revised. The date of the “SQF Program Food Sector Categories” should therefore be clearly identified.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Food Sector Categories listed are used to facilitate a uniform approach to the management of the SQF Program.

2 SCOPE

This document applies to Certificates of Registration issued within the SQF Program, including, but not limited to Certificates of Registration, SQF Expert Registration, and SQF Auditor Registration.

3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document the relevant definitions given in the “SQF Program – Vocabulary” apply.

4 RISK LEVEL

Processes and products are classified as either **General Risk** or **High Risk** dependant upon the potential safety hazard that loss of control during processing poses to the intended consumer of the product. SQF Expert and SQF Auditor Applicants requesting a category that includes High Risk Processes are required to demonstrate specific training and/or work experience in those processes. Examples of high risk classifications are provided in the following table as guidance only and take into account that within certain Food Industry Categories there may well be low and High Risk Processes. For example Category 3 is generally considered a low risk category however, the category also includes the production and supply of bean sprouts, now accepted as a High Risk Food and involving a High Risk Process. Therefore to achieve registration to audit a bean sprout process the applicant will need to satisfy the requirements for High Risk Processes. Another example of a High Risk process is provided in the table below.

| Risk Classification | Description | Typical Business |
|---------------------|---|---|
| High Risk | Processing of ready-to-eat foods targeted at vulnerable groups and the manufacture of high risk food for a large customer base, prepared in one location and served in another. | For example caterers, nursing homes, home delivery operations, hospitals and child care centres and Producers supplying bean sprouts. |

5 SQF PROGRAM FOOD SECTOR CATEGORIES

Food Sector Categories are listed below. Applicants must demonstrate knowledge and practical experience in the categories requested for registration by completing Part D in the appropriate application. Additional categories can be added after initial registration provided the appropriate training and/or work experience can be demonstrated. Note the sub-categories (5A, 9B) are meant for demonstration purposes for the industry to aid in the determination of where products fall within a food sector category. Certifications should not be directed to a sub-category. SQF Consultant and SQF Auditor registrations will be registered to the main category, not the sub-categories.

| Primary Production – SQF 1000 Code – Food Applications | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| No. | Category (Suppliers Scope of Certification) | Description | Example | Level of Risk |
| 1 | Production, Capture and Harvesting of Livestock and Game Animals | Applies to the capture, transport, holding, intensive animal husbandry and free range farming of animals, but does not include fish. | Includes: | |
| | 1A Free Range Animal Production | | Deer, cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry, ostrich, emu, egg, etc. | LR |
| | 1B Intensive Animal Production | | Cattle, veal, lamb, pigs, poultry, eggs | LR |
| | 1C Dairy farming | | Cattle, sheep and goats | LR |
| | 1D Game Animals | | Buffalo, wild pigs, emu | LR |
| 1E Apiculture | | Bees | LR | |
| 2 | Growing and Harvesting of Animal Feeds | Applies to the production, harvesting, transport and storage of all non-processed sources of animal feeds. <i>Note: Excludes manufactured animal feed.</i> | Includes pasture, silage and hay. | LR |
| 3 | Growing and Production of Fresh Produce | Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, field packing, transport and controlled temperature storage of fresh whole fruit and vegetables. Includes all products grown under broad acre and intensive horticulture production systems, including orchards, viticulture, and hydroponics production and nursery operations. | All fruit and vegetable varieties including: | |
| | 3A Fresh produce that will undergo further processing | | Tropical and temperate tree fruits, carrots, beets, potatoes, wine grapes | LR |
| 3B Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Produce | | Table grapes, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, all forms of leafy greens, spring mix, tomatoes, peppers, herbs and spices and tomatoes, green onions, baby spinach, lettuce, melons etc | Some products and processes in category 3B are classified high risk. | |
| 4 | Fresh Produce Pack house Operations | Applies to the packing, sorting, grading, cleaning, controlled atmosphere temperature storage and transport of fresh and pre-packaged whole unprocessed fruits and vegetables for retail sale or further processing. | Includes all fruit and vegetable varieties which are packed in pack houses and which may undergo controlled atmosphere storage and transport. | LR |
| 5 | Extensive Broad Acre Agriculture Operations | Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, transport and storage of cereal and other grains. | All grain and cereal varieties including but not limited to Wheat, oats, pulse crops, soy, legumes, maize, corn and cotton | LR |
| | 5A Seed Production | | Mung bean seeds, alfalfa seeds, Watercress seeds. | Some products and processes in category 5A are classified high risk. |
| 6 | Harvest and Intensive Farming of Fish | Applies to the harvest and wild capture and intensive farming of freshwater and marine fishes and shellfish, including purification, transport and storage and extends to gilling, gutting, shucking and chilling operations at sea. | All fresh and salt water fish and shellfish species including: | |

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|-----------|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| 6A | Wild Caught Fish | | Tuna, abalone, lobster, shrimp, salmon, snapper and other finfish spp. | LR |
| 6B | Aquaculture and RTE fish. | | Tuna, oysters, mussels, salmon, tilapia, shrimp, basa, catfish etc. | Some products and processes in category 6B are classified high risk. |

| Primary Production – SQF 1000 Code – Non-Food Applications | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| No. | Category (Suppliers Scope of Certification) | Description | Example | Level of Risk |
| 28 | Provision of Crop Spray Services | Applies to the provision of a spray service on field crops. | Includes pesticides and fertilizers administered dry or in aqueous solution. | High risk activity depending on the method and time of application. |
| 29 | Provision of Field Harvest Services | Applies to the provision of manual labour and equipment to provide a field harvesting service. | Includes fresh fruit and vegetable pickers, rice-pickers, and nut pickers. | High risk activity for some crops. |

| Food Sector Categories: Processing and Manufacture – SQF 2000 Code | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| No. | Category (Suppliers Scope of Certification) | Description | Example of Products | Level of Risk |
| 4 | Fresh Produce Pack house Operations | Applies to the packing, sorting, grading, cleaning, controlled atmosphere temperature storage and transport of fresh and pre-packaged whole unprocessed fruits and vegetables for retail sale or further processing. | Includes all fruit and vegetable varieties which are packed in pack houses and which may undergo controlled atmosphere storage and transport. | LR |
| 7 | Slaughterhouse, Boning and Butchery Operations | Applies to the slaughtering, dressing, processing, transport, storage, chilling, freezing and wholesaling of all animal species and game animals for consumption and extends to all meat cuts. | Includes uncooked poultry, pork and red meat animal species prepared in retail butcher shops, boning rooms and meat wholesale markets, including ground (minced) meats. | LR |
| 7A | Red Meat | | Bone in and whole muscle fillet for pork and red meat species including ground (minced) red meat. | |
| 7B | Poultry Meat | | Bone in and whole muscle poultry fillet and ground (minced) poultry meat. | |
| 8 | Processing of Manufactured Meats and Poultry | Applies to the processing, manufacture, transport and storage operations where meat (all red meat species and poultry) is the major ingredient including all value-adding operations (e.g. cook-chill, crumbing, curing, smoking, cooking, drying, fermenting and vacuum packing) and chilling and freezing operations, but not canning of meat or poultry product. | Includes poultry, pork and red meats blends and raw heat-treated and fermented poultry, pork and red meats including salami, hot dogs, sausages, bacon, pepperoni, and meat pastes etc. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 9 | Seafood Processing | Applies to the processing, manufacture, transport and storage of all fish species and extends to value-adding operations including dismembering, fermenting, crumbing, smoking, cooking freezing, chilling, drying and vacuum packing, but not canning of fish product. | Includes: | |
| 9A | Raw fish and fishery products | | Whole fish, fish fillets, reformed fish cakes, coated fish portions uncooked fish product | Some products in category 9A are classified high risk. |
| 9B | Uncooked RTE Fish | | Sashimi, sushi and raw uncooked shellfish such as oyster and mussels | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 9C | Cooked RTE Fish | | Includes, surimi smoked cooked fish products chilled or frozen that require no further cooking prior to consumption. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 10 | Dairy Food Processing | Applies to the processing, transport and storage of food products from all species used for milk collection and extends to all value-adding operations including freezing ultra filtration, pasteurisation, evaporation/concentration, fermentation, clarification, culturing and spray drying of milk but not UHT operations. | Includes all milk collection and includes milk and cream, butter, cottage cheese, sour cream, all forms of cheese, yogurt, ice cream and dried milk. Includes milk substitutes such as soymilk and tofu (where the process and technology is essentially the same). Also includes infant formula. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 11 | Honey Processing | Applies to the processing, transport and storage of food products from all species used for honey collection | Includes honeycomb; pollen and royal jelly | Some high risk process knowledge required |

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| | | including value-added operations. Includes clarifying and treatment operations. | | |
| 12 | Egg Processing | Applies to the processing, transport and storage of food products from all species used for egg collection and processing. Pasteurization of liquid egg products. | Fresh shell eggs including value added products where egg is the major ingredient. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 13 | Bakery and Snack Food Processing | Applies to the processing, transport and storage of extruded snack foods and cake mix formulations and extends to all bakery operations. | Includes baked items such as meat pies, custard pies, bread, biscuits (cookies), cakes and mixes and all varieties of snack food. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 14 | Fruit and Vegetable Processing | Applies to the processing, transport, storage and distribution of all processed fruit and vegetable varieties including freezing, fermenting drying, slicing, dicing, cutting, and modified atmosphere processing of all fruits and vegetables. Does not include fruit or vegetable juice manufacture or the canning of fruits and vegetables. | Includes frozen. Fermented, dried, sliced, diced, cut, and modified (MAP) packaged fruit and vegetable products including prepared and deli salads. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 15 | Canning, UHT and Aseptic Operations | Applies to the processing, transport and storage of low acid canned foods, and sterilisation (retorting) UHT, other high temperature processes not covered elsewhere and the manufacture of the associated hermetically sealed containers. | Includes: | |
| 15A | Canning Operations | | The commercial sterilization of fish, meats, fruits and vegetables and other low acid soups and sauces in metal or glass containers or retort pouches. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 15B | UHT Operations | | The UHT treatment of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasteurized canned and chilled crab meat; • Milk or milk products; or • Egg or egg products; or • Fruit or vegetable juices. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 16 | Ice, Drink and Beverage Processing | Applies to fermentation, concentration aseptic filling or drying operations processes. Excludes powdered milk and pasteurisation and UHT treatment of milk or milk products or fruit and vegetable juicing operations. | Includes un-pasteurised fruit and vegetable fruit juice, cordial, carbonated soft drinks, carbonated and non carbonated waters, mineral water, ice, wine, beer and other alcoholic beverages, powdered beverage formulations and tea and coffee products. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 17 | Confectionary Manufacturing | Applies to the preparation, transport and storage of all types of confectionary and extends to all chocolate and imitation chocolate-based processing. | Includes all confectionary products which undergo refining, conching, starch moulding, compression, extrusion and vacuum cooking. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 18 | Preserved Foods Manufacture | Applies to the processing, transport and storage of all foods preserved under high temperature processes not covered elsewhere, compositionally preserved foods that are not high temperature processed or other alternative acceptable methods not covered elsewhere. | Includes dressings, mayonnaise, sauces, marinades, pickled foods, peanut butter, mustards, jams and fillings. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 19 | Food Ingredient Manufacture | Applies to the processing, blending, re-packaging transport and storage of dry food ingredients including cultures and yeast, but excludes dairy products, fermented meats or other fermented products mentioned elsewhere. | Includes starter cultures used in cheese, yogurt and wine manufacture and cultures used in the baking industry and other products such as vinegar used for the preservation of foods. Other additional products include additives, preservatives, flavourings, colourings, soup | Some high risk process knowledge required |

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| | | | mixes, sauces, dehydrated culinary products, salt, sugar, spices and other condiments. | |
| 20 | Recipe Meals Manufacture | Applies to the processing, receipt, controlled temperature storage and transport of foods prepared from a range of ingredients (mixed foods) that require cooking or heating prior to serving. | Includes RTE chilled meals and deserts, frozen meals, pizza, frozen pasta, soups, and meal solutions, sous vides products, and freeze-dried and dehydrated meals. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 21 | Oils, Fats, and the Manufacture of oil or fat-based spreads | Applies to the manufacture of all animal and vegetable oils and fats and to the manufacture of margarine. Includes clarifying and refining processes. | Includes shortening (animal and vegetable), oils (olive, peanut, corn, vegetable, sunflower, safflower, canola, nut, seed), and oil-based spreads such as margarine and oil based spreads. | LR |
| 22 | Processing of Cereal Grains and Nuts | Applies to the processing of cereals and nuts of all varieties, including sorting, grading, picking, handling of bulk grains, milling, and extruding and the roasting, drying, cutting, and grinding processing of nuts. | Includes wheat, maize, rice, barley, oats, millet, nut butters/pastes, pasta, breakfast cereals, and sliced, chopped, and ground nuts. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 23 | Food Catering and Food Service Operations | Applies to all food preparation and service activities, including transport, storage, and distribution undertaken with of prepared mixed foods that are ready to eat and do not require further treatment or processing by the consumer. | Includes food service caterers, retail delicatessen/self serve facilities, restaurants, fast food outlets, delicatessens, school cafeterias (canteens), hospital/institution meal services, childcare centers, and mobile and home delivery food services. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 24 | Food Retailing | Applies to the receipt, handling, storage and display at retail level of stable or pre-processed and packaged foods and/or food intended for further preparation by the consumer. | Includes all foods distributed and sold through retail outlets that are not considered high-risk foods. | LR |
| 25 | Fresh Produce Wholesaling and Distribution | Applies to the receipt, controlled temperature storage, display, consolidation and distribution of all perishable fresh produce at wholesale level. | Includes transportation, storage and delivery of all varieties of fresh unprocessed fruits and vegetables. | LR |
| 26 | Food Wholesaling and Distribution | Applies to the receipt, storage, display, consolidation and distribution of general food lines including dry goods, stable or pre-processed and packaged foods and/or food intended for further preparation by the consumer at wholesale level. | Includes all transportation, storage and delivery of all foods sold through retail and foodservice facilities that are low and high-risk foods. | LR |
| 31 | Manufacture of Dietary Supplements | Applies to the manufacture, blending, transport and storage of dietary supplements. | Includes vitamins, probiotics and label supplements. | High risk product and process knowledge required |
| 34 | Manufacture of Animal Feeds | Applies to the manufacture, blending, transport and storage of animal feeds. | Includes compounded and medicated feeds. | Some high risk process knowledge required |
| 35 | Broker or Agent | Applies to entities that source all types of food through domestic and import channels; procuring and assembling consignments according to a buyer specification. The broker/agent acts as a link between the producer/manufacture and the buyer. In some instances a broker/agent may never see or handle the product | All foods and beverages | LR |

| Food Sector Categories: Non Food Applications – SQF 2000 Code | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|----------------------|
| No. | Category (Suppliers Scope of Certification) | Description | Example of Products | Level of Risk |
| 27 | Manufacture of Food Sector Packaging Materials | Applies to the manufacture, storage and transport of food sector packaging materials. | Includes all food-grade packaging materials including flexible films, paperboard based containers, metal containers, flexible pouches, glass containers, plastic and foam containers (PET, polystyrene, etc.), and single-use foodservice products, | LR |
| 30 | Provision of Sanitation and Hygiene Services | Applies to the provision of sanitation and hygiene facilities and the servicing and maintenance of these facilities on site or in the field. | Includes stationary and portable lavatories, hand-washing stations, and foot baths and contract cleaning services. | LR |
| 32 | Fertilizer Manufacture | Applies to the manufacture, conditioning, storage and transport of fertilizers used for agriculture. | Includes soil conditioners, chemical and organic fertilizers. | LR |
| 33 | Manufacture of Agricultural Chemicals and Food Processing Aides | Applies to the manufacture, storage and transport of chemicals and aides used in the agricultural and processing sectors. | Includes food grade lubricants, post-harvest waxes and spray treatments and chemicals for clean-in-place systems. | LR |