

# Food Safety Culture

## Definition

Shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behavior toward food safety in, across and throughout an organization. Elements of food safety culture are those elements of the food safety management system which the senior management of a company may use to drive the food safety culture within the company. These include, but are not limited to:

- Communication about food safety policies and responsibilities
- Training
- Employee feedback on food safety related issues
- Performance measurement.

## Applicable Code Requirements

1. 2.1.1.1 ii.
2. 2.1.1.2

## Review Glossary Terms

1. Food Safety Culture

## Implementation & Audit Guidance

### What does it mean?

Very simply stated it is team members doing the right things even if someone is not watching. A site with a strong food safety culture has a fully implemented food safety system and addresses concerns or potential issues when they arise. Employees are empowered and encouraged to do the right things and report events that could impact the food safety of the product. Food safety culture is not achieved by conducting surveys or completing training classes. While those activities may be a starting place to determine the current level of the culture in a site, they are not the measure that an auditor will use to determine if a good food safety culture exists. That determination will rely heavily on accurate and complete food safety records, interviews with team members at all levels in the organization and observations of employee behavior.

### Why is it in the Code & why is it important?

Food Safety Culture was inherently always in the code just not called out specifically in one particular clause. As the definition states it is collectively those activities that create a favorable mindset that drives the behavior of everyone in an organization. Food safety culture would typically be driven from the top starting with senior management and extending through to all employees. This creates the need for it to be a part of the food safety policy statement.

### RIO Road to Audits (Records, Interviews, and Observations)

Records	Interviews	Observations
<p>The following are examples of records and/or documents to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food Safety Objectives &amp; Performance Measures</li> <li>▪ Organization Chart</li> <li>▪ Capital Project Plan</li> <li>▪ Work orders</li> <li>▪ Internal Audit Reports</li> <li>▪ GMP Inspection Reports</li> <li>▪ Recognition Programs</li> <li>▪ Disciplinary Process</li> <li>▪ FS/Q Records</li> <li>▪ Training Records</li> <li>▪ Job Descriptions</li> </ul>	<p>The following are examples of records and/or documents to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All levels of the organization including the primary and secondary roles.</li> </ul> <p>The following are examples of questions to ask to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How is the site meeting their FS objectives? How are they measured?</li> <li>▪ Provide some examples of instances in which additional resources were needed. What is the role of those individuals?</li> <li>▪ IS the product safe to feed to your family and friends?</li> <li>▪ What happens if someone violates FS procedures?</li> <li>▪ Explain a time when management was made aware of a food safety issue. What was the response?</li> </ul>	<p>The following are examples of observations to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-verbal communications such as information boards, TV screens, and/or postings.</li> <li>▪ Behaviors such as picking up trash from the floor, putting items away not in use, organization of work area and/or hand washing.</li> <li>▪ Leadership by example-observing senior site managements behaviors.</li> <li>▪ Employee behavior during interviews such as hesitancy to answer questions or looking to management to answer.</li> <li>▪ Completion of FS/Q tasks correctly and to the correct frequency.</li> </ul>

### Additional References

- A Culture of Food Safety A position paper from GFSI  
<https://mygfsi.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GFSI-Food-Safety-Culture-Full.pdf>