

Document Control

Definition

Document control is the method by which a site ensures that all aspects of the food safety system is kept current and relevant. This includes procedures, policies, programs, specifications, work instructions, standard operating procedures and forms.

Implementation & Audit Guidance

What does it mean?

The supplier must prepare a food safety manual that documents the policies, procedures, pre-requisite programs, Food Safety Plan(s), specifications and work instructions necessary to support the development, implementation, maintenance and control of the SQF System. This includes forms which are the templates for records that are used to support the food safety system. The manual will include the company policy statement and an organizational chart. It will include the HACCP Food Safety Plan(s) for all products and processes included in the supplier's scope of certification.

The food safety manual must be practical, usable, and available to all employees with a responsibility for food safety. It is to be available in a form and language that meets the access needs, language and literacy levels of the operating staff. It can be stored electronically or in hard copy. and the currency and security of the manual must be controlled.

There is no prescribed format for how the manual is to be constructed. Format is determined by the supplier. It can be divided into a policy manual, food safety manual, or combined into one manual. It can be integrated with other operational procedures or housed in a separate SQF manual - the choice depends on what best suits the supplier's business.

A written procedure describing how documents will be maintained, updated and replaced must be developed and in place. A list or register of documents and forms, while not required, may be maintained to identify the current documents in use. It could include when they were issued, updated and who has a copy of each document. Documents referred to include, for example, pre-requisite programs, food safety plans, SSOPs, SOPs, other work instructions and raw material and finished product specifications, etc.

It is recommended that the supplier designate a staff member who is responsible for document storage and security and how documents are controlled; distributing current versions to relevant employees; and ensuring that documents are up to date. Worn, illegible or out-of-date documents must be replaced.

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

In general, food safety management systems involve “saying what you do,” e.g., documenting policies, specifications, procedures, HACCP plans and work instructions that agree with the standard (in this case, the SQF Code), and “doing what you say,” e.g., operating based on those documented policies and procedures. This is reflected throughout the SQF Code in the use of the terms “documented and implemented.” In the SQF Code the food safety manual is the documented system (“saying what you do”) that must be implemented (“doing what you say”).

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">■ Food Safety Manual■ Document control procedure■ Controlled document list/register including forms	<p>The following are examples of people to interview to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ SQF Practitioner■ Document control specialist <p>The following are examples of interview questions to ask to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Explain the process for making a revision to a current document.■ How are document revisions communicated?■ How is a new document created?	<p>The following are examples of observations to assist in the implementation and review of this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Observe the revision of various documents and forms in use during the site inspection and compare to the revision noted on the controlled document list or register