



TIP SHEET 7

APPROVED SUPPLIER PROGRAM

The approved supplier program ensures there is a proper program in place for selecting suppliers based on factors that include, but are not limited to, supplier history, supplier knowledge, and risk. This program provides the foundation for a properly documented, implemented, and maintained system for ensuring that approved suppliers and emergency suppliers adequately fulfill the responsibilities and safety precautions outlined by the site to ensure safe raw materials, ingredients and packaging are supplied.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- RECOGNIZE AND VET A SUPPLIER FOR APPROVAL
- DEFINE GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING A SUPPLIER

APPLICABLE CODE ELEMENT

- 2.4.4

KEY TERMS

- ECONOMIC ADULTERATION

The intentional substitution of a food, product or ingredient for economic gain.

- SUPPLIER

The entity that provides a product or service to the SQF certified site.

PROCESS STEPS

1. Identify the necessary suppliers to your site.
 - a. Document lists of ingredients, products and packaging sourced externally.
 - b. Evaluate each supplier, asking “Why?” – why is this particular supplier used?
 - i. Is the supplier a long-term partner with your site - why?
 - ii. Do you have more than one or two suppliers for this product or ingredient – why?
 - iii. Does this supplier provide you with the desired level of service and comply with your specification – why or why not?



TIP SHEET 7

2. Identify the risk of the ingredients purchased.
 - a. Are the products a low/medium/high risk to the site? Would production stop if you could not get this product from this supplier? Is the ingredient supplied in high volume by this supplier? Does the product have special handling requirements such as for temperature or microbiological specifications?
 - b. What is the risk of potential economic adulteration for each ingredient needed for purchase?



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3. Select suppliers using various risk-based tools.
 - a. Gauge the supplier's past history.
 - b. Consider conducting an assessment or using a score card for each supplier to ensure that necessary criteria are being met.
 - c. Determine if higher risk suppliers will require an onsite assessment by your company or a third party.



4. Define and compile documentation that outlines your site's approved supplier program. This may include documentation such as:
 - a. Creating a register of all approved suppliers;
 - b. Including the responsibilities and requirements outlined for each approved supplier;
 - c. Outlining the agreed specifications;

TIP SHEET 7

- d. Referencing to the rating of the level of risk applied to a raw material ingredients, packaging materials and services and the approved supplier;
- e. Providing a summary of the food safety controls implemented by the approved supplier;
- f. Detailing the methods for granting approved supplier status;
- g. Detailing the methods and frequency of monitoring approved suppliers;
- h. Providing details of the certificates of conformance if required; and
- i. Monitoring of the methods and frequency of reviewing approved supplier performance and status.



5. Determine a “Plan B” for approved suppliers in the case of an emergency
 - a. Prepare a list of suitable alternate suppliers should a back-up supplier be needed in an emergency situation.
 - b. Create a record detailing how incoming goods are to be inspected or analyzed.



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6. Conduct annual reviews of approved suppliers to be sure they continue to meet your criteria.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

- SQFI Documents
<http://www.sqfi.com/documents/>
- SQFI Public Search of Certified Suppliers
<https://www.sqfi.com/suppliers/assessment-database/public-search/>