

SQF Fundamentals Program FAQs

1) Will I get a certificate?

Yes. Sites that close out all of their non-conformities within thirty (30) days are deemed to have successfully implemented the SQF Fundamentals program. A certification decision will be made within forty-five (45) calendar days of the last day of the SQF Code audit and within ten (10) days from that you will receive a certificate which includes the following information:

- i. The name, address and logo of the certification body;
- ii. The heading “certificate of completion;”
- iii. The phrase “(site name) is registered as meeting the requirements of the SQF Fundamentals for Manufacturing, Basic or Intermediate, edition 1;”
- iv. The food sector categories and products included in the scope of registration;
- v. Dates of audit (last day), date of next re-certification audit, date of certification decision, and date of certificate expiry;
- vi. The SQF logo; and
- vii. Signatures of the authorized officer and issuing officer.

All certificates are valid for seventy five (75) days beyond the anniversary of the initial certification audit date.

2) Does the new SQF Fundamentals program require an unannounced audit?

No. The SQF Fundamentals program does not require an unannounced audit. These were removed to take the surprise out of the audit experience and allow the SQF Fundamentals Program to be used as a learning experience.

3) Will my retailer accept this program in lieu of my GFSI requirement?

Maybe. Many retailers have different requirements when it comes to their suppliers. The SQF Fundamentals Program was developed using the GFSI Global Markets toolkit. That toolkit meets many retailers and buyers requirements for small and medium enterprises.

4) What type of training will be available for the Fundamentals Code?

SQFI will be using a three pronged approach to adeptly address the learning and access needs for a varying audience:

- Online course (focus is on the Intermediate level)
- Paper-based, self-directed learning tools (SQF Tip Sheets)
- Instructor-led training

The online course is in development and will be available at the end of 2018. This is an easy access course via a computer or laptop. The advantage of the online course is that there is no need for travel, it is self-paced with the ability to repeat lessons and it includes knowledge checks for understanding.

The instructor-led training is also in development and will be available in Q3 of 2018. This is a face to face course with interaction and knowledge sharing including problem solving among industry peers. The advantage of the face to face training is that it is immediate expert advice and guidance and includes activities used to aid understanding.

The SQF Tip Sheets are self-guided tools that are available now for many key topics. This is a low cost (free) tool that can be downloaded or printed. These self-guided instruction sheets allow for progressive development of a food safety system and you can learn as much or as little as needed. The self-directed learning tools can be used alone or in conjunction with online or instructor-led training.

5) Will this replace the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals code?

Yes. Once the new SQF Fundamentals Program is implemented, the previous SQF Food Safety Fundamentals code will no longer be available. This may be a good opportunity for these existing sites utilizing the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals code to transition into one the SQF Food Safety Codes, which follows the requirements outlined by internationally recognized organization Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). If you feel like you still aren't ready to make this leap, existing SQF Fundamental sites will be required to implement the SQF Fundamentals Code for Manufacturing or Primary Production, Intermediate.

6) What do I use if I am not under the manufacturing or primary production Codes such as storage and distribution or food packaging?

If you don't fit under one of the SQF Fundamentals Codes (manufacturing or primary production), don't worry you can still use the SQF Fundamentals program. Your Certification Body can use the system elements (module 2) with the GxP module from the relevant SQF Food Safety Code. For example, if you are a packaging manufacturer who wants to start off in the Basic SQF Fundamentals Program. You will use the system elements from the SQF Fundamentals for Manufacturing, Basic code with the GMP module 13 for the SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturer of Food Packaging.

7) Can the Quality Code be used with the SQF Fundamentals Code?

No. A site can only be audited against the SQF Quality Code as an extension of an existing certification or re-certification audit to the SQF Food Safety Code, or as a stand-alone audit conducted when there is a site has current certificate to the SQF Food Safety Code.