



ALL ABOUT GFSI

Your organization has been asked to achieve Certification to a GFSI recognized standard.

What should you do?

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED TO BE GFSI CERTIFIED?

Many large retailers and multinational food manufacturers are demanding that their suppliers are certified to a GFSI recognized standard.

Obtaining a GFSI recognized Food Safety Certification is a “must” to do business with these organizations.

Food processors, manufacturers, and packaging manufacturers are all finding that more and more customers want to see this type of certification.



WHAT IS GFSI?

GFSI is a global network made up of all types of organizations involved with food and food safety such as certification bodies, government entities, academia, retailers, manufacturers and suppliers. GFSI reviews food safety management certification programs against a set of criteria they have developed with the input of industry experts from across the globe.

The certification schemes that meet the criteria are benchmarked by GFSI. GFSI does not itself develop standards, provide certification or offer training. You may hear the term "GFSI Certification." However, there is no GFSI Certification—what people mean is "Certification to a GFSI Benchmarked Standard."

GFSI benefits both manufacturers and their customers. Before GFSI, one of your customers may have asked you to be certified to one scheme while another customer asked for something different. Now, your customer can ask that you are certified to a GFSI benchmarked standard. You are free to decide which standard to select.

*You can view a list of the benchmarked standards at the **GFSI** website. **SQF**, **FSSC 22000** and **BRC** are popular choices.*

BENEFITS OF GFSI



Make Safer Food

Building a food safety management system allows your company to effectively manage food safety hazards. The GFSI guidance document identifies the key elements, requirements, and current best practices of a food safety management system.

Increase Your Market Reach

Certification can gain or retain you an important customer. Large retailers and multinational manufacturers or processors are demanding certification of their suppliers. By acquiring the certification, you become qualified to supply these organizations which opens large markets for your products.

Prepare for Regulatory Changes

Countries across the globe are making changes to food safety regulations. For example, the United States has passed the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Certification helps prepare your organization to meet many or most of the FSMA requirements.

HOW TO CHOOSE A PROGRAM

GFSI has benchmarked **SQF**, **BRC**, and **FSSC 22000** and others and determined that they meet the requirements outlined by GFSI. Because they are each GFSI Benchmarked, the programs are well recognized and have a similar requirements. However, they are not exactly the same.



Consider:

Which programs do your customers use?



What is your target market in terms of geography and product?

HOW LONG DOES CERTIFICATION TAKE?

This is an important question for planning, but the answer is: ***"it depends."***

It may take anywhere from 6 to 12 months or more to prepare. The length of time it takes to prepare for certification depends on the state of your current systems.

Having a HACCP Plan in place means that you have started down the road towards being prepared for certification. If you do not yet have a thorough HACCP Plan documented and implemented you will need to extend the timeline to certification.

If you have GMPs/PRPs in place, and a strong HACCP plan implemented you have a good start on the project. The next factor is what type of management system you have in place. This would

include processes such as: Corrective and preventive actions, Internal Audits, Management Responsibilities, Validation and Verification Processes, and more.

To identify how many of the requirements you already meet is to perform a Gap Analysis. Use a checklist with all of the requirements of the standard and systematically evaluate your current processes. Identify which requirements you meet, and which you do not. Put each of the items that you do not comply with on a project task list. You can then start to assign responsibilities and a timeline to each of the tasks.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Checklists

Training

Tools

Templates

STEPS TO PREPARE FOR CERTIFICATION

1. **Select** a GFSI Benchmarked Standard, for example, SQF, BRC, or FSSC 22000
2. **Learn** the requirements of the standard.
3. **Conduct** a Gap Analysis Audit to compare those requirements against what you already have in place.
4. **Implement** your food safety management system and document it.
5. **Train** employees and internal auditors.
6. **Perform** internal audits.

OPTIONS TO PREPARE FOR CERTIFICATION

Hire a Consultant

High cost, Quick process

Expensive daily rates and travel costs

Price scales quickly with each additional product, facility, and process

No one knows your operation like you do

FSMS designer incentivized to create dependency to re-hire them for implementation and design

Use Online Training

Low cost, Quick process

Flexible templates and checklists

Built off of best practices

Time tested, proven to work

Developed by industry experts

Creates in-house expertise

Includes step by step implementation process

Do It Yourself

Low cost, Long process

Reinventing the wheel

Trial and error

Higher risk

HOW WE HELP

Our **Complete Training Packages** include all the tutorials, tools, and templates you need to efficiently build a customized food safety system ready for certification.

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