



**dicentra Global Certifications' Conditions for
Maintaining Certification Statement**

Date

Client Name

Business Name

Address

City, Prov, Postal Code

Dear,

Congratulations on having obtained your SQF Certification! Please find enclosed a copy of your certificate. Note that an electronic copy of the certificate will be sent to you separately.

Please be advised that:

- Your certificate will remain valid for 75 days from the one year anniversary date of the initial certification audit date;
- As a certified registered site, you will be listed in the SQF Assessment Database, and your certification site details, including your food sector category, products, audit rating, and country, will be displayed on the SQFI website; and
- Should you wish to make any changes to the scope of your certification, dicentra will first need to conduct a new audit, and pending the outcome of the audit, a new certificate will be issued.

Please also see below, as per Section 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 of the SQF Code, edition 8.1, for additional information concerning maintaining your certification.



Please also see below, as per Section 4.6 and 4.7 of the SQF Code, edition 8.1, for additional information outlining the conditions for maintaining your certificate and the conditions under which the certificate may be suspended or withdrawn.

Kind regards,

Terry Johnson
SQF Administrator

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4.1 Maintaining Certification

To maintain SQF certification, a supplier is required to attain a "C - complies" audit rating or greater at re-certification audits, ensure that surveillance and/or re-certification audits occur within the required timeframe, ensure that no critical non-conformities are raised at surveillance or re-certification audits, and that all major and minor non-conformities are corrected within the time frame specified.

4.2 Surveillance Audit

The surveillance audit is conducted when the supplier attains a "C - complies" rating at a certification audit or re-certification audit. The surveillance audit shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the six (6) month anniversary of the last day of the previous certification or re-certification audit. A new score and rating is issued at the surveillance audit, however the re-certification audit date is not affected.

The purpose of the surveillance audit is to:

- i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;
- ii. Verify that the SQF System continues to be implemented as documented;
- iii. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the supplier's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the supplier's SQF System;
- iv. Confirm continued compliance with the requirements of the SQF Code;
- v. Verify all critical steps remain under control; and
- vi. Contribute to continued improvement of the supplier's SQF System and business operation.

Major or minor non-conformities raised at the surveillance audit shall be closed out as indicated in section 3.2.

The supplier's certificate shall be suspended by the certification body if:

- i. The supplier fails to permit the surveillance audit within the required timeframe;
- ii. A critical non-conformity is raised at the surveillance audit, or
- iii. The supplier fails to close out major or minor non-conformities within the agreed timeframe.

4.3 Recertification Audit

The re-certification audit of the SQF System is undertaken to verify the continued effectiveness of the supplier's SQF System in its entirety.



The re-certification audit shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the anniversary of the last day of the initial certification audit. The re-certification audit score is calculated in the same way as the initial certification audit, and the same rating applied (refer to 3.3 above).

Written approval by the SQF senior technical director is required to issue a temporary extension to a supplier's re-certification audit timeframe and certificate expiry date including instances in extreme circumstances such as acts of nature or extreme weather. Season suppliers shall refer to section Part A, section 4.9.

Situations that require a permanent change to the re-certification audit date require written approval by the SQF senior technical director and the supplier's new re-certification date may be moved earlier than the anniversary and the new re-certification date fixed as the new initial certification audit date.

All extension requests shall come from the certification body that issued the supplier's SQF certificate.

The purpose of the re-certification audit is to:

- i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;
- ii. Verify that the SQF System continues to be implemented as documented;
- iii. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the supplier's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the supplier's SQF System;
- iv. Verify all critical steps remain under control and the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF System;
- v. Verify the overall effectiveness of the SQF System in its entirety in the light of changes in operations;
- vi. Verify that the supplier continues to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF System and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements; and
- vii. Contribute to continued improvement of the supplier's SQF System and business operation.

4.4 Variations to the Re-certification Process

The requirements for the re-certification audit are the same as those described in sections 2.1 – 3.4 for the certification audit, with the following exceptions:

- i. An independent desk audit is not required as part of a re-certification audit. However an integrated desk and facility audit shall be conducted at each re-certification. The supplier's documentation shall be reviewed as necessary as part of the facility audit.
- ii. If the supplier fails to permit the re-certification or surveillance audit within the agreed timeframe, the certification body shall immediately suspend the supplier's certificate.



iii. If the supplier receives an “F – fails to comply” rating at the re-certification or surveillance audit, the certification body shall immediately suspend the supplier’s certificate.

If the supplier fails to close out non-conformities within the agreed timeframe, the certification body shall immediately suspend the supplier’s certificate.

4.5 Unannounced Re-certification Audit

Within three (3) certification cycles the certification body shall conduct one (1) unannounced re-certification audit of the supplier. The unannounced audit shall occur in the supplier’s facility within the sixty (60) day re-certification window (i.e., the anniversary date of the initial certification audit +/- thirty (30) days). Currently certified SQF suppliers shall be required to undertake one (1) unannounced audit within the three (3) year certification cycle:

- i. The supplier’s certification cycle begins with the initial certification audit date. Unannounced re-certification audits shall occur once in every three (3) certification cycles.
- ii. Unannounced audits shall not be conducted on the initial certification audit or on a surveillance audit.
- iii. If a supplier changes certification bodies, the supplier’s unannounced re-certification audit schedule shall not change.
- iv. The unannounced re-certification audit shall follow the protocol under the SQF Code, Part A, section 4.3 and 4.4.
- v. Multi-site suppliers are exempted from unannounced audits.
- vi. The date of the unannounced audit shall be determined by the certification body within the 60 day re-certification audit window. The unannounced audit year shall be determined between the supplier and certification body.
- vii. A defined blackout period shall be established by negotiation between the supplier and their certification body that prevents the unannounced re-certification audit from occurring out of season or when the facility is not operating for legitimate business reasons.
- viii. Immediate suspension of the supplier certificate will occur in facilities that refuse entry to the auditor for an unannounced audit.

4.6 Suspending Certification

The certification body shall suspend the SQF certificate if the supplier:

- i. fails to permit the re-certification or surveillance audit,
- ii. receives an “F – fails to comply” rating,
- iii. fails to take corrective action,



- iv. fails to permit an unannounced audit,
- v. fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified, or
- vi. where in the opinion of the CB, fails to maintain the requirements of the SQF Code.

Where the supplier's certificate is suspended, the certification body shall immediately amend the supplier details on the SQFI database to a suspended status indicating the reason for the suspension and the date of effect; and in writing:

- i. inform the supplier of the reasons for the action taken and the date of effect;
- ii. copy the senior technical director of SQFI on the notice of suspension sent to the supplier,
- iii. request that the supplier provides to the certification body, within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving notice of the suspension, a detailed corrective action plan outlining the corrective action to be taken. When the supplier's certificate is suspended, the certification body shall upon receipt of the detailed corrective action plan:
 - iv. Verify that the immediate correction has been taken by the means of an on-site audit and within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the corrective action plan;
 - v. When corrective action has been successfully implemented, re-instate the supplier status on the SQFI database and give written notice to the supplier that their certificate is no longer suspended;
 - vi. Not more than six (6) months after suspension, the certification body shall conduct a surveillance audit to verify the effective implementation of the corrective action plan and that the supplier SQF System is achieving stated objectives, and
 - vii. Copy SQFI on the notice indicating lifting of the suspension sent to the supplier.

When a certification body has suspended a supplier's SQF certificate, for the duration of suspension, the supplier shall not represent itself as holding an SQF certificate.

Quality Code suppliers must comply with Reference Appendix 3: SQF Quality Shield and Logo Rules of Use.

4.7 Withdrawing Certification

The certification body shall withdraw the certificate when the supplier:

- i. Has been placed under suspension and fails to submit approved corrective action plans as defined by the certification body, or take approved corrective action as determined by the certification body within the time frames specified;
- ii. Has falsified its records;
- iii. Fails to maintain the integrity of the SQF certificate; or
- iv. Has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the closure of the



supplier (except for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the supplier ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors or makes any arrangement or composition with its creditors.

In addition, a Quality Code supplier shall comply with Appendix 3: SQF Quality Shield and Logo Rules of Use. When the supplier's certificate is withdrawn, the certification body shall immediately amend the supplier's details on the SQF assessment database to a "withdrawn" status indicating the reason for the withdrawal and the date of effect; and in writing:

- i. Inform the supplier that the SQF certificate has been withdrawn, the reason for such action and the date of effect; and
- ii. Copy SQFI on the notice of withdrawal sent to the supplier,
- iii. Instruct the supplier to return the certificate;

In addition, for Quality Code suppliers, the certification body must comply with Appendix 3: SQF Quality Shield and Logo Rules of Use.

A supplier that has their certificate withdrawn must re-apply for certification.

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