

Criteria for
Approval of
**Food Safety
Programme
Auditors**



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Purpose

This document outlines the criteria applied by the Director General of New Zealand Food Safety Authority for the approval of auditors of food safety programmes under the Food Act 1981.

The authority to approve food safety programme auditor applications has been delegated by the Director – General to the Director of Approvals of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

In carrying out of the assessment of the Food Act process the Authority will give full recognition to the provisions contained in sections 8ZV – 8ZZF of the Food Act 1981.

Conditions that apply to all auditor approvals

General

Auditors of food safety programmes will be approved for a period of three years unless the approval is revoked earlier by the NZFSA or surrendered by the auditor. Bodies corporate (as well as individuals) may gain approval as auditors of food safety programmes provided they employ at least one person with the knowledge, experience and skills required to meet the criteria set out in this document.

The approval shall relate only to those classes of food operation which are specified by the NZFSA.

The audits carried out by approved auditors must address the following:

- compliance with the food safety requirements of the Food Act 1981
- compliance with the food safety requirements of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and the Food (Safety) Regulations 2002
- terms and conduction specified by the regulatory agency in relation to the exemption from the food Hygiene Regulation 1974 – compliance with the food safety programme
- the appropriateness of the food safety programme for the business

NB: Other details of the audit shall be determined by the terms of the individual contract between the food business and the auditor.

Independence, Impartiality and integrity

Auditors shall not engage in any activities that conflict with their independence of judgement and integrity in relation to audit activities. In particular, auditors shall not have been involved in the design or implementation of any food safety programme that they audit, other than in an advisory capacity which may arise during the normal course of the audit.

Auditors shall be free from any commercial, financial, regulatory and other pressures that might affect their judgement. Procedures shall ensure that persons or organisations, external to the auditor, do not influence the results of audits carried out.

Organisation and management

Auditors shall maintain the capability to audit satisfactorily.

Auditors are responsible for ensuring that audit activities are carried out in accordance with these criteria.

Auditors shall operate an effective quality management system appropriate to the work performed. Auditors who do not wish to establish their own quality management system, may still seek approval provided they are employed by, or have a contract with, any body corporate already approved to audit food safety programmes.

Auditors shall maintain a system for control of all documentation relating to their activities.

Auditors shall have available suitable and adequate facilities and equipment to permit all activities associated with the audit services to be effectively carried out. Auditors shall have a management plan that states both how their own equipment will be maintained and how they will access other equipment needed for their audit activities. The plan must verify that all equipment is accurate, reliable and obtained from a reputable source. Such documentation must be made available for inspection by an officer of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

Where a body corporate employs individual auditors, it shall verify:

- that all auditors are suitably qualified
- that all auditors are independent of the business(es) being audited
- that auditors do not audit in types of business outside those for which approval has been granted

Audit methods and procedures

Auditors shall have and use adequately documented procedures for all stages of the audit process.

All documentation and data relevant to the work of auditors shall be maintained up to date and be readily available for inspection by an officer of the NZFSA.

All audit findings shall be recorded in a timely manner to prevent loss of relevant information and shall be available to an officer of the NZFSA.

Auditors shall ensure that:

- audits to be undertaken are within their expertise and that they have adequate resources to meet the requirements
- the requirements of those seeking the auditing services are defined and that special conditions are understood
- the audit process is regularly reviewed – and appropriate corrective action applied
- each audit is reviewed with the owner of the food safety programme

Handling samples

Auditors shall ensure that any samples taken for verification are uniquely identified, are handled so as to maintain their integrity, and are representative of the process being audited.

Audit records

Auditors shall maintain an appropriate record system sufficient to permit satisfactory evaluation of the audits undertaken.

All records shall be safely stored, held secure and in confidence to the client, unless otherwise required by law.

Audit reports

The audit report to the client shall include all results of the examination of the process and the determination of conformity to the approved food safety programme. The report shall be accompanied by any information needed to facilitate its understanding and interpretation.

The audit report shall review the food safety programme to demonstrate that it remains valid and shall verify that the food safety programme is effectively in place.

The audit report shall contain details of any deficiencies in the approved food safety programme together with details of the agreed corrective actions and the timeframe for these actions to be carried out.

Audit reports shall be signed by the auditor.

Corrections or additions to an audit report after issue shall be recorded and reported in accordance with the other requirements of these criteria.

Auditors must supply to the regulatory agency granting the exemption, within seven working days of the completion of the audit, a report detailing the compliance with the agreed food safety programme, any detected variations or deficiencies, and the agreed corrective actions and the timeframes for these actions to be taken.

Whenever auditors become aware of any case in which critical control point (as defined in the Codex Alimentarius document on the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point [HACCP]) is either absent or ineffective, thus causing a potential risk to public health, they shall immediately notify the regulatory authority granting the exemption.

Subcontracting

When auditors subcontract any part of the audit, they shall demonstrate that the subcontractor is an approved auditor who is competent to perform the service in question.

Auditors may be assisted by persons who have specialist knowledge of technical skills but who are not approved auditors. In such cases the approved auditor shall remain accountable for the overall integrity of the audit process.

Auditors themselves shall normally perform the audits which they contract to undertake

Complaints and appeals

Auditors shall advise their clients of the intention to subcontract or use a specialist assistant(s) for any part of the audit. Both auditors should reasonably attempt to resolve any matter under dispute.

Details of unresolved disputes or complaints shall be reported by auditors to the regulatory agency granting the exemption.

Conditions for maintaining approval

Auditors must demonstrate that they will employ the systems and procedures necessary to ensure the ongoing integrity of the audit process (see section 3, Organisation and management).

Auditors must have in place a system acceptable to the NZFSA to provide independent verification of the effectiveness and integrity of their audit operation.

Auditors shall co-operate with designated officers who are carrying out their duties under the Food Act 1981 or action under instruction of the NZFSA.

Applying for auditor approval

(See Appendix 1, Summary of process of approval of auditors)

To allow the NZFSA to make a decision of whether an applicant meets the criteria for approval as an auditor under section 8ZV of the Food Act 1981, each application must be accompanied by the following supporting information:

- records of training and qualification
- detailed résumé of relevant experience
- name and contact details of three independent referees.

Auditors must demonstrate that they have knowledge, experience, skills and training in food safety auditing. This may relate to one or a number of classes of food operation depending upon the credentials of the individual. The NZFSA will approve auditors only for these classes of food operation for which they can demonstrate the required qualification, skill and experience.

Where appropriate, approval will be restricted to certain classes of food operation, depending on qualification, skills and experience of the applicant. This restriction is to ensure that there is integrity in the audit process for each individual business.

Auditing experience and knowledge

The applicant must show that they have either:

- satisfactorily completed an audit training course meeting the outcome criteria specified by the NZFSA (Appendices 2&3)
- sufficient practical experience to achieve the same outcome

Auditor competence will be assessed by the NZFSA in accordance with these criteria.

References

The applicant should provide references from three independent referees who can attest to the applicant's knowledge and experience in the activities for which the approval is being sought.

Independent Assessment

To assist applicants to demonstrate that they have met the training outcomes (see appendices 2 and 3) and performance criteria specified, NZFSA has drawn up agreements with International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) and Joint Accreditation Standards Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ). Under these agreements IANZ and JAS-ANZ can provide an independent expert assessment of an applicant.

NZFSA cannot insist that any applicant shall produce an IANZ or JAS-ANZ report. However, a positive report from IANZ or JAS-ANZ is an acceptable method of demonstrating technical skills and expertise for the purposes of processing an application. Applicants choosing to bypass the IANZ or JAS-ANZ assessment process must provide equivalent information from an acceptable source.

Under the agreements with IAN or JAS-ANZ, NZFSA will not require applicants to undergo a practical assessment of each class of food operation specified in their application. Rather, IANZ or JAS-ANZ will use one class assessment to determine the applicant's capability to audit in a professional and efficient manner.

This assessment will be carried out on a food safety programme that is auditable but not necessarily approved under the voluntary exemption process. Note that the food safety programme chosen must not be one that the applicant has helped to develop or implement.

IANZ or JAS-ANZ will assess the applicants documentation for each class of food operation specified.

If evidence provided is insufficient to demonstrate the applicant's skills and experience for any particular class of food operation, IANZ or JAS-ANZ may request the applicant to:

- provide more data
- undergo an (additional) assessment for that particular class of food operation
- refer the details to the NZFSA for a determination
- agree to have that class of food operation removed from the application.

Approvals, then, are subject to conditions set down by the NZFSA. If auditors wish to vary some of those conditions as a result of changing circumstances, they may apply for a variation. In such cases, only the area(s) covered by the variation in conditions will be subject to a formal assessment process.

Organisations with existing quality management systems which confirm to standards such as ISO 9000 may apply to have these recognised by IANZ. If an applicant can demonstrate conformity with a quality management system by way of a certifier's report, IANZ will confine its assessment to specific requirements for food safety programme auditing not covered by the existing quality management system.

The applicant will meet the cost of any elected method of satisfying the Authority. This will be in addition to the application fee paid to the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

A certificate will be provided to all applicants who gain approval as auditors of food safety programmes and details are available for public inspection at the NZFSA and local public health service units. A list of approved food safety programme auditors is also available on the Authority's web site (www.nzfsa.govt.nz). A list of approved auditors may also be obtained from the your local public health unit or the NZFSA on requests.

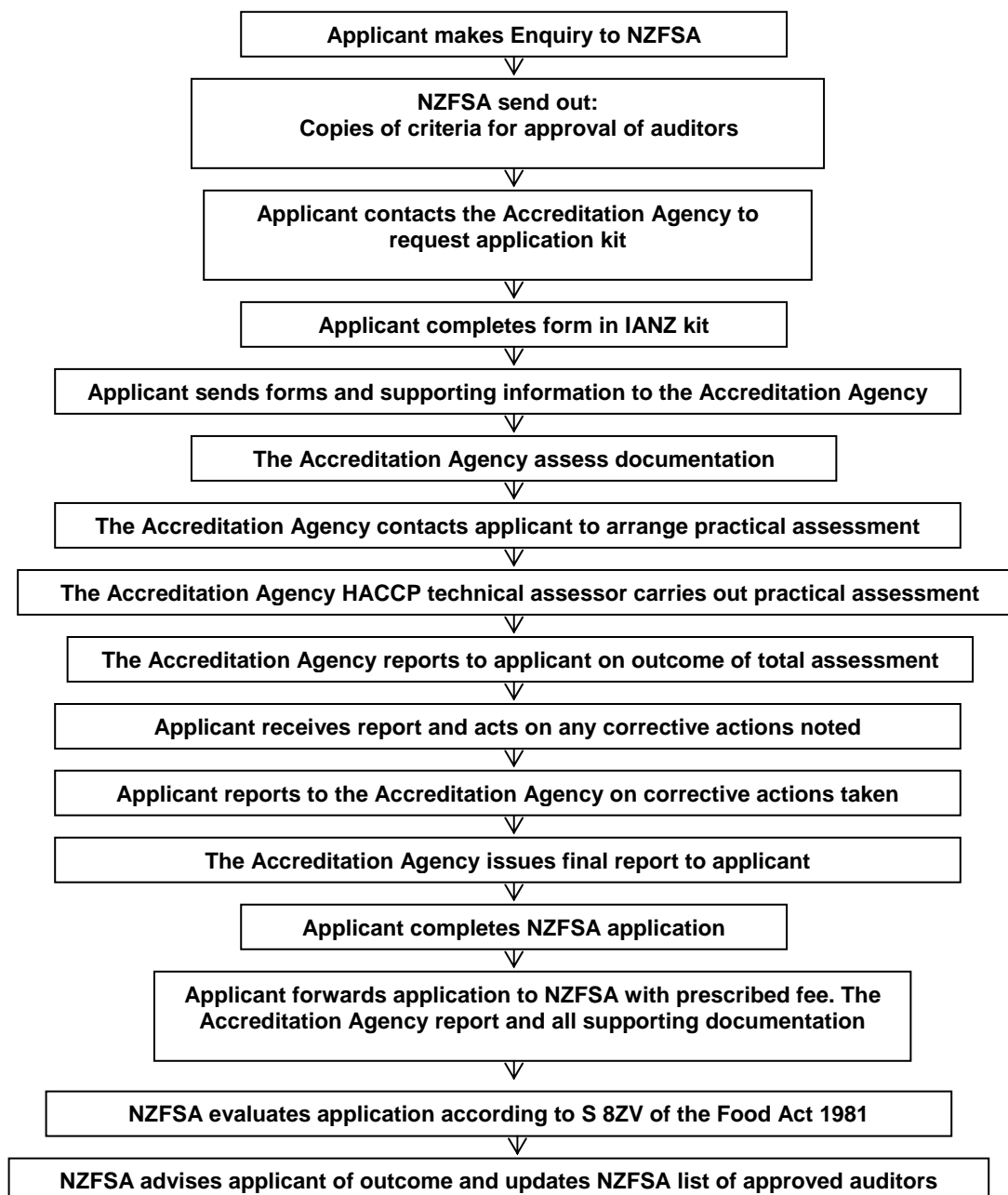
Fees

Application should be accompanied by the appropriate fee

(see www.nzfsa.govt.nz for the current auditors application fee)

Appendix 1: Summary of process for approval of auditors

Note: This flow chart summaries the process for approval where IANZ or JAS-ANZ is involved. The NZFSA reminds applicants that an IANZ or JAS-ANZ assessment is not essential to the approval process. Auditor's choosing to bypass the IANZ or JAS-ANZ assessment process must provide equivalent information from acceptable sources.



Appendix 2: Training in the implementation of a food safety programme based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system

Training outcome

The participant will be competent to contribute to the implementation of a food safety programme in a food business.

Performance criteria

The participant must be able to:

- identify and document the potential hazards associated with food production and service
- assess the likelihood of occurrence and potential severity of hazards
- determine critical control points to eliminate, manage, control, or minimise the likelihood of occurrence of each hazard
- establish critical limits, monitoring processes and corrective action for each critical control point
- establish procedures for dealing with substantial materials and for the recall of unsafe products in the market
- implement procedures for the verification of the effectiveness of hazard identification and the critical control point implementation
- establish procedures required for the operation of the food business
- establish effective organisational structures are in place
- establish effective systems are in place for the purchasing of safe food
- assess training needs and achieving appropriate staff competence
- ensure critical process instruments are calibrated'
- establish procedures for retention of records relating to the food safety programme

Competence assessment

Participants must be able to demonstrate their ability by completing independently a practical project involving the identification of hazards and critical control points in a food business and preparing an action plan for the manager of the food business.

Appendix 3: Training in the auditing of a food safety programme based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)

Training Outcome

The participant will have an advanced understanding of the principles and theory of the process of auditing a food safety programme.

Performance criteria

The participant must be able to:

- demonstrate a working knowledge of the requirements of a food safety programme and a code of practice
- understand the differences between inspection and auditing and the requirements of systems
- be able to establish with a client the criteria for a particular audit
- establish the steps for planning and implementing an audit
- conduct a pre-audit visit where necessary
- establish food safety programme documentation
- assemble an audit team with necessary competencies
- conduct entry and exit meetings where necessary
- conduct observation and interviews to assess practices in the food business and determine compliance with food safety programme requirements
- prepare audit findings and audit reports
- undertake follow-up where necessary
- conduct surveillance visit to determine the effectiveness of maintenance of the food safety programme where necessary or where required.

Competence assessment

Participants must be able to demonstrate their understanding of the principles and practice of auditing of food safety programmes by an examination testing knowledge of both the requirements of food safety programmes and the procedures and techniques of auditing

Application for
Approval as an Auditor
of food Safety Programmes

To: **Director, Approvals Group, C/o Advisor (Food Service and Import)**
New Zealand Food Safety Authority, PO Box 2835, Wellington 6140

Name of Applicant:

Applicant Company (*if applicable*)

Address:

Postal Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email :

As provided in section 8ZV of the Food Act, I apply for approval as an:

(*tick as appropriate*)

Auditor

Auditor Organisation

of Food Safety Programmes adopted by persons exempt from the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations 1974

I attach evidence¹ that I have met the training outcome and performance criteria specified by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority in **Criteria for Approval of Food Safety Programme Auditors**.

I also attach evidence² of my experience and qualification to audit food safety programmes for the following class(es) of operation:

(*tick as appropriate*)

retail sale of Food

eating houses (*including takeaways*)

manufacture of Frozen Food

catering establishments

manufacture of cook-chill

canneries

manufacture of 'high-risk'* food

Domestic Dairy

(*please specify*) _____

produce (primary/secondary processing)

Raw milk products manufacture

general manufacture of food

Other (please specify)

transport and storage of food

¹ Bodies corporate must employ at least one person with the knowledge, experience and skills required to meet the criteria set out in the document "Criteria for Approval of food Safety Programme Auditors"

² Any appropriate qualification, reference, curriculum vitae or record that demonstrates the appropriate knowledge and experience and which accompanied by independent expert assessment as detailed in the document "Criteria for Approval of Food Safety Programme Auditors."

* High-risk foods are foods that are classified as readily perishable foods and/ or foods that are perishable and ready-to-eat without further cooking.

I undertake to carry out any audits and submit reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Director, Approvals Group, New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

Signed (*Applicant*)

Date:

