



A Detailed Guide to SQF Certification

With

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Overview of SILLIKER Global Certification Services

SILLIKER Global Certification Services is a wholly owned subsidiary of SILLIKER Group Corporation

The organization was established as a separate legal entity to ensure that the inherent requirements of national and international standards relating to the operation of Product Certification Bodies will be fully complied with, particularly in regard to:

- ❖ **Impartiality**
- ❖ **Independence**
- ❖ **Confidentiality**
- ❖ **Objectivity**

in the Certification process and all related decisions.

The need for this degree of due diligence is not unusual. SILLIKER Group Corporation, as the parent company, with 40 locations in 12 countries, is recognized as the leading international network of accredited testing laboratories serving the food processing, retail, food service, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries. The move to expand operations to the provision of third party Certification Services was an obvious and logical one, that capitalises on the organizational strengths established over many years.

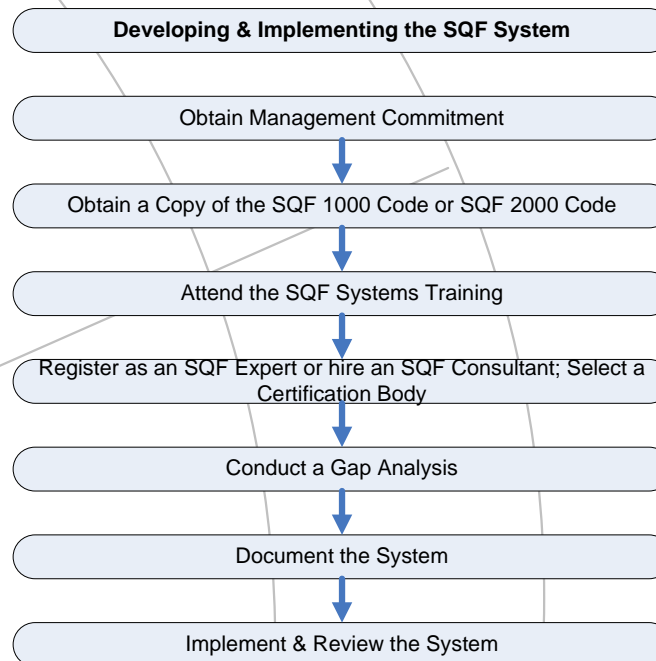
SILLIKER Global Certification Services is accredited by JAS-ANZ www.jas-anz.com.au



The SQF Certification Process

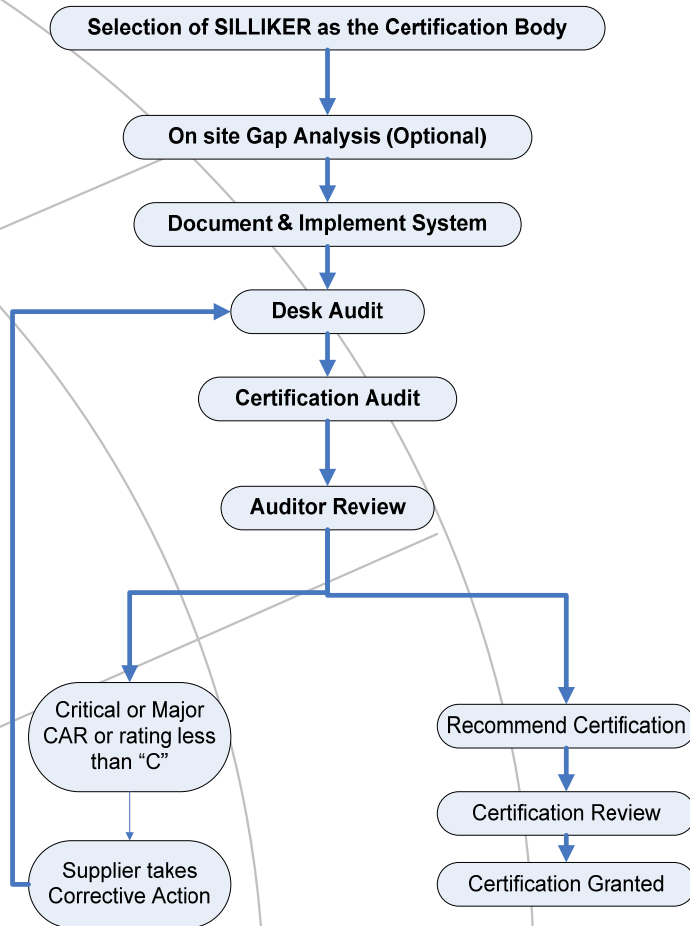
SQF Institute have published a *Detailed Guide for Implementing the SQF Audit and Certification Process*. This document can be downloaded by clicking on the following link (http://sqfi.com/detailed_guide.pdf). This guide is a useful reference tool in understanding the process flow of certification and is referenced extensively in this document.

By the time an organization is ready to consider seeking SQF certification a number of implementation steps will have already occurred within the organization as depicted in the above SQF Institute guide and reflected below.





The SILLIKER SQF Certification Process





The 6 steps to Certification with SILLIKER

| Step | Activity |
|------|---|
| 1 | <p>Selection of SILLIKER as the Certification Body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Firstly it will be necessary to complete the SILLIKER SQF Questionnaire. This document provides all of the information required to provide your organization with a tailored proposal ➤ Once the completed questionnaire is returned we will develop a tailored proposal for your scrutiny and acceptance. ➤ The proposal will include all costs associated with the Certification process. Due to the diversity of many operational process some elements of the proposal are provided as estimated costs which may be refined following the Desk Audit (Documentation Review) ➤ The proposal only becomes active once the acceptance is signed and returned |
| 2 | <p>The GAP Analysis/ Pre-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ While a GAP analysis/ pre-assessment can be conducted in house, or by an external SQF consultant, it can also be your chosen Certification Body, SILLIKER. ➤ Most organizations seeking SQF already have adequate food safety and quality assurance systems in place. The GAP Analysis reviews these systems to identify those that comply to the SQF requirements and also those that need development to meet the requirements of SQF. It may also provide SILLIKER with an operational understanding of your system in preparation for the Desk Audit. ➤ The outcomes of the GAP Analysis provide a foundation for the further development of documentation and the food safety system. |
| 3 | <p>The Desk Audit</p> <p>This activity is known by various names; Documentation Review, Stage 1 Audit, Desk Study etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In essence, it is a review of all documentation supporting your developed SQF system and must be conducted by the Certification Body ➤ Depending on discussions with you, SILLIKER can conduct this activity off site providing adequate access is given to required documentation and records. We prefer to undertake the Desk Audit onsite as it |



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| | <p>provides greater access in the event of queries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A report will be provided to you on completion of the Desk Audit identifying the level of compliance to the SQF requirements |
| 4 | <p>Corrective Action</p> <p>Where anomalies or non-compliant elements are identified during the Desk Audit, Corrective Actions will be documented and presented to you for resolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A timeframe for resolution of identified issues will be negotiated. ➤ Unfortunately the certification audit cannot proceed until any raised Non conformances have been addressed to the satisfaction of the SILLIKER audit team. ➤ Once resolved a date for the Certification audit is established and SILLIKER will provide you with an indicative audit plan. |
| 5 | <p>Certification Audit</p> <p>The certification audit is an onsite activity that assesses compliance of your total system to SQF requirements. Typically, the audit will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ an opening meeting with key personnel ➤ a tour of your facilities, ➤ review of key records, ➤ interviews with various staff at all levels in the organization, ➤ direct observation of processes and ➤ verification that test and other records are effective at the workplace. <p>For multisite certifications these activities will be replicated at all selected SQF 1000 sites SILLIKER utilize the approved SQFI audit checklists. These are available to you for review at http://www.sgfi.com/SQF_documents.htm</p> <p>Audit Review</p> <p>Immediately on completion of step 5 the audit team will review all audit findings, classify and document Corrective Actions and prepare the preliminary audit report</p> |



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| | <p>On conclusion of this review a closing meeting with you is conducted</p> <p>Where no Critical or Major Non conformances are identified the audit team will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ensure that a minimum rating of “C” is achieved based on the SQF Requirements; and ➤ complete the reporting process and recommend certification of your organization to the SILLIKER Certification Manager <p>Where Critical or Major Non Conformance are raised or a rating less than “C” is awarded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The audit team is unable to recommend Certification. ➤ The documented Corrective Actions presented to you must be reviewed and resolved in accordance with the timeframes defined below and forwarded to the audit team for closure. ➤ Depending on the issue raised this may require a further visit to your facilities to assess the corrective actions undertaken.. This is not a full system audit; it solely focuses on the activities relating to the Corrective Action(s). ➤ Once the Corrective Actions have been satisfactorily closed, the audit team will compile the final report and recommend Certification |
| 6 | <p>The Certification Decision</p> <p>On receipt of a recommendation to Certify your organization to SQF, the Certification Manager will, with the assistance of an independent, qualified SQF auditor undertake a comprehensive review all of the audit findings, including Corrective Actions and the associated closure evidence. Any anomalies will be resolved with the audit team directly</p> <p>Certification is then granted</p> |



We will register Your organization details on the SQFI Supplier database. The basic information pertaining to your certification is made available for public display and you may elect to allow your clients more specific details of your certification, including audit ratings etc

You will also receive:

- ❖ The final audit report.
- ❖ An SQF Certificate with a unique Supplier number is forwarded to you along with guidance documents for the use of the SQF trade marks & SILLIKER Certification logo.
- ❖ For SQF 2000 suppliers an indicative date for the surveillance audit that is required 6 months following Certification.
- ❖ A SILLIKER invoice.

The SILLIKER Proposal

Once you have completed the SILLIKER SQF questionnaire, we will develop and present a tailored proposal for your consideration.

This proposal will clearly identify

- ❖ The selected SQF Code.
- ❖ The relevant SQF Food Sector Category.
- ❖ The assigned risk.
- ❖ The Period of Certification and surveillance frequency for SQF 2000 certification.
- ❖ For multi site certification, the number of SQF 1000 sites covered by the certification.
- ❖ Estimated costs for a Gap Analysis.
- ❖ Estimated costs for the Desk Audit including associated planning and reporting.
- ❖ Costs for Certification Review, Certificate issue and administration.



- ❖ Relevant Accreditation Fees including the SQF royalty fee which is collected by SILLIKER on behalf of SQFI.
- ❖ Travel and associated charges where these apply.
- ❖ Additional activity rates should this be necessary.
- ❖ The Terms associated with acceptance.
- ❖ For new clients, a SILLIKER Credit Application.

Due to the diversity of the SQF Food Sector Categories and the SQFI Auditor qualification requirements, SILLIKER's available auditor pool comprises of both employed and contract auditors. To ensure we assign the most appropriately qualified SQF auditor to evaluate your system. This may be an approved contract SILLIKER auditor depending on the timing and relevant Food Sector categories.

Every SILLIKER auditor, employed or contract, undergo comprehensive selection, induction and ongoing performance monitoring to ensure our commitment to providing the highest calibre resources to our clients

In the unlikely event that you have an objection to the assigned auditor, please contact us and we will assign an alternative auditor



System Non Conformity

Non Conformances or Corrective Actions are raised where your SQF system does not comply with the relevant SQF requirements

Throughout any audit activity conducted by SILLIKER, identified system non conformities will be discussed with you immediately following detection. As a professional team we do not believe that it is of any value to defer discussion on non conformity until the closing meeting. Whilst we endeavour to explain requests for information/evidence, we recognize that, in a number of cases, the “pressure of being audited may result in some misunderstanding. Further discussion with the SQF system expert regarding relevant observations or unsuccessful requests for information may result in the elimination of potential non conformity or downgrading of a non conformity

SQF Institute has defined classification of Non Conformity at 3 levels. Below is a table identifying these along with the required timeframes for resolution

| Classification | Examples | Resolution Timeframe |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Critical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A break down of control(s) at a critical control point, Pre-requisite Program or other process step and judged likely to cause a significant public health risk whereby product safety is compromised and judged likely to result in a Class 1 or Class 2 recall and effective corrective action is not taken. ➤ Falsification of records relating to food safety controls and the SQF System ➤ A series of three (3) Major Non-Conformities that collectively result in a systems element breakdown. ➤ More than four (4) Major Non-Conformities detected across the total system. | <p>During the initial Certification process, certification is withheld until rectified and verified through a follow up audit</p> <p>During a surveillance or re-certification audit, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Immediate suspension of Certification will occur ➤ A Corrective Action Plan must be developed by you and reviewed by SILLIKER within 48 hours ➤ Closure must be achieved within 7 days and verified by a follow up audit ➤ An additional follow up audit must be |



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| | | conducted within 3 months |
| Major | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a lack or deficiency in the SQF System producing unsatisfactory conditions that carry a food safety or quality risk and likely to result in a systems element breakdown; or ➤ five (5) Minor Non-Conformities that collectively cause a systems element breakdown; or ➤ more than 10 Minor Non-Conformities identified across the total system | <p>During the certification audit, certification is withheld until rectified and verified through a follow up audit</p> <p>During a surveillance or re-certification audit, then evidence of effective closeout must be achieved within 14 days (or less if determined by the auditor).</p> |
| Minor | a lack or deficiency in the SQF System that produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed, may lead to a risk to food safety and quality but not likely to cause a systems element breakdown | Where a minor non-conformance is raised during any audit, then evidence of effective closeout must be achieved within 30 days . |

Suspension & Withdrawal of Certification

Obviously this is a subject that both SILLIKER and you would like to avoid, however we consider it important for you to be aware of the impact of certain actions or failure to comply to defined SQF requirements. The following provides guidance for you.

Suspension of Certification

Suspension will occur immediately when:



- ❖ A critical Non Conformance is detected; or
- ❖ Where you fail to undergo a scheduled audit within 30 days of the agreed date.

Suspensions are registered on the SQFI database and can only be lifted following satisfactory resolution of either of the above points.

Withdrawal of Certification

This action is initiated when:

- ❖ A Supplier under suspension fails to address a critical or Major CAR in the timeframes specified.
- ❖ Falsification of Records is identified.
- ❖ A Supplier fails to allow SILLIKER to conduct a scheduled audit.
- ❖ Evidence is identified that indicates a failure to comply with the Certificate of Registration.
- ❖ A Supplier uses the Certification Trade Mark whilst under suspension.
- ❖ A Supplier uses the Certification Trade Marks inappropriately or not in accordance with the Relevant SQF rules of use.
- ❖ An order is made or resolution passed for the winding up of the business.
- ❖ Bankruptcy or a supplier applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankruptcy or insolvent debtors

Complaints

In the event that a SILLIKER client wishes to register a complaint or suggestion in relation to their certification, these may be lodged directly with the Certification Manager (mike.wallace@silliker.com.au) or with any of the SILLIKER local offices.

On receipt SILLIKER will acknowledge and commence a quality investigation on the issue. Clients will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of their status of the matter.



All complaints and suggestions will be registered through our own quality system and reported regularly to senior management.

Alternatively, any client has the right to raise complaints to our Accreditation Body; JAS ANZ www.jas-anz.com.au

At certification all clients will also receive a guidance document on the process for addressing any complaints raised by users in relation to the SQF certification



Multi Site Certification

The following information has been developed from Annex 4, Criteria for Certification Bodies - SQF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 Edition 5 – Amended March 2006-General Requirements for Certification Bodies Offering Certification of SQF Systems. To qualify for multi site certification an organization must be certified, or eligible for certification, to SQF 2000 and have a network of sub sites that are eligible for certification to SQF 1000

All sites, including the SQF 200 site (the Central site) must carry out essentially similar activities; eg.

- ❖ a slaughterhouse operating with a group of contracted Primary Producers who supply animals for slaughter;
- ❖ a fruit pack-house receiving fruit from a group of contracted fruit growers;
- ❖ a grain receival depot or flour mill operating with a group of contracted grain Producers who supply grain for further processing or for storage and consolidation prior to bulk shipment;
- ❖ a fish processor operating with a group of contracted fishermen who supply fish for further processing; or
- ❖ Product(s) supplied by Sub-sites should be substantially, the same kind and produced according to the same fundamental methods and procedures.
- ❖ The Central-site shall establish a SQF 2000 management system and shall maintain Certification for the duration of the multi-site arrangement.
- ❖ The Central-site's SQF 2000 management system shall be administered under a centrally controlled plan and be subject to central management review. All the relevant Sub-sites (including the central administration function) shall be subject to the Central-site's internal Audit program and shall be Audited in accordance with that program prior to the Certification Body starting its assessment.
- ❖ The Central-site must be able to collect and analyze from all sites, including the Central-site, and authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required.
 - i System documentation and system changes;
 - ii management;
 - iii complaints;
 - iv evaluation of corrective actions; and
 - v internal Audit planning and evaluation of the results.



- ❖ The Central-site shall document its internal Audit procedure. The procedure shall include an internal audit schedule and outline the method and frequency of conducting audits of all Sub-sites and the Central-site.
- ❖ The Central-site shall ensure that personnel conducting internal Audits of the Multi-site Organization, and evaluating the results of those internal Audits, are trained in internal Audit procedures and that they are registered as a SQF Consultant or a SQF Auditor