

: Quality Assurance



2013 Audits in review

QA Update 14/07

WQA version 8 and SQF version 7.1 have been in effect for over 6 months now, therefore most companies that hold certification to either of these standards have been through at least one round of audits. A majority of these businesses have had successful outcomes, however they have seen an increased number of corrective actions raised.

The revised standards have 'lifted the bar' significantly with respect to the requirements for compliance. This has also seen some auditors struggle with the interpretation of the intent of the requirements of the relevant standards.

Here are a couple of pointers to ensure that your company gets the most from your next audit.

Tip One: Don't forget you are paying for the audit service and as such you should expect to get value for money. This is not just an exercise in attaining certification, the audit outcome and feedback provided should assist in the continual development and improvement of your quality management system.

Tip Two: The audit process should provide a comprehensive review of your operational compliance to the relevant standard/s and identify areas or opportunities for improvement. Auditors should audit for 'evidence of compliance' NOT 'evidence of noncompliance'.

Tip Three: Auditors should also have an ability to understand the risk category of your business and be able to make assessments accordingly. (A number of companies have had bad audit experiences when high risk certified auditors have audited low risk businesses as they are not always able to realign with the risk category.)

Tip Four: You have the right to request that a specific auditor not be assigned to your facility.

Tip Five: You are able to appeal or object to any CAR raised at audit if you feel it is unjustified or incorrectly raised or raised against the wrong standard. This usually involves contacting the technical reviewer for the particular certification body the auditor represents and providing the reviewer with evidence to justify your objection. (As an example if you receive a CAR for traceability because you have completed the exercise but not conducted a mass balance, if this is raised under WQA version 8 then the CAR is valid as mass balance is a specific requirement of that standard, if the CAR is raised under SQF then the CAR is invalid as SQF does not have a specific requirement to mass balance your traceability exercises and / or mock recalls.)

CONSUMER LEVEL RECALLS IN AUSTRALIA FOR DEC 2013

- 09/12/13 Sesame paste – Labelling error undeclared allergen (Peanut)
- 05/12/13 Sakata Paws Original 6 Pack Multipack – Undeclared allergen (Milk)
- 04/12/13 Old El Paso – Hot Chunky Tomato Salsa 300g – foreign objects (Glass)
- 03/12/13 Vodka Cruiser Sugar Free Pomegranate & Guava – Non compliant labelling (does not

include mandatory warning statement for phenylalanine)

AUSTRALIAN FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS 2013

 *December 2012 / January 2013*

Jindi soft cheese – A *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak linked to soft cheeses sickened 18 people in Australia; two victims died and one woman miscarried as a result of infection with the bacteria.

May 2013

Canberra – At least 100 people affected by Canberra's worst food poisoning outbreak, with 15 people admitted to hospital. The people became ill with salmonella poisoning after eating at the Copa Brazilian Churrasco restaurant in Dickson. Dozens of its customers presented to hospital with symptoms of salmonella poisoning, including diarrhoea, stomach cramps and fever. The ACT Chief Health Officer, Dr Paul Kelly confirmed that eggs used in a mayonnaise served at the Copa Brazilian Churrasco restaurant were the cause of the outbreak.

November 2013

Brisbane – Queensland health authorities investigated an outbreak of food poisoning. Fresh mayonnaise made with raw eggs were suspected to be the culprit.

Over 100 people have been hospitalised.

STOP POTENTIAL FOOD POISONING

One of the reasons that food poisoning may be increasing in western countries is that we no longer eat the traditional meat and three cooked vegetables but are consuming healthier food such as salads and fruit. Raw vegetables and fruit are great for our health but they can be contaminated from the soil they are grown in or by people handling them before purchase.

Everyone in the supply chain has a responsibility to ensure that their actions do not contribute to a food poisoning outbreak.

[Need Brismark's Help For more information on Brismark QA service contact Lisa Dwyer on 3915 4222 or email \[esm@brismark.com.au\]\(mailto:esm@brismark.com.au\)](#)