

2019

Guideline for Startup Food/Feed Business

FSQA GL 8 (2019)

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY AUTHORITY | Kotu East, Serrekunda, The
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Table of Contents

Preamble.....	2
Registration of the Food Business with FSQA	2
Establishment Location and/site Assessment for approval.....	2
Establishment/facility conformity Assessment	2
Assessment of processing Equipment.....	6
Development and Implementation of Food Safety Systems	7
Start of operations	7

Preamble

The guideline is designed to provide a guide to the requirements of the Authority for setting up a new food business. The primary responsibility of ensuring food safety and quality lies with the food business operator and therefore the requirements of the Authority (its Act, policies and regulations) which are set to ensure production of safe and wholesome foods and/or feed must be met. In the event of a violation of the provisions of the Food Safety and Quality Act 2011, the FBO might be subjected to sanctions including prosecution.

Registration of the Food Business with FSQA

All food businesses are obliged to register with the Authority according to **Part IX, Section 32 (1)** of the **Food Safety and Quality Act 2011**. Therefore, food and/feed business must register their business with the Authority prior to its operations. This can be done by picking up a form from the Authority, fill and submit or register online through the FSQA website (www.fsga.gm/). However you will be required to collect the registration certificate in Person from the FSQA Central Officer/Regional Offices.

Establishment Location and/site Assessment for approval

No establishment should be located in areas where there is an obvious threat to food safety except if proper interventions are taken to fully control the threat. Establishments should not be located in areas which might be:

- Polluted with industrial activities representing a serious threat to contamination of food
- Presenting risk of air pollution
- Prone to flooding
- A possible source of pest infestation
- Contaminated by solid or liquid waste or where such waste cannot be effectively removed

When possible, a protecting fence should be raised to protect the establishment from external pollution and contamination.

Therefore, all new food business must involve the Authority before taking a final decisions on the location of their establishment. Failure to comply might result to closure of your business from the location that is of threat to food safety.

Establishment/facility conformity Assessment

The establishment shall be situated close to sources of portable water and electricity and if possible in special designated industrial areas.

- **The plant should have at least four (4) doors:**
 - One door for the entry of raw materials
 - One door for the entry of production staff
 - One door for shipment of finished products
 - One for waste disposal
 - A fifth one can be necessary, in some cases, for the reception of packaging materials.

*Note: The above recommendation depends on the size and production capacity of establishment. For smaller establishment, should have a minimum of two doors (one for entry of raw materials and the other for finished products). Disposal of raw materials can be done with one of the two doors but before and after operation.

- **The onward flow principle.**

Successive production operations should ensure a forward progression of products, without back return, from the lowest level of development towards the highest one, from the least healthy conditions towards the healthiest one, from the least susceptible condition towards the most susceptible one.

In order not flout this rule, operators should not move from place to place- they should remain at work at the station at which they are placed.

- **No production line crisscross.**

Two (or more) production lines should not crisscross. They can be connected (e.g. assembly of composed products put into a previously washed package) or split (e.g. manufacturing lines of by-products obtained during the preparation of the main product).

- **Separation of cool and warm zones**

Areas where hot foodstuffs are handled shall be separated from those where cold foodstuffs are handled in order to avoid breaking the cold chain.

- **Separation of clean and dirty areas**

Waste produced at each stage of manufacture should be removed in the most direct way possible towards its treatment location(s) (e.g. dishwashing) or storage (e.g. waste handling).

*Remarks

When the layout of the establishment does not allow the application of the last two principles above i.e. separation of cool and warm zones; and separation of clean and dirty areas, it can be allowed to undertake processing activities in sequence at different times- in the same area, provided that control measures are deployed to reduce the risk of cross contamination and maintain the clod chain.

- **Portable water supply**

- A sufficient quality of portable water- hot and cold as appropriate- shall be available to the establishment.
- Networks of potable water and non-portable water (e.g. used for steam production, cooling systems e.tc) must be clearly identified and separated (e.g. used color coding of pipes).
- The portable water supply system shall satisfy the requirements laid down in section 4.4.1 of the standard CAC/RCP 1-1969, REV. 4 (2003) Recommended Code of Practice for Good Hygienic Practices. The quality of the potable water used in the process or cleaning purposes shall be:
 - Guaranteed by the supplier if taken from an external network, or
 - Demonstrated by results of analysis made by a recognized laboratory if the water supply is a well, or the other source, or intermediary storage tank belonging to the establishment.
- Ice and steam to be in contact with foodstuffs must be made from potable water.
- For fishery products, “clean sea water” may be used for the cleaning of products, equipment and utensils

- **Construction Requirements**

- Floors shall be:
 - Smooth
 - Non-skid
 - Hard-wearing
 - Washable
 - Not subjected to rot
 - Water proof
 - With a slope allowing easy drainage of used waters towards the drainage system of the establishment.

The drainage system must be equipped with grids and U-bends so as to avoid:

- The obstruction of the network by waste,
- Reflux of waste water, and
- Pest from entering the premises.

- Walls shall be:
 - Impervious with no toxic effect to intended use
 - Smooth
 - Washable
 - Light colored

- Not subjected to rot
- 'shock resistant' (up to 2 meters high)
- Easy to clean and disinfect
- Bonded to the floor by semicircular joints, with no nooks or crannies, to allow easy cleaning and drainage of wash and rinse water (see diagram below)
- Doors shall be:
 - Built in a smooth material resistant to impacts
 - Non-absorbent surfaces
 - Easy to clean and disinfect
 - Built so as to avoid the entry of all kind of pest into the premises from outside the building
- Windows shall be:
 - Easy to clean and disinfect
 - Equipped with fly screens that can be dismantled for cleaning
 - Built so as to avoid the entry of all kind of pests into the premises from outside the building
 - Free from degradation that would cause contamination
- Ceilings shall be:
 - Built to minimize dirt and condensation, and the shedding of particles
 - Light colored
 - Easy to clean and disinfect
 - Smooth
- Passive or mechanical ventilation devices shall:
 - Ensure the elimination of steam and smoke
 - Reduce the risk of condensation and air-borne contamination of food
 - Ensure air does not flow from the most contaminated areas to the least contaminated areas
 - Contribute efficiently to regulating the temperature of food preparation areas
- Lightning shall be:
 - Bright to enable the undertaking to operate in a hygienic manner
 - Neutral in color (so as not to modify/alter the foodstuff color)
 - Protected from impacts and designed so as to avoid physical hazards (glass, plastic, etc.) from falling in the foodstuffs during processing

Assessment of processing Equipment

- Equipment shall be:
 - Made of material with no toxic effect in intended use
 - Smooth
 - Not subjected to rot
 - Stainless
 - Washable (without nooks and crannies that are inaccessible for cleaning)

Compliance with these rules prohibits the use of undressed wood, cardboard or tape for the manufacture of furniture (or their use in temporary repairs).

Undressed wood of good quality can be accepted (if approved by the authority) in specified food processing sectors and situation, where it is traditionally in use. For example, bakeries, bread-making or cheese ripening rooms.

Equipment should not be placed adjacent to walls so as to allow for proper cleaning and for proper pest and cleaning inspection.

- Materials used to manufacture food contact surfaces such as tables shall be:
 - Made of from Non-toxic material
 - Smooth
 - Light colored
 - Impermeable
 - Not subjected to rot
 - Hard-wearing
 - Easy to clean and disinfect

Compliance with these rules prohibits the use of undressed wood or cardboard and porous or rough materials like rough concrete. The materials most often used are stainless steel, plastics and glazed earthenware tiles.

- Tools (used in food processing or preparation such as knives, cutters etc.) shall be:
 - Inalterable in all parts
 - Easy to clean and disinfect

The compliance with this principle prohibits the use of wood even for the handles of tools (e.g. knives with wooden handle). The materials most often used are stainless steel, aluminum and plastics. In some cases, traditional use of undressed wooden tools may be accepted (bakeries etc.)

- Machines shall:
 - Not be subject to deterioration, preferably stainless, definitely non-corrosive
 - Be easily dismantled
 - Be easy to clean and disinfect (without nooks and crannies that are inaccessible for cleaning)

Machines should not be installed against the walls so as to facilitate cleaning operations and limit harboring of pest.

Vehicles such as forklifts, used for handling in areas where foodstuffs are being processed or stored should not emit fumes presenting a food safety risk or health hazard.

Development and Implementation of Food Safety Systems

The production of safe food products requires that the HACCP system be built upon a solid foundation of prerequisite programs, otherwise your HACCP system will collapse/fail. Each segment of the food industry must provide the conditions necessary to protect food while it is under their control traditionally through the application of GMPs. These conditions and practices are now considered to be prerequisite to the development and implementation of effective HACCP plans. Prerequisite programs provide the basic environmental and operating conditions/activities that are necessary for the production of safe, wholesome food. It is essential to note that, prior to developing HACCP plans, the establishment shall develop and implement prerequisite programs to assist in controlling the likelihood of introducing food safety hazards to the product through the work environment and operational practices. The prerequisite programs shall be documented, updated whenever there are changes associated with the prerequisite programs and reassessed at least annually.

Therefore, all food establishments are required to establish and implement these systems before releasing the product to the market for public consumptions. The Authority has developed a guideline document for establishing these system (FSQA/GL 6 2019 and FSQA/GL 7 2019) and electronic copies can be obtain form www.fsqa.gm/ or printed copies at FSQA central Office for a minimal cost.

Start of operations

Upon fulfillment of the above set requirements, the Food Establishment of concern can start full scale production and release of products in the market for public consumption.

Note: there might be instance where an establishment might be allowed to start operations with the establishment of and implementation of the Prerequisites to HACCP but this is on case by case basis.