



BRC Food and IFS

Retailers Food Safety Standard

The BRC (British Retail Consortium) Global Standard and the IFS (International Food Standard) are standards created to ensure supplier compliance and secure retailers' ability to guarantee the quality and safety of the food products they sell.

BRC Food and IFS are the operational tools most frequently used by all players in the food chain, in order to select and qualify the suppliers. This reduces the overall costs of the process, and increases the level of safety for customers, suppliers, and consumers. Regarded as a ticket to trade, the standards are also a great opportunity to demonstrate your company's commitment to food safety, quality, and legality, and to work on continual improvement.

What are the standards?

The main retailers in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Europe in general are concerned about food safety because of their direct responsibility in case of an incident. To take control of the situation, retailers require that all food suppliers are certified to a specialised standard to ensure that they comply with quality and safety demands, and legal requirements.

BRC is the global standard for food retailers, while IFS is an international standard for auditing retailer and wholesaler branded food products. The requirements in the retailers' standards are related to the quality management system, the HACCP system, and the Factory Environmental Standards, which is a set of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) and GHP (Good Hygiene Practice) requirements.

Why is certification good for my business?

The most important European retailers and many food processing industries established BRC or IFS certification as a mandatory requirement to be included in their food and/or ingredients supplier list.

The standards enable your organisation to:

- Provide evidence of commitment, and, in case of a food safety incident, legal defence in the frame of the "due diligence" concept*.
- Build and operate a management system capable of helping you to better meet food quality/safety requirements and legal compliance, with specific reference to the legislation applicable in the countries where the finished product is consumed.
- Provide a tool for food safety performance improvement, and the means to monitor and measure food safety performance effectively.
- Facilitate reductions in product waste, product reworking, and product recall.

*The capability to be able to demonstrate that every reasonable measure has been taken to avoid an incident.

How can I prepare for certification?

Companies that plan well will often have an advantage and be better prepared for certification. It is important that you and your company are positive, committed, and set clear target dates for implementation and assessment.

This includes:

- Establishing a Quality Management System.
- Identifying legal requirements.
- Identifying and documenting the specific food safety hazards and the relevant control measures (HACCP system).
- Identifying the applicable Good Manufacturing Practice/Good Hygiene Practice, including a pest control program, equipment and building maintenance program, housekeeping and cleaning program, and all the specific standard requirements.
- Implement any needed structural improvements.