



# FPA-SAFE

## Supplier Audits for Food Excellence

The FPA-SAFE programme was designed by leading food companies to meet the global food industry's audit needs, including packaging manufacture.

FPA-SAFE provides a reliable, comprehensive assessment of a company's entire food quality and safety system, while reducing the time and expenses associated with redundant supplier audits.

Instead of each company relying on or imposing its own audit and audit checklist on suppliers, these companies have agreed to a single, comprehensive audit that is widely accepted within the industry. As a result, a single FPA-SAFE audit will satisfy the audit requirements of several customers, eliminating the need for costly, disruptive, and often duplicative audits.

What is the programme?

The fundamental characteristic of a SAFE audit is that there are no requirements, other than that the facility does not produce adulterated or illegal products. A requirement for one customer is negotiable, or maybe even not important, to another.

The SAFE auditor reviews your policies, procedures and actual practices, and provides that information in the report as an objective "virtual tour" of your quality systems. The auditor also provides his/her opinion, or "judgment", of the overall effectiveness of each system. Then your customers can read the report and determine for themselves whether your quality systems meet their expectations.

Two different checklists are available for food products and packaging products. The checklists are divided into five categories: Management Responsibility, Fundamentals, HACCP and Food Safety Systems, Quality Systems, and Regulatory Considerations. Each category is divided into one or more sections, which, in turn, are subdivided into one or more items. Each item covers some component of the facility's food safety and quality systems, and auditors are instructed to investigate each in an effort to learn and report what is really being done. The auditors answer literally hundreds of questions while compiling information for the report.

FPA-SAFE auditors do not score the audits, but a "scoring" option is available to your customers. It assigns a value to the auditor's judgments and calculates a "Quick Score" based on an equal weighting of all 36 audit sections. Another option available to your customers is a customised scoring template, which allows customers to weight each section to their own preferences. Every customer using the scoring option must decide for themselves the score that constitutes a "pass" or "fail".

Why is the programme good for my business?

Instead of customers individually imposing their own audit criteria on suppliers, the leading food companies participating in the SAFE programme have agreed to a common, comprehensive checklist that encompasses virtually all of their food safety and quality system audit needs.

For suppliers, participation in this programme will result in fewer disruptive audits, particularly if they serve food producers that participate in the FPA programme. The SAFE programme is designed to replace most, if not all, of them with a single, comprehensive, annual audit, saving both time and money.

In a SAFE audit, the auditor gets to know the facility's policies and procedures, performs an inspection of facility records and in-plant practices, and writes a comprehensive, objective, narrative "virtual tour" of his/her observations. This allows you to demonstrate, and your customer to read, what you are really doing.

One of the primary goals of the SAFE programme is to reduce the number of audits that a facility faces each year. To do this, the SAFE audit report must meet the informational needs of many customers. While few customers will need or want all of the information in a SAFE audit, each customer will have specific audit questions that the SAFE report must answer in order to make a follow-up audit less likely. The checklist was developed, and is continuously reviewed, by customers' auditors to ensure that every audit item meets some customers' needs for audit information.

How can I prepare for an audit?

There is only one SAFE requirement: the facility shall not produce adulterated or illegal products (referred to in the SAFE audit as a Critical Failure).

The audit request process is done online. You can request an audit on <http://www.fpa-safe.org/default.htm>, which provides the audit checklist and a step-by-step process to:

- Register your company
- Provide information about the facility to be audited
- Propose audit dates

It guides you in selecting the auditing company to bid on the audit. DNV responds directly to you with its proposal via the secure website. After entering your facility information, you will be e-mailed a username and password, which allows you to enter your personal homepage.