Fact Sheet

TÜV NORD CERT – BRC Standard for Food Safety, Version 7

TÜV®
TÜV NORD
TÜV NORD CERT GmbH
Tel.: +49 (0) 511 9986-1222
Fax: +49 (0) 511 9986-69 1900
info.tncert@tuev-nord.de

The BRC Global Standard for food safety was developed in order to specify in more detail the safety, quality and operational criteria for fulfilment of the applicable legal regulations and consumer protection measures in the food industry. The certification is recognised by many food retailers, food service companies and manufacturers worldwide in their assessment of the capabilities of their suppliers.

Target groups

The BRC standards are intended for food manufacturers – in particular those producing private labels, but also brand manufacturers, suppliers etc. – and also for manufacturers of packaging and packaging materials for the food industry and other sectors. BRC certification is of particular interest to companies who export to Great Britain.

Scope

The BRC specifies requirements for the manufacture of "processed" foods and preparation of primary products which are supplied as private labels of a particular retailer and branded foods and food or ingredients for use by catering companies, restaurants and food manufacturers.

Important changes in BRC Food Version 7

As of 1 July 2015, the seventh version of BRC Food will be mandatory and supersede BRC Food 6. The following changes are significant:

1. **New fundamental requirements*** – The ten fundamental requirements from Version 6 are retained, and there are two new fundamental requirements regarding label control and supplier management.
2. **Changed scoring system** – from now on, grades AA, A, B, C and D will be assigned.
3. **Free selection of unannounced programmes*** now applies to all sites.
4. **New BRC Programme – "Global Markets"***
5. **Additional voluntary modules*** can be included in the audit.
6. **Traceability** – the requirement for traceability becomes stricter, particularly in relation to suppliers.
7. **Authenticity** – in order to estimate the probability of counterfeits and prevent food fraud, risk assessments must be carried out and any necessary measures taken and/or sampling procedures introduced.
8. **Extended zone concept** – In addition to the "high care" and "high risk" zones for products with mandatory refrigeration, from now on there will also be a risk class for non-refrigerated products with high-care requirements. In addition, all operating areas must be divided into zones, which must be represented as plans.

* Further information is available in this Fact Sheet

The certification only applies for products which are manufactured or prepared at the audited site, and includes storage facilities which are under the direct control of the production site management.

The standard **does not** apply for:

- Food products which are not further processed at the audited site, or
- Activities associated with wholesale, importation, delivery or storage outside the direct control of the company.

Benefits

- Many retailers and food manufacturers only approve suppliers with BRC certification
- Supply capability is evidenced by means of listing and registration in the BRC database – drawing attention to certified suppliers
- Enhanced image of certified companies
- Reduction of risks and warranty claims
- Possibility of efficient and cost-effective combined audits (e.g. linked with other management systems/food safety systems)

Product categories

Audit scope		Individual categories
Raw products of animal or vegetable origin that require cooking prior to consumption	1	Raw red meat
	2	Raw poultry
	3	Raw prepared products (meat and vegetarian)
	4	Raw fish products and preparations
Fruit, vegetables and nuts	5	Fruit, vegetables and nuts
	6	Prepared fruit, vegetables and nuts
Processed foods and liquids with pasteurisation with UHT as heat treatment or similar technology	7	Dairy, liquid egg
Processed foods, ready to eat or heat	8	Cooked meat/fish products
	9	Raw cured and/or fermented meat and fish
	10	Ready meals and sandwiches, ready-to-eat desserts
Ambient stable products with pasteurisation or sterilisation as heat treatment	11	Low/high acidic products in cans/glass
Ambient stable products not involving sterilisation as heat treatment	12	Beverages
	13	Alcoholic drinks and fermented/brewed products
	14	Bakery
	15	Dried food and ingredients
	16	Confectionery
	17	Cereals and snacks
	18	Oils and fats

Preconditions

In addition to fulfilment of the requirements of the standard, the following criteria are decisive for certification according to BRC:

- Application of the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)
- Analysis of processes/technologies in the manufacturing of products and/or packaging
- Fulfilment of legal regulations with regard to facilities and equipment, products and services as well as qualification of personnel
- Classification of risks
- Auditing of the quality management system

Certification procedure

Offer by TÜV NORD CERT based on information provided

Order for certification

Audit planning

Certification audit

Nonconformity management (if appropriate)

Release of the certification process by the certification body

Award of certificate (depending on result, between 6 and 12 months) and registration in the BRC database

Audit duration

The duration of the audit depends on the following factors:

- Number of employees
  (calculated on the basis of the full-time employees, including seasonal work)
- Size of the production facility
  (including storage areas)
- Number of HACCP studies
  (One HACCP study relates to product groups with similar risks and manufacturing methods/technologies)

50 per cent of the calculated time is assigned to assessment of production. The company must ensure that the manufacturing processes for the products included in the scope of the certificate can be assessed during the audit.

Audit options

a) Announced

The audit date is agreed with TNC before the audit, and all requirements of the standard are assessed during the audit itself. Successful sites receive a certificate with grade AA, A, B, C or D, depending on the number and severity of nonconformities identified.

b) Unannounced

Unannounced audits offer sites the opportunity to demonstrate the maturity of their quality systems. Depending on the nonconformities identified during the audit, the grades AA+, A+, B+, C+ or D+ are awarded. There are two options for unannounced audits. In the case of Option 1, fulfilment of the entire standard is assessed during one single unannounced audit (~2-3 days). With Option 2, the audit visit is divided into two separate areas (with ~1-2 days each). During the first, unannounced visit good manufacturing practices will primarily be assessed, whilst the second, announced part concentrates on documented systems and documentary evidence.

c) Global markets

This three-stage programme corresponds to the GFSI Global Markets Programme and is most suitable for companies who are new to the standard and in the process of developing their food safety system. The programme allows sites to be assessed according to specified requirements of the BRC, which are categorised as basic or intermediate food safety requirements. This means that sites receive recognition at a basic or intermediate level before they finally achieve complete certification.

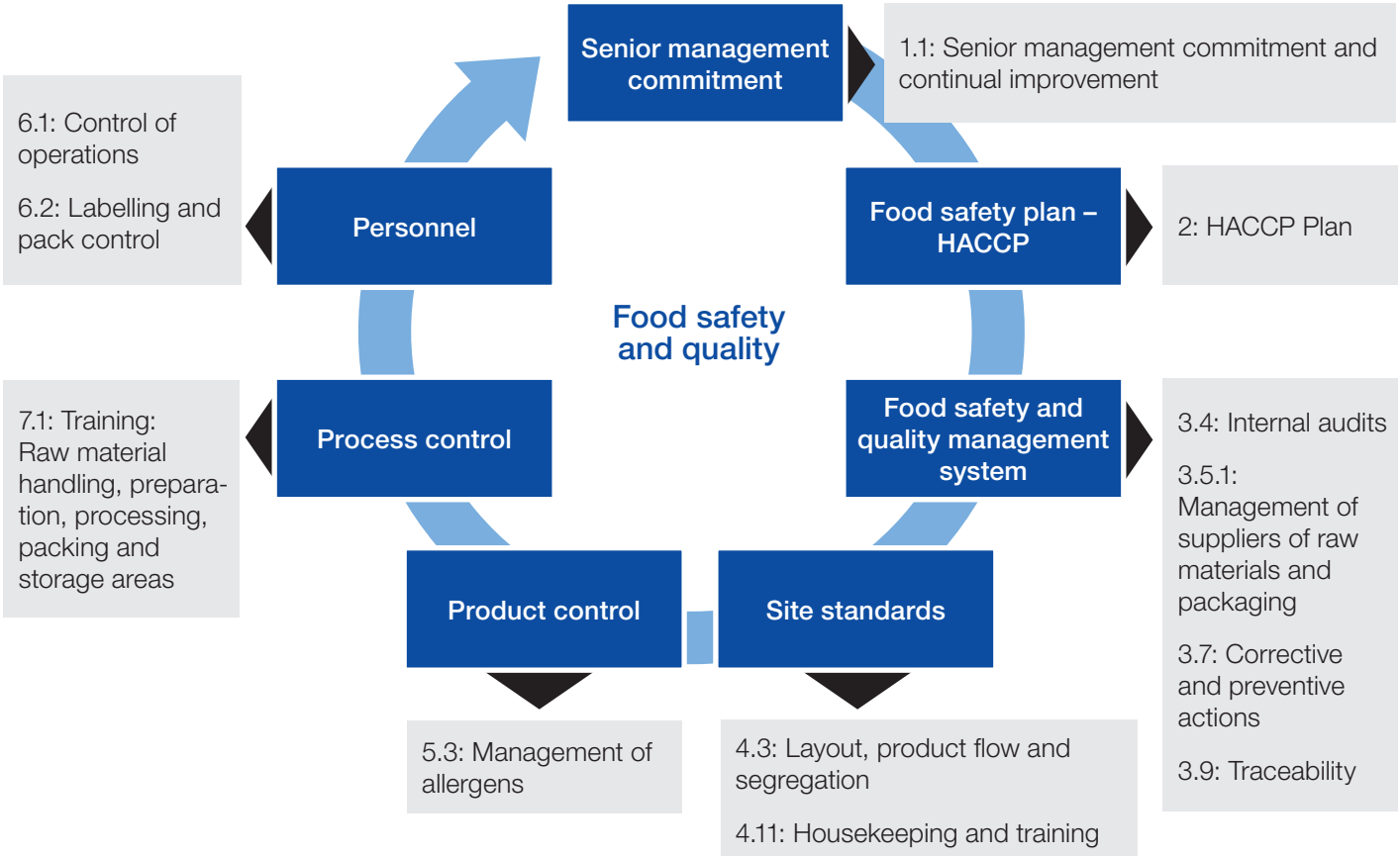
Voluntary modules

The standard has been designed to allow the addition of voluntary modules to the routine audit. The voluntary modules mean that sites can demonstrate compliance with specific groups of requirements in order to fulfil certain market or customer conditions. Every audit option can be added to the complete certification.

A list of voluntary modules, the applicable requirements and all specific clauses relating to them is available on the BRC website *(www.brcglobalstandards.com)*.

Requirements

The current requirements for certification to BRC 7 are assigned to seven main clauses. Within the standard, certain requirements are described as “fundamental”. These are shown in the diagram below in addition to the main clauses. Non-fulfilment of a fundamental requirement (i.e. a significant nonconformity) leads to non-certification in an initial audit or withdrawal of the certification if the nonconformity is identified in subsequent audits. If this occurs, a further full audit is necessary in order to provide evidence of fulfilment.



Nonconformities

There are three grades of nonconformities:

- **Critical:**
  Where there is a critical failure to comply with a food safety or legal issue
- **Major:**
  Where there is a critical failure to meet the requirements of a "statement of intent" or any clause of the Standard or a situation is identified which would, on the basis of available objective evidence, raise significant doubt as to the conformity of the product being supplied
- **Minor:**
  Where a clause has not fully been met but, on the basis of objective evidence, the conformity of the product is not in doubt.

If nonconformities are identified, the company must present the auditor with an action plan within 28 days along with evidences that prove that the nonconformities have been corrected or that corrections have been instigated (e.g. in case of actions concerning buildings).

Audits covering several sites

Generally, the audit, the report and the certificate are product- and site-specific. Under some circumstances, however, more than one site can be included in one certification.

Audits can cover several sites with different addresses if:

- all sites are under the same organisation ownership,
- all sites are operated with the same documented quality management system,
- the sites manufacture products that are a part of the same manufacturing process,
- the sites only supply the other sites, with no additional customers, and
- the sites are not more than 50 kilometres (30 miles) apart.

Further information

Further information as well as the Standard itself are available at the BRC website for downloading:

www.brcglobalstandards.com/

If you have any further questions, please contact TÜV NORD CERT directly.

TÜV NORD CERT GmbH
Tel.: +49 (0) 511 9986-1222
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