

NSF CERTIFICATION UK SERVICE PROTOCOL

For Certification against all the International Featured Standards

1 Application.

All applicants to the NSF Certification UK scheme for the IFS Standards are required to complete the NSF Certification UK Scheme application form for each audit. The application form also asks for an undertaking that the applicant will abide by the NSF Certification UK scheme rules "Certification Scheme Regulations Governing Accredited Certificates which must be adhered to. These can be found via the NSF Certification UK website link:

http://www.nsf-foodeurope.com/service.asp?service_id=certification&subservice_id=46

2 Arranging Assessments Visits

Assessments are conducted at a mutually convenient date. The audit frequencies and the method of demonstrating audit plans for deviations and correction of non conformities are detailed in individual Standards. A documented audit plan is required detailing how deviations and non conformities identified during an audit are to be addressed; for a Major or KO a revisit or a full re-audit after a period for improvement is required. Audit frequencies are 12 months. The assessment duration is determined using the IFS audit duration calculator based on information provided in the application form; (Broker 1 day); but certain factors can necessitate an increase or decrease in the duration of the evaluation. The time required will be assessed based on the information provided in the application form and by discussion in line with guidance contained in the individual IFS Standards.

3 Certification Charges and Invoicing

Assessment charges are calculated after consideration of the size, type and location of the operation. A typical assessment takes 2 days to complete, with a further half day for report writing. Travel to and from assessments will be charged at the current mileage rates and will be declared on any quotes. Overnight expenses are charged at cost. All assessment charges are agreed with the client and confirmed in writing. Normally the client is invoiced after completion of the assessment. In addition to the costs for the assessment the IFS make a charge of €200 + VAT for each assessment. This charge will be shown separately on your invoice and is paid directly and in full to the IFS by NSF Certification UK.

4 Cancellation of Assessment Visits

In the event a client wishes to cancel or postpone an assessment visit, written notification must be sent to NSF Certification UK at least ten working days prior to the date the assessment visit is due. In the event that an assessment visit is cancelled or postponed NSF Certification UK reserves the right to charge the client a cancellation fee as follows:

- ◆ Cancellation/postponement within 10 working days of the assessment date – 50 %, within 5 working days 75 % and if on the day of assessment – 100% of the full charge

5 Scope of assessments.

If there is any production IFS Food or IFS HPC is applicable. The IFS Broker is a Standard for auditing Brokers who select suppliers for retailer and wholesaler branded food and non-food products. The IFS Broker can only be used when the company has trading activities. If a Broker or other company runs transport, storage and distribution activities then IFS Logistics Standard applies.

The scope of the assessment will be defined with the client prior to undertaking the assessment and reconfirmed at the opening meeting. Parts of a site or operation may be excluded from the scope; such exclusions will be clearly defined in the report and certificate. Where a company, for example, has several storage / distribution sites all of which are operating to a centralised system managed at Head Office, a separate uncertified audit of the HO function will be undertaken. Satellite locations, cross docking / trans-shipment activities may be included in the audit of hub depot where specific criteria are met, or can be audited and certificated as separate sites.

6 Preparation for the assessment.

Prior to each assessment the operation should be reviewed in relation to the requirements of the Standard with a view to making any necessary amendments or improvements to the operation and systems. It is the supplier's responsibility to ensure that they are using the most up to date issue of the IFS Standard. It is important that the activities to be certified are in operation at the time of the assessment and this will be discussed when arranging the assessment. If particular operations such as loading occur at night or early in the morning it may be necessary for the assessment to occur at this time.

7 Assessment process

Assessments will usually be conducted in local languages. Assessments consist of six elements:

- Opening meeting; inspection of the operations – 33% of the site audit time; document review including HACCP or hazard and risk management and Quality Management Systems; Check back of audit trails, verification and further documentation checks; Final evaluation of findings by the auditor in preparation for the closing meeting; closing meeting.

It is expected that at the opening and closing meetings those attending on behalf of the company will be senior managers who have the appropriate authority to ensure that corrective action can be progressed, if non conformances are found. The assessor will prepare a copy of the assessment summary, deviations and non-conformances, which are left with the company's technical representative on the day or in exceptional circumstances provided within 1 day of the assessment. The decision to award certification has to be taken independently of the auditor following a review of the assessment report and any documented action plans provided or re-visit corrective action verification provided, independently by NSF Certification UK Management.

8 Assessment Reports

After each assessment a full written report is prepared in accordance with the required format dictated by the IFS.

9 Corrective Action assessment.

In order for a certificate to be issued it is necessary for action plans to be closed within 28 days and for a single Major re-visits to be completed satisfactorily 6 weeks to 6 months following the original assessment. More than one Major or KOs require a full re-audit.

10 Distribution of Assessment Reports

The report is despatched to the client usually within 42 days of the assessment date. The person paying for the assessment is regarded as the customer. As such, it is this party that receives the assessment report. Reports are also uploaded to the IFS database and will only be made available to IFS members when permitted by the owner of the report. NSF Certification UK will also retain a copy of the report and the information on which a certification decision is based for a period of 5 years.

11 Certificates

Certificates will be issued to clients who meet the requirements of the standard and in accordance with the requirements of the IFS Certification protocol. The certificate remains the property of NSF Certification UK and is issued subject to the client complying with the Rules Governing Certification.

12 Maintaining Certification.

It is the client's responsibility to maintain certification. The issue of the certificate provides an assurance to customers that NSF Certification UK has assessed the certified site and is satisfied that the requirements of the Standard have been met through the assessment and any corrective actions and that processes are in place to ensure that the standard is maintained for at least the duration of the certificate. It is important therefore for the integrity of the Standard that in the event that there are substantial changes to the premises or products, these must be notified in writing to NSF Certification UK.

13 Complaints and Appeals

NSF Certification UK operates a documented complaints and appeals procedure as part of the quality system. Complaints and appeals must be made in writing by named person(s) and addressed to the Quality Manager, NSF Certification UK Ltd, Long Hanborough, Oxford, OX29 8SJ.