Welcome to the second edition of Queensland Health’s food safety auditor newsletter. The newsletter is intended to provide information for auditors approved under the Food Act 2006, particularly in relation to new or topical issues.

Reviewed auditor resources

In the first edition of the auditor newsletter, you were invited to provide feedback on the usability and clarity of specific documents as part of a review of auditor resources. Food Safety Policy & Regulation has now completed a review of these resources and thanks those who submitted feedback for consideration during the review.

Major changes that have been made include:

★ The documents have been renamed for consistency and ease of identification.

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<th>Previous title &amp; document number</th>
<th>Reviewed title &amp; document number</th>
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<td>Notice of written advice – consideration for accreditation of a food safety program (FA03.1)</td>
<td>Food Act 2006 – Written advice for consideration of food safety program for accreditation (FA03.2)</td>
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<td>Food Act 2006 Food safety audit report (FA04.1)</td>
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<td>Notice of critical non-compliance (FA10.1)</td>
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<td>Food safety programs – Administration, accreditation, auditing and enforcement (guideline)</td>
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★ Documents FA03.2, FA04.2 and FA10.2 are no longer protected word documents with fields controlling the entry of data. They have been designed so that auditors can insert additional lines where necessary to ensure all relevant information is able to be included. Formatting has also been amended to improve usability.

★ Completed examples for documents FA03.2, FA04.2 and FA10.2 have been created and watermarked as ‘sample’. These documents are available to local governments and approved auditors in PDF format to illustrate using simple examples how the documents should be completed.

★ The guideline is discussed on the next page.

Copies of the reviewed documents can be found on our website - http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety/

You may notice that a set check list is not included on the templates, only examples are provided. This is because items for the assessment and audit of a food safety program will be specific to the program. A number of items will be common across all programs, but not all items will be identical meaning that a list should be developed for each program.

Some of the feedback received, while it was relevant to auditing, did not directly relate to the scope of the review. These items have been collated and will be considered as part of the ongoing management of the auditing framework, and related projects or activities conducted by Food Safety Policy & Regulation.

What this means for you

Your conditions of approval will soon be updated to reflect the reviewed titles of the templates and documents.

You are strongly encouraged to familiarise yourself with the reviewed documents and commence using them now. When you receive your revised conditions of approval you must commence using the new templates and conduct your audit activities in accordance with the reviewed guideline.

As part of the review, it was decided that auditor identification cards will no longer be issued. You are reminded that until you receive the revised conditions, you are required to comply with your current approval, including the requirement to carry and produce your identification card as described.
Guideline – Management of food safety programs Food Act 2006

As discussed on the previous page, some auditor resources under the Act have been reviewed.

You may notice that the document previously titled Food safety programs – Administration, accreditation, auditing and enforcement has been renamed and reformatted and is now titled Management of food safety programs – Food Act 2006. This is to create consistency and ease of identification within an existing suite of guidelines under the Act currently used by environmental health officers.

Changes

As noted in section 1 of the guideline, Queensland Health is obliged to meet national requirements in relation to food regulation. The majority of changes made to the guideline include simplifying the wording used, and aligning terminology and requirements to the National Food Safety Audit Policy, the National Regulatory Food Safety Auditor Guideline, The priority classification system for food businesses and the Food Act 2006.

Specific changes include:

- the removal of information on who needs a food safety program as this can be found in existing fact sheets
- the removal of references to corrective action requests (CARs) as these are not part of the Act
- the removal of forms from the appendices as all forms are available online

Audit methodology

Audits should be conducted in accordance with the skills and knowledge covered in the competency FDFFSCFSAA Conduct food safety audits. Auditors may find it useful to refer to resources obtained while completing this competency. Further guidance on planning and conducting audits can be found in the National Regulatory Food Safety Auditor Guideline (available from the Food Regulation Secretariat in the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing - www.health.gov.au).

Hot topics

Renewals

If you wish to apply for a renewal of your approval as an auditor under the Food Act 2006, you must comply with the renewal provisions of the Act. An application for renewal must be made in the 30 days before the expiry of your approval, be in the approved form, be signed by the applicant and be accompanied by the prescribed fee (including an application fee of $100 and an approval fee of $215 per year).

If you apply for renewal of your approval as an auditor prior to your approval expiring (in accordance with the Act), your approval is taken to continue in force from the expiry date until the application for renewal is decided. This means that until you either receive your new approval, or receive notice of refusal, you can continue to conduct activities as an auditor under the Act.

Use of templates and documents

Standard conditions on all auditors’ approvals require auditors to use templates produced by Queensland Health when conducting auditing activities under the Act and to conduct audit activities in accordance with the guideline.

These conditions are included to assist in maintaining the integrity of Queensland Health’s food safety audit system by encouraging consistency across auditors, establishing a formalised approach to auditing activities and promoting the use of appropriate and consistent terminology and assessment criteria.

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