Choosing an auditor

This fact sheet aims to assist those food businesses who have an accredited food safety program under the Food Act 2006 (the Act) to choose an auditor.

What is an auditor?

An auditor is a person approved under the Act to perform the functions of an auditor under the Act, which include:

- advising local government about the accreditation of food safety programs.
- conducting audits of accredited food safety programs.
- preparing reports of audits conducted.
- giving the local government or the Queensland Department of Health information requested about audits conducted.

Only auditors who are approved under the Act can perform audit functions required by the Act.

How do auditors get approved?

Persons wanting to be an approved auditor under the Act must submit an application to the Department of Health. The Department of Health considers the application and ensures that the person has the expertise or experience to perform the functions of an auditor and that the person is a suitable person to be an auditor.

Do I need an approved auditor?

Under the Act, certain licensable food businesses in Queensland must have a food safety program accredited by their local government. This includes catering operations, private hospitals and food businesses processing or serving potentially hazardous food to six or more vulnerable persons. For further information on the food safety program requirements for these food businesses, see Food Safety Fact Sheets 22 and 23.

Other food businesses that are not required to have a food safety program under the Act may also apply for accreditation of their food safety program if they choose, see Food Safety Fact Sheet 24.

Food businesses that have an accredited food safety program must have the program audited in accordance with the frequency set by the local government that accredited the program. If you have a food safety program accredited under the Act, all auditing functions must be undertaken by an auditor approved under the Act.

How do I find an auditor?

The Queensland Department of Health keeps a register of auditors approved under the Act at www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety. The register contains the name and contact details of the auditor, the conditions of the auditor’s approval and the term of the approval.

In some instances, the local government that accredited the food safety program may also offer auditing services.
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All audits undertaken in relation to the Act must be undertaken by an auditor approved under the Act to conduct audits for the specified type of food business.

There is no requirement for a food business to use a specific auditor, or to use the same auditor for every audit. The food business may choose to engage any auditor approved under the Act for their food business type.

The Department of Health and local governments are unable to enforce an agreement between a food business and an auditor or insist that there be an ongoing agreement.

The Act does not prescribe fees that auditors or local governments may charge for auditing and managing food safety program activities. Audit fees are set by auditors in response to market forces and by local governments in accordance with the Act.

Some factors to consider when choosing an approved auditor may include:

- referring to the register of auditors to find an auditor that provides services within your area and performs audits specific to your type of food business.
- asking to see the auditor’s current approval, taking note of the term of approval and the scope of the approval.
- asking the auditor what his or her experience is in conducting audits for your type of food business operation.
- confirming that the auditor is available to conduct the audit at a suitable time and prior to the date it is due.
- agreeing on the cost and payment terms prior to the audit being conducted.

Food businesses should ensure that they receive an audit report from the auditor within 14 days after the audit is conducted.

Do I have to use the local government’s auditors?

No. While some local governments have employees who are also auditors, there is no legislative requirement stating that food businesses must use anyone in particular, only that auditing functions under the Act must be conducted by auditors approved under the Act.

For further information

The Queensland Department of Health has a variety of fact sheets with detailed information on food safety. Food Safety Fact Sheets 22 to 26 provide further information on food safety programs. Fact sheets can be accessed at [www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/foodsafety).

If you have any questions or concerns about an approved auditor, contact Food Safety Standards and Regulation on phone (07) 3328 9310, or email [foodsafety@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:foodsafety@health.qld.gov.au).

If you have any further questions relating to whether your food business is a licensable food business or if the food safety program provisions relate to your food business, contact the local government for the area where your food business is located. Contact details can be found in the White Pages or at [www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory.html](http://www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-government-directory.html).