



# **Mastering SQF: Streamlining Audit Readiness and Compliance**

Hosted by Provision & ASI Food Safety

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# Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Why SQF
3. The Audit Experience
4. Common Non-Conformances
5. Strategies for Streamlining Compliance
6. Audience Q&A



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# Speakers



**Amanda Wilder**  
Provision

Provision is a cloud platform that helps food companies streamline audited documentation, saving time while turning frontline data into insights for risk management.



**Stacey Brown**  
ASI Food Safety

ASI is a third-party auditing, training, and consulting firm that helps food companies meet global safety and quality standards, making certification and compliance easy.



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# What is SQF?

SQF is a rigorous food safety and quality standard.

- **Certified**  
Annual audits produce a certificate you can share with customers
- **Global**  
Benchmarked to the **Global Food Safety Initiative** (GFSI)
- **Rigorous**  
Uses a risk-based approach to manage hazards proactively
- **Unified**  
Bridges food safety and quality to ensure reliable production

# Why SQF?

SQF signals to buyers that you have robust systems for food safety.

- **Trusted**  
14,000 certified sites in 40 countries on 6 continents
- **Recognized**  
GFSI certificates are required by major buyers in retail and foodservice
- **Modular**  
SQF codes are specific to industry sectors

# How SQF audits work.

Audits are completed in two stages:

## 1. Desk Audit

The auditor evaluates food safety and quality documentation to ensure that policies, procedures, and records meet SQF Code requirements.

## 1. Facility Walk

The auditor walks the facility to verify that what's written in your documents is actually happening on the floor.



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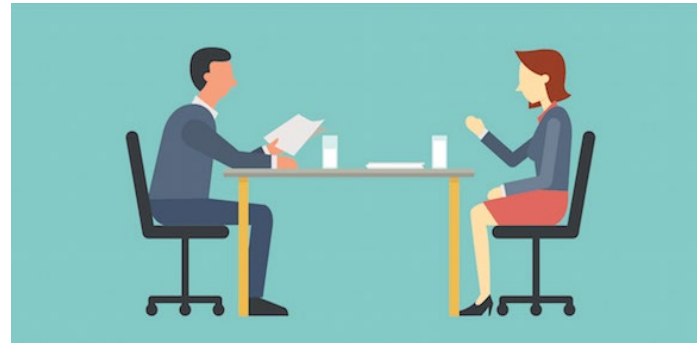


# Key components of SQF audits.

“RIO” are the 3 elements:



Records



Interview  
s



Observation  
s

# How documentation is audited for SQF.

The “desk audit” takes 60% of the total audit time.

- **Interview Leadership and Department Managers**  
Management commitment and culture
- **Policy and procedures review**  
Specificity check: HOW do you implement the code requirements
- **Records Review**  
Not just current year or that day



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# The need for specificity.

“Our Company has methods for handling, investigating, and resolving food safety complaints from commercial customers, consumers, and authorities, arising from products manufactured or handled on-site or co-manufactured, shall be documented and implemented. Adverse trends of customer complaint data shall be investigated and analyzed and the root cause established by personnel knowledgeable about the incidents. Corrective and preventive action shall be implemented based on the seriousness of the incident and the root cause analysis as outlined in 2.5.3. Records of customer complaints, their investigation, and resolution shall be maintained.

**vs**

“Our Company receives customer complaints through customer service portal on our website or through our 1-800 phone line. The Customer Service representative documents the complaint in the online database. The representative will categorize the complaint as a food safety (illness/injury, visible growth, rotten smell, visual contamination) and/or quality (bad taste, damaged packaging, no injury/illness. These complaints are forwarded to our Director of Food Safety and Quality for investigation. Food safety and Quality complaints are required to have a CAPA issued, a root cause analysis completed and the complaint must be closed out within 30 days. All complaints are reviewed during the monthly management meetings and are recorded on the Continuous Improvement Matrix board. A response sent to the customer in writing by the customer service team officially closes out the complaint. Positive feedback about our products is sent to our Plant manager to review during leadership meeting and posted by the HR team to Continuous Improvement Matrix board and on the employee bulletin board.



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# How facilities are audited for SQF.

The facility audit takes 40% of the total audit time.

- **Observations**

Physical structure (e.g. lights, doors, paint, insulation)

Employee GMPs (e.g. uniforms, jewelry, PPE)

Handwashing and flow

Exterior walk - Food Defense

- **Interviews with staff**

How they incorporate the policy in their job

Competency check



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# How to avoid SQF audit pitfalls.

Top non-conformances in Module 2:

Section	Description	% Non-Compliant
2.1.2.1	Annual Review of SQF System by Senior Site Management	62%
2.1.2.2	Monthly SQF Practitioner Update to Site Management	57%
2.4.8.1	Risk-Based EMP - Responsibility & Methods Documented	55%
2.5.4.1	Scheduling and Conducting Internal Audits Annually	55%
2.1.1.1	Site Management Commitment Policy	54%



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# How to avoid SQF audit pitfalls.

Top non-conformances in Module 11:

Section	Description	% Non-Compliant
11.1.7.1	Specs for Equipment & Utensils, Purchasing Procedures	50%
11.1.2.4	Walls, etc. of durable construction, easily cleanable	49%
11.1.5.1	Windows, etc. sealed when closed, dust/pest proof	49%
11.2.4.1	Documented Pest Prevention Program	46%
11.2.5.1	Food Handling Equipment Cleaning Protocols (SSOPs)	45%



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# Root causes.

When SQF audits go awry, this is why:



**Practicing SOPs**

Policies are written but activities are missed or pencil -whipped



**Supporting Labor**

Staff guess at procedures without proper ongoing guidance



**Managing Issues**

Staff complete checklists but issues aren't scouted and controlled



**Gut Feel**

Management isn't trending results for continuous improvement



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# How to streamline SQF data capture.

SQF relies on mass data capture from non-technical operators.



**Tasks**

Get reminders that prevent late activities



**Guidance**

Prevent rework with SOP help inside records



**Speed**

Use autofill, photos, voice -to-text, and more



**Translation**

Enable diverse staff to work in 109 languages



**Mobility**

Easy interface for small devices








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# How to streamline SQF audit preparation.

Scalability becomes key in managing 1,000s of audited docs.

	<b>Notifications</b>	Get alerts for overdue records
	<b>Requirements</b>	Prevent incomplete record submissions
	<b>CAPA</b>	Flag, track, and manage deviations
	<b>Verification</b>	Approve and sign records in one tap
	<b>Audits</b>	Auto-sort all data by program and standard

# How you'll see return on investment.

By streamlining compliance, you can focus on data-driven control.

53% Time saved in data entry

53% Time saved in team management

61% Time saved in verification

74% Time saved in audit prep



# Getting more value out of SQF.

Turn your goldmine of facility data into insight for process control.



**Visualize**

Chart your results in intuitive dashboards



**Integrate**

Combine SQF records with complementary data



**Score**

Measure performance in real-time



**Investigate**

Analyze risk by site and program



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# What certified sites say.

Modern solutions for SQF enable continuous improvement.

“We weren't happy with binders... It used to take us at least six months of planning for an SQF audit. Even after all that prep, it was still nerve-wracking. Now, audits with Provision go much smoother... With the data we have in Provision, we're able to analyze trends in performance as well as shortcomings within our teams. It lets us identify coaching opportunities.”

- Asbah Hadi, Get Fresh Produce



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