Supplier Documentation and Release Policy

Quality Assurance · Version 4.0 · Issued 29 June 2023

This document is an earlier version of the supplier documentation policy. It is retained for records purposes and carries no authority.

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the documentation a supplier must hold before material they supply may be released into production, and how that documentation is assessed.

No lot of material may be released into production unless a valid certificate for that supplier and that material is held at the time of release.

2. Scope and application

This policy applies to every material received at every site, and to the certificate a supplier holds for its own operation. It does not cover the certificate of analysis issued against an individual batch.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Operators assess submissions, record the outcome and chase suppliers when a document is refused. The quality specialist decides whether held material is released. The quality manager owns this policy and approves each revision.

5. Document control

This policy is reviewed at least annually. A revision takes effect on the date it is issued and the version it replaces is withdrawn on the same day. Assessments are made against the version in force on the date of assessment.

6. Which standard a material requires

The required standard is a property of the material and is recorded in the ERP against it. The requirement is read from the ERP at the time of assessment and no local copy may be relied on.

The same certificate may therefore be the correct document for one material and the wrong document for another.

7. Accepted schemes

FSSC 22000 and BRCGS Food Safety are accepted in place of ISO 22000. IFS Food is not accepted in place of ISO 22000 and material covered only by an IFS Food certificate is not released.

11. Group and multi-site certificates

A certificate issued to a parent company is accepted for a supplying subsidiary where the subsidiary is named on the certificate.

10. Certified scope

The scope printed on the certificate must cover the category of the material being supplied, as recorded in the ERP. Scope wording is written by the certification body and will rarely match the category word for word.

15. Incomplete and illegible documents

A document that cannot be read, or from which a value this policy depends on cannot be established, is not assessed. It is returned to the supplier with a request for a legible copy.

16. The assessment sequence

An assessment establishes which supplier and material the submission concerns, what the ERP records that material as requiring, what the document says, and whether it satisfies the sections above. An assessment stops at the first point that refuses the document.

17. Exceptions

A refused submission is chased by the operator. Where a chase produces nothing and the material is needed, the case is escalated to the quality specialist.

18. Records

Every assessment is recorded with the supplier, the material, the document assessed, the outcome and the reason for it. Records are retained for five years from the date of assessment.