COLD CHAIN OPERATIONS AUDIT TEMPLATE

Cold Chain Audit Checklist

Audit transport, receiving, chilled and frozen storage, handling, displays, monitoring devices, alarms, incidents, product disposition, and corrective actions.

STORE / LOCATION	AUDIT DATE	AUDITOR	APPROVER

1. Audit setup, cold chain scope, and governance

1 Confirm the location, audit date, operating status, auditor, cold chain owner, department contacts, and escalation contacts. — METADATA + SIGN-OFF

NAME | Enter — TIME | __:__ — SIGNATURE | Sign

Execution tip: Identify who can authorize product containment, disposal, transfer, and equipment shutdown.

2 Define the products, suppliers, delivery routes, vehicles, receiving points, cold rooms, freezers, preparation areas, displays, and transfer stages included. — SCOPE CHECKLIST

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Record excluded areas and confirm the sample covers every active temperature-controlled process.

3 Review previous temperature breaches, equipment failures, complaints, recalls, waste, supplier issues, and overdue corrective actions. — PREVIOUS FINDINGS REVIEW

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Use repeat failures to target high-risk products, equipment, shifts, and suppliers.

4 Verify current cold chain SOPs, product limits, alarm thresholds, monitoring frequencies, calibration rules, and escalation procedures are available. — CRITICAL — DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Check version, approval, issue date, and employee access to the current standard.

5 Confirm the approved temperature and time limits for each chilled, frozen, hot-held, or temperature-sensitive product category. — CRITICAL — LIMIT MATRIX VERIFICATION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Use product-specific limits rather than one general temperature rule for all items.

6 Capture the audit start time, geo-location, and an approved reference photo of each audited cold chain zone. — CRITICAL — GEO-LOCATION + TIMESTAMP + PHOTO

Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo

Execution tip: Confirm the correct site and zone before collecting readings and evidence.

2. Supplier, transport, vehicle, and delivery controls

7 Verify sampled suppliers, carriers, and distribution routes are approved for the temperature-controlled products delivered.
CRITICAL | SUPPLIER APPROVAL CHECK
Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A
Execution tip: Confirm approval status, service scope, review date, and any open performance restrictions.

8 Inspect delivery vehicles, compartments, doors, seals, insulation, curtains, and refrigeration units for condition and cleanliness.
CRITICAL | VEHICLE CONDITION + PHOTO
Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A
Execution tip: Inspect before unloading and record anything that could affect temperature or contamination control.

9 Confirm chilled, frozen, ambient, allergen-sensitive, raw, and ready-to-eat products are suitably separated during transport.
CRITICAL | TRANSPORT SEGREGATION CHECK
Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo
Execution tip: Review physical separation, packaging integrity, stacking, and leakage risks.

10 Review transport temperature records, data logger results, alarm history, dispatch time, arrival time, and journey duration.
CRITICAL | TRANSPORT RECORD REVIEW
Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A
Execution tip: Investigate gaps, unexplained resets, missing readings, and time outside the planned route.

11 Verify vehicle or compartment temperatures are checked before doors are opened and unloading begins.
CRITICAL | PRE-UNLOADING TEMPERATURE
Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A
Execution tip: Record the device ID, exact reading, time, product category, and acceptance decision.

12 Confirm unloading begins promptly and protects products from sun, rain, warm air, contamination, and avoidable delay.
CRITICAL | UNLOADING CONTROL OBSERVATION
Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action
Execution tip: Measure door-open and unloading time where exposure could affect product safety or quality.

3. Receiving temperatures, inspection, and acceptance

13 Measure representative product temperatures immediately on arrival using the approved method for the product and packaging.

CRITICAL · PRODUCT TEMPERATURE READING

Compliant · Partially compliant · Non-compliant · N/A

Execution tip: Sample high-risk, high-volume, outer, middle, and suspect cases using a verified device.

14 Compare every sampled reading with the approved receiving range and document the acceptance decision.

CRITICAL · TEMPERATURE COMPLIANCE RESULT

Compliant · Issue found · Critical gap · Add live photo

Execution tip: Do not rely only on vehicle display readings when product verification is required.

15 Inspect products for thawing, refreezing, ice crystals, sweating, leakage, discoloration, odor, damaged packaging, or contamination.

CRITICAL · CONDITION INSPECTION + PHOTO

Compliant · Partially compliant · Non-compliant · N/A

Execution tip: Record evidence before products are moved, accepted, rejected, or returned.

16 Verify shelf life, use-by dates, batch details, labels, seals, and traceability information meet receiving requirements.

CRITICAL · DATE AND TRACEABILITY CHECK

Strong · Needs attention · Critical gap · Create action

Execution tip: Link the physical product to delivery documents and the system receipt.

17 Confirm borderline, out-of-range, damaged, or suspect products are isolated while a trained person completes the risk assessment.

CRITICAL · RECEIVING QUARANTINE CONTROL

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Keep affected goods clearly identified and outside usable inventory until a decision is recorded.

18 Record rejected, conditionally accepted, transferred, returned, or disposed quantities with supplier acknowledgment and follow-up action.

CRITICAL · DISPOSITION AND CLAIM RECORD

Compliant · Partially compliant · Non-compliant · N/A

Execution tip: Retain the decision, quantity, value, evidence, owner, and claim or credit reference.

4. Chilled storage, cold rooms, and back-of-house control

19 Measure temperatures in sampled cold rooms, chillers, refrigerators, and storage zones at representative points.
CRITICAL | CHILLED STORAGE TEMPERATURE

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Check warm spots near doors, high shelves, corners, and heavily loaded areas.

20 Verify product temperatures remain within approved limits and are consistent with equipment displays or monitoring systems.
CRITICAL | PRODUCT AND EQUIPMENT COMPARISON

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Investigate differences between air, probe, infrared, and displayed readings.

21 Check doors, seals, curtains, hinges, drains, fans, evaporators, lighting, and insulation are clean and in good condition.
CRITICAL | COLD-ROOM CONDITION + PHOTO

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Look for condensation, frost, damaged seals, standing water, blocked airflow, and warm-air entry.

22 Confirm products are stored off the floor, away from walls where required, below load lines, and without blocking airflow.
CRITICAL | STORAGE AND AIRFLOW CHECK

READING | ___ °C | LIMIT | Enter | Add photo | Create action

Execution tip: Correct overloading and unsafe stacking before accepting the zone as compliant.

23 Verify raw, cooked, ready-to-eat, allergen-controlled, damaged, quarantined, and returned products are suitably segregated.
CRITICAL | STORAGE SEGREGATION CHECK

READING | ___ °C | LIMIT | Enter | Add photo | Create action

Execution tip: Review vertical storage, covered containers, labels, dedicated zones, and leakage risks.

24 Confirm FIFO or FEFO rotation, date labels, opened-on dates, thaw labels, and discard dates are complete and followed.
CRITICAL | ROTATION AND DATE-CODE SAMPLE

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Sample products behind and below newer stock, not only front-facing items.

5. Frozen storage, freezer integrity, and thaw control

25 Measure sampled freezer and frozen-product temperatures against the approved operating and product limits.

CRITICAL | FROZEN TEMPERATURE READING

READING | ___ °C
LIMIT | Enter
Add photo
Create action

Execution tip: Record the exact location, product, device, time, and reading rather than only checking the display.

26 Inspect frozen products for softening, thawing, refreezing, freezer burn, leakage, damaged packaging, or excessive ice.

CRITICAL | FROZEN PRODUCT CONDITION

READING | ___ °C
LIMIT | Enter
Add photo
Create action

Execution tip: Quarantine any item whose condition suggests an uncontrolled temperature history.

27 Check freezer doors, seals, latches, curtains, alarms, defrost cycles, fans, and insulation for effective operation.

CRITICAL | FREEZER CONDITION + PHOTO

READING | ___ °C
LIMIT | Enter
Add photo
Create action

Execution tip: Investigate frost around openings, damaged gaskets, unusual noise, or repeated door-open alarms.

28 Verify products remain below load lines and do not obstruct vents, sensors, fans, drains, or evaporators.

CRITICAL | FREEZER LOADING CHECK

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Reorganize stock where airflow or sensor accuracy is compromised.

29 Confirm thawing is performed using approved time, temperature, labeling, segregation, and drip-control methods.

CRITICAL | THAW PROCESS VERIFICATION

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Trace a thawed item from frozen storage through use or discard time.

30 Verify thawed products are not refrozen unless an approved validated process specifically permits it.

CRITICAL | REFREEZING CONTROL

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Check labels, employee knowledge, inventory movements, and recent exceptions.

6. Handling, preparation, transfer, and exposure control

31 Observe products during picking, staging, replenishment, preparation, packing, and internal transfer for avoidable temperature exposure.

CRITICAL | PROCESS OBSERVATION

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Measure exposure time during the busiest or most complex handoff, not only during quiet periods.

32 Verify time out of temperature control is recorded and remains within approved cumulative or single-exposure limits.

CRITICAL | EXPOSURE TIME RECORD

Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo

Execution tip: Include receiving, preparation, replenishment, display loading, and customer-order staging.

33 Confirm insulated containers, chilled totes, ice packs, covers, and transfer equipment are clean, intact, and used correctly.

CRITICAL | TRANSFER EQUIPMENT CHECK

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Pre-condition equipment where required and verify lids or closures remain effective.

34 Check temperature-sensitive products are returned to controlled storage promptly after counting, cleaning, preparation, or inspection.

CRITICAL | RETURN-TO-CONTROL TIMING

Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo

Execution tip: Record delays and assess affected product before returning it to available stock.

35 Verify hot food cooking, hot holding, cooling, reheating, and chilled storage steps meet approved time and temperature limits.

CRITICAL | HOT AND COOLING PROCESS CHECK

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Record both time and temperature when the control depends on both values.

36 Confirm employees know how to identify, contain, report, and escalate a cold chain breach during live operations.

CRITICAL | EMPLOYEE KNOWLEDGE TEST

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Use a practical scenario relevant to the employee's department and shift.

7. Display cabinets, service counters, and customer-facing control

37 Measure temperatures across sampled chilled and frozen display cabinets, cases, islands, and service counters.
CRITICAL | DISPLAY TEMPERATURE MAPPING

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Sample upper, lower, front, rear, end, and known warm locations where applicable.

38 Verify product temperatures remain within approved limits during normal trading, replenishment, and peak customer activity.
CRITICAL | TRADING-CONDITION PRODUCT CHECK

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Avoid auditing only immediately after equipment has been closed or lightly loaded.

39 Check products remain below load lines and do not block air returns, curtains, vents, fans, sensors, or drainage.
CRITICAL | DISPLAY LOADING AND AIRFLOW

READING | ___ °C
LIMIT | Enter
Add photo | Create action

Execution tip: Correct overfilled or badly positioned stock before taking final readings.

40 Inspect cabinet doors, seals, night blinds, lighting, drainage, shelves, fans, and temperature displays for condition and cleanliness.
CRITICAL | DISPLAY CONDITION + PHOTO

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Record condensation, frost, warm-air entry, damaged seals, leaks, or blocked airflow.

41 Verify replenishment quantities and frequency maintain availability without prolonged exposure or overloading the display.
REPLENISHMENT CONTROL

EXPECTED | ___
ACTUAL | ___
VARIANCE | ___
Investigate

Execution tip: Use sales rate, holding capacity, product life, and equipment performance to plan replenishment.

42 Confirm any out-of-range cabinet triggers product assessment, relocation, containment, repair, and customer protection action.
CRITICAL | DISPLAY BREACH RESPONSE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Document affected products, exposure time, interim control, decision authority, and closure proof.

8. Monitoring devices, calibration, alarms, and records

43 Verify thermometers, probes, infrared devices, data loggers, sensors, and displays are identified and assigned to the correct zone.

CRITICAL | DEVICE INVENTORY VERIFICATION

EXPECTED | | ___ ACTUAL | | ___ VARIANCE | | ___ Investigate

Execution tip: Match device IDs to calibration, maintenance, and monitoring records.

44 Check monitoring devices are clean, undamaged, correctly positioned, functional, and suitable for their intended use.

CRITICAL | DEVICE CONDITION CHECK

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Inspect probes, cables, batteries, screens, mounts, and sensor placement.

45 Review calibration or verification records and confirm each device is within the approved interval and tolerance.

CRITICAL | CALIBRATION RECORD REVIEW

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Record reference standard, actual result, variance, tolerance, and action taken.

46 Test selected high and low temperature alarms, notification routes, acknowledgment, escalation, and response timing.

CRITICAL | ALARM TEST

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Use an approved safe test method and retain evidence of notification and response.

47 Review manual and automated temperature records for completeness, frequency, trends, gaps, overrides, and suspicious entries.

CRITICAL | MONITORING RECORD ANALYSIS

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Investigate repeated identical readings, missing shifts, edited records, and unexplained gaps.

48 Confirm failed devices are removed from service, clearly identified, replaced, and assessed for impact on product decisions.

CRITICAL | FAILED-DEVICE CONTROL

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Review the period since the last valid reading and determine whether products require assessment.

9. Breakdowns, power loss, incidents, and product disposition

49 **Verify current procedures cover refrigeration failure, alarm failure, power loss, door damage, flooding, transport delay, and other cold chain incidents.**

CRITICAL · INCIDENT PROCEDURE REVIEW

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Confirm roles, contacts, backup capacity, decision limits, and communication steps.

50 **Check backup power, emergency refrigeration, insulated storage, transfer routes, and alternative capacity are available where required.**

CRITICAL · CONTINGENCY READINESS

Current · Incomplete · Missing / expired · Attach record

Execution tip: Verify capacity and response time rather than only confirming that a plan exists.

51 **Review recent equipment or power incidents and confirm alarm time, response time, exposure duration, readings, and product decisions were recorded.**

CRITICAL · INCIDENT RECORD REVIEW

Compliant · Partially compliant · Non-compliant · N/A

Execution tip: Trace one event from first alarm through product disposition and repair closure.

52 **Confirm affected products are identified by item, batch, quantity, location, exposure, and current status during an incident.**

CRITICAL · AFFECTED PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Prevent mixing assessed, unassessed, released, and rejected stock.

53 **Verify product release, transfer, rework, donation, return, or disposal decisions are authorized and supported by evidence.**

CRITICAL · DISPOSITION APPROVAL

Compliant · Partially compliant · Non-compliant · N/A

Execution tip: Record the competent decision-maker, rationale, quantity, value, and system adjustment.

54 **Confirm customers, regulators, suppliers, quality teams, or management are notified when the approved escalation criteria are met.**

CRITICAL · INCIDENT COMMUNICATION CHECK

Current · Incomplete · Missing / expired · Attach record

Execution tip: Retain notification timing, recipient, message, acknowledgment, and follow-up action.

10. Findings, corrective actions, verification, and sign-off

55 Calculate the overall cold chain compliance result and summarize critical breaches, recurring gaps, and affected products or zones.

AUDIT SCORE + SUMMARY

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Separate immediate product risk from underlying equipment, process, supplier, or training causes.

56 Create immediate containment for every critical temperature, traceability, equipment, alarm, or product-condition failure.

CRITICAL | CONTAINMENT ACTION

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Record what was stopped, isolated, transferred, assessed, or protected before normal work continued.

57 Assign each finding an owner, priority, due date, root-cause requirement, corrective action, and closure evidence rule.

CRITICAL | CORRECTIVE ACTION ASSIGNMENT

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Use short deadlines for immediate risk and realistic deadlines for permanent prevention.

58 Escalate overdue, repeated, high-value, or customer-safety-related cold chain actions to the required management level.

CRITICAL | ESCALATION WORKFLOW

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Track acknowledgment, interim controls, revised due date, and responsible approver.

59 Verify closure through follow-up readings, repair proof, calibration evidence, product records, observation, or a repeat audit.

CRITICAL | CLOSURE VERIFICATION

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Do not close an action based only on a written comment from the assigned owner.

60 Record the final audit decision, remaining restrictions, next review date, auditor, manager approval, date, time, and signature.

CRITICAL | APPROVAL + SIGNATURE

NAME | Enter
TIME | __:__
SIGNATURE | Sign

Execution tip: Keep affected equipment or product restricted until all release conditions are met.