FOOD SAFETY OPERATIONS AUDIT TEMPLATE

Food Safety Audit Checklist

Audit hygiene, receiving, temperatures, storage, preparation, allergens, sanitation, pest control, traceability, incidents, and corrective actions across food operations.

STORE / LOCATION	AUDIT DATE	AUDITOR	APPROVER

1. Audit setup, scope, and food safety governance

1 Confirm the site, audit date, operating status, auditor, site manager, food safety owner, and escalation contact. METADATA + SIGN-OFF

NAME | Enter   TIME | __:__   SIGNATURE | Sign

Execution tip: Verify responsibilities before starting so every finding routes to the correct owner.

2 Define the areas and processes included, such as receiving, storage, preparation, display, service, cleaning, waste, and staff facilities. AREA AND PROCESS CHECKLIST

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

Execution tip: Record every excluded area with a reason and confirm the scope reflects current operations.

3 Review previous audit results, complaints, food incidents, recalls, overdue actions, test results, and repeat non-compliance. RECORD REVIEW

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Start with recurring and overdue risks so the audit sample targets known weaknesses.

4 Verify the current food safety plan, SOPs, licenses, supplier approvals, allergen procedures, recall process, and emergency contacts are available. CRITICAL DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Check document version, approval, and expiry dates rather than only confirming presence.

5 Record current products, production or service volume, staffing, deliveries, maintenance activity, and unusual operating conditions. OPERATING CONTEXT

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

Execution tip: Capture conditions that may affect risk without using them to excuse an uncontrolled hazard.

6 Capture the audit start time, geo-location, and an approved reference photo of the audited site or food area. CRITICAL GEO-LOCATION + TIMESTAMP + PHOTO

Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo

Execution tip: Confirm the correct location and audit window before taking the reference image.

2. Personal hygiene, health, and employee practices

7 Verify food handlers wear clean uniforms, suitable footwear, hair restraints, beard covers, and required protective equipment.
CRITICAL | PERSONAL HYGIENE CHECK

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

Execution tip: Observe employees across different tasks and shifts rather than relying only on supervisor confirmation.

8 Check handwashing stations are accessible, functional, and supplied with water, soap, hygienic drying, and required instructions.
CRITICAL | HANDWASH STATION READINESS

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

Execution tip: Test each sampled station and correct missing supplies immediately.

9 Observe handwashing at required moments and capture approved evidence of any material hygiene failure.
CRITICAL | OBSERVED PRACTICE + PHOTO

Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo

Execution tip: Watch real work transitions, including after waste handling, breaks, cleaning, and raw-food contact.

10 Confirm illness reporting, fitness-to-work checks, exclusion rules, and return-to-work approvals are understood and followed.
CRITICAL | ILLNESS CONTROL CHECK

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

Execution tip: Ask employees how they report symptoms and verify recent cases against records.

11 Verify jewelry, personal items, glove use, wound coverings, eating, drinking, smoking, and mobile phone use are controlled in food areas.
CRITICAL | BEHAVIOR AND CONTAMINATION CHECK

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

Execution tip: Record the exact practice observed and the affected food or area.

12 Rate overall personal hygiene and food-handler discipline and attach supporting evidence where needed.
CRITICAL | HYGIENE RATING + PHOTO

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Base the rating on repeated observations across roles, not one employee or one moment.

3. Cleaning, sanitation, and equipment hygiene

13 Verify cleaning schedules cover food-contact surfaces, equipment, utensils, floors, drains, storage, and high-touch points.

CRITICAL | CLEANING SCHEDULE CHECK

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

Execution tip: Compare scheduled frequency with actual soil level, use intensity, and recent completion records.

14 Inspect sampled food-contact surfaces for cleanliness, residue, biofilm, grease, debris, and incomplete sanitation.

CRITICAL | SURFACE INSPECTION + PHOTO

Compliant | Issue found | Critical gap | Add live photo

Execution tip: Check hard-to-see areas, joints, seals, undersides, and dismantled equipment parts.

15 Check cleaning tools, cloths, brushes, mops, buckets, and dishwashing equipment are clean, identified, stored, and fit for use.

CLEANING EQUIPMENT CONDITION

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

Execution tip: Replace damaged or contaminated tools and prevent cross-use between high-risk zones.

16 Rate overall cleaning and sanitation effectiveness across the audited areas.

CRITICAL | SANITATION EFFECTIVENESS RATING

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Compare visible condition with records, chemical use, and verification results.

17 Sample sanitizer concentration, contact time, or warewashing parameters against the approved standard.

CRITICAL | SANITATION VERIFICATION SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Record the product, test method, expected range, actual result, and corrective action.

18 Verify cleaning chemicals are approved, labeled, diluted correctly, secured, and separated from food and packaging.

CRITICAL | CHEMICAL CONTROL VERIFICATION

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

Execution tip: Check secondary containers and dispensing stations, not only original chemical containers.

4. Receiving, supplier, and incoming food controls

19 **Inspect sampled deliveries for approved supplier status, intact packaging, clean condition, correct labeling, and freedom from contamination.** CRITICAL | RECEIVING CONDITION + PHOTO

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Capture evidence before affected goods are moved, returned, or disposed of.

20 **Verify delivery vehicles, containers, pallets, and handling equipment are clean, suitable, and segregated from contamination sources.** CRITICAL | DELIVERY HYGIENE CHECK

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

Execution tip: Inspect the vehicle interior and product contact points before unloading.

21 **Match supplier, purchase order, delivery note, product, batch, expiry, quantity, and traceability information.** CRITICAL | RECEIVING DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Trace sampled items from delivery paperwork to the actual product and receiving record.

22 **Measure sampled chilled-food temperatures at receipt against the approved acceptance range.** CRITICAL | CHILLED RECEIVING TEMPERATURE

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

Execution tip: Use a calibrated device and record the product, delivery, time, location, and exact reading.

23 **Measure sampled frozen-food temperatures and check for thawing, ice build-up, leakage, or temperature abuse.** CRITICAL | FROZEN RECEIVING TEMPERATURE

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

Execution tip: Sample different cartons or pallet positions when the load is large or uneven.

24 **Verify rejected, damaged, contaminated, expired, or non-conforming deliveries are identified, segregated, recorded, and resolved.** CRITICAL | REJECTION AND QUARANTINE RECORD

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Do not allow rejected goods to enter usable stock while supplier action remains open.

5. Storage, temperature, rotation, and labeling

25 Measure sampled chilled-storage temperatures against the approved operating range.

CRITICAL | CHILLED STORAGE TEMPERATURE

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

Execution tip: Take readings from more than one location and investigate repeated borderline results.

26 Measure sampled freezer temperatures and inspect products for thawing, freezer burn, damaged packaging, or excessive ice.

CRITICAL | FROZEN STORAGE TEMPERATURE

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

Execution tip: Check cabinet loading, door seals, airflow, and defrost condition when readings fail.

27 Where hot-held food is used, verify the approved temperature and time controls are maintained and recorded.

CRITICAL | HOT-HOLD TEMPERATURE

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

Execution tip: Record both temperature and holding time when the standard depends on both controls.

28 Sample use-by, best-before, preparation, thawing, opening, and discard labels and verify FEFO rotation.

CRITICAL | DATE-CODE AND ROTATION SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Include slow-moving, short-life, and previously opened products in the sample.

29 Verify batch, lot, product name, allergen, origin, storage, and traceability labels are complete and readable.

CRITICAL | TRACEABILITY AND LABEL VERIFICATION

Current — Incomplete — Missing / expired — Attach record

Execution tip: Trace at least one item from storage back to receiving or supplier records.

30 Confirm raw, cooked, ready-to-eat, allergen-controlled, chemical, damaged, and quarantined items are correctly separated.

CRITICAL | STORAGE SEGREGATION AUDIT

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

Execution tip: Review vertical storage, shared containers, shelving, and temporary staging areas.

6. Food preparation, cross-contamination, and allergens

31 **Sample food preparation activities and verify approved recipes, process steps, cooking controls, cooling controls, and holding instructions are followed.** CRITICAL · PROCESS CONTROL SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Observe the process in real time and compare it with the current approved procedure.

32 **Verify knives, boards, utensils, containers, probes, and preparation equipment are clean, identified, and used to prevent cross-contamination.** CRITICAL · EQUIPMENT SEGREGATION + PHOTO

Compliant · Issue found · Critical gap · Add live photo

Execution tip: Check actual use during task changes, not only color or storage labels.

33 **Sample allergen orders, recipes, labels, ingredients, or menu information and verify the declared allergen controls are accurate.** CRITICAL · ALLERGEN CONTROL SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Trace the item from ingredient information through preparation and customer communication.

34 **Verify cleaning and changeover controls are completed between raw and ready-to-eat tasks and between allergen profiles.** CRITICAL · CHANGEOVER VERIFICATION + PHOTO

Compliant · Issue found · Critical gap · Add live photo

Execution tip: Inspect hidden contact points and confirm the required sanitizer contact time.

35 **Create immediate containment and corrective action for any cross-contamination, cooking, cooling, or allergen-control failure.** CRITICAL · CRITICAL FOOD SAFETY ACTION

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Separate affected food, stop the process where required, and assign a named owner before continuing.

36 **Verify unsafe, contaminated, temperature-abused, mislabeled, or otherwise unfit food is isolated and disposed of through an approved process.** CRITICAL · UNSAFE-FOOD DISPOSITION

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Record quantity, reason, authorization, inventory impact, and disposal evidence.

7. Pest, waste, water, and facility hygiene controls

37 Verify pest-control inspections, contractor reports, trend records, bait maps, and corrective actions are current and complete.

CRITICAL | PEST-CONTROL RECORD REVIEW

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Compare records with physical evidence and focus on repeat activity zones.

38 Inspect waste bins, grease or used-oil points, compactors, disposal areas, and waste routes for hygiene, lids, leakage, odor, and separation.

CRITICAL | WASTE CONTROL INSPECTION

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

Execution tip: Confirm waste movement does not cross clean food or customer routes.

39 Measure hot water or warewashing temperatures where these are part of the approved sanitation control.

CRITICAL | WATER OR WAREWASH TEMPERATURE

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

Execution tip: Record the point tested, method, expected limit, actual reading, and response.

40 Inspect walls, ceilings, floors, drains, doors, windows, ventilation, lighting, and equipment seals for conditions that could contaminate food.

CRITICAL | FACILITY HYGIENE CONDITION

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

Execution tip: Photograph structural defects and identify whether temporary containment is effective.

41 Record pest sightings, droppings, gnawing, insects, damaged traps, or other evidence and compare the actual count with the expected zero condition.

CRITICAL | PEST EVIDENCE COUNT

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

Execution tip: Map the exact location and escalate any activity near open food or food-contact surfaces.

42 Sample waste, expired-food, used-oil, donation, return, and disposal records for completeness and authorization.

WASTE AND DISPOSITION SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Reconcile physical waste or disposal evidence with inventory and authorization records.

8. Display, service, customer protection, and incidents

43 Record the time sampled food spends outside approved temperature control during preparation, replenishment, display, or service.

CRITICAL | TIME-CONTROL CHECK

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

Execution tip: Measure actual exposure rather than relying on estimated preparation or replenishment times.

44 Sample packaged, prepared, or displayed foods for correct product name, date, allergen, ingredient, storage, and handling information.

CRITICAL | CUSTOMER LABEL SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Compare the label with the recipe, product specification, and current approved information.

45 Verify self-service food, tasting, bakery, produce, or service counters have suitable guards, utensils, covers, and contamination controls.

CRITICAL | CUSTOMER PROTECTION CHECK

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

Execution tip: Observe customer interaction and replace contaminated utensils or food immediately.

46 Sample thermometers, display equipment, hot-hold units, refrigeration alarms, and monitoring devices for correct operation.

CRITICAL | FOOD SAFETY EQUIPMENT SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Confirm devices are positioned correctly and compare readings with a reference where required.

47 Rate customer-facing food safety behaviors, including glove changes, utensil use, product handling, cleaning, and communication.

CRITICAL | SERVICE HYGIENE RATING

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Use observable behaviors and avoid scoring based only on appearance or confidence.

48 Review complaints, suspected illness, foreign-object reports, contamination incidents, withdrawals, and customer notifications.

CRITICAL | INCIDENT RECORD REVIEW

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Confirm each event has investigation, containment, reporting, and documented closure.

9. Training, verification, recall, and emergency readiness

49 Sample food safety training completion across managers, food handlers, cleaners, receivers, and temporary workers.

CRITICAL | TRAINING SAMPLE

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

Execution tip: Verify role-specific competence and practical understanding, not only course attendance.

50 Confirm food-handler certificates, medical or fitness records where required, refresher dates, and competency checks are current.

CRITICAL | PEOPLE COMPLIANCE RECORDS

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Check expiry dates and sample both new starters and experienced employees.

51 Verify visitors, contractors, maintenance teams, and delivery personnel follow access, hygiene, PPE, and food-area rules.

CRITICAL | VISITOR AND CONTRACTOR CONTROL

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

Execution tip: Review active work areas and confirm temporary controls protect exposed food.

52 Test thermometer calibration, verification devices, alarms, or other critical monitoring equipment using the approved method.

CRITICAL | MONITORING EQUIPMENT TEST

Sample	Expected	Actual	Result	Evidence

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

53 Confirm recall, withdrawal, power-loss, water-loss, refrigeration-failure, contamination, and emergency response procedures are ready.

CRITICAL | EMERGENCY AND RECALL READINESS

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

Execution tip: Test contact details, product isolation, customer communication, and decision authority.

54 Review internal verification, laboratory results, trend analysis, incident investigations, and management review records.

VERIFICATION AND TREND REVIEW

Current | Incomplete | Missing / expired | Attach record

Execution tip: Look for repeat failure patterns that are hidden by acceptable average scores.

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

55 Rate overall food safety compliance across people, receiving, storage, preparation, sanitation, allergens, facilities, and records.

CRITICAL | FOOD SAFETY SCORECARD

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Keep critical failures visible even when the overall percentage appears acceptable.

56 Record the highest-priority findings, affected food or area, customer exposure, severity, likelihood, and immediate containment.

CRITICAL | PRIORITY FINDING REGISTER

Strong | Needs attention | Critical gap | Create action

Execution tip: Use standard severity definitions so different locations can be compared consistently.

57 Create corrective actions with owner, priority, due date, root-cause requirement, evidence, and escalation path.

CRITICAL | CORRECTIVE ACTION + SLA

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Write each action so another person can understand the risk and expected closure proof.

58 Confirm every critical temperature, contamination, allergen, hygiene, pest, traceability, or illness risk is contained or formally escalated.

CRITICAL | CONTAINMENT VERIFICATION

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Do not close the audit while an uncontrolled critical food safety risk remains.

59 Set the follow-up date and confirm overdue actions escalate to site, quality, food safety, and operations leadership.

CRITICAL | FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULE + ESCALATION

Finding	Owner	Priority	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Base the review date on risk and verify escalation recipients before submission.

60 Complete site manager and audit reviewer approval with comments, open risks, timestamp, and signature.

CRITICAL | MANAGER + REVIEWER SIGN-OFF

NAME | Enter

TIME | __:__

SIGNATURE | Sign

Execution tip: Sign-off must state unresolved risks, interim controls, overdue actions, and the next review date.

RUN THIS CHECKLIST DIGITALLY

Turn every food safety finding into accountable action and verified closure

Use Taqtics to schedule audits by site and area, capture live evidence and readings, contain critical hazards, assign corrective actions, enforce deadlines, verify closure, and compare recurring food safety gaps across locations.

Area-based audits | Live evidence | Temperature readings | Containment actions | Escalation | Food safety dashboards

Try the Food Safety Audit Checklist in Taqtics