

Date 26 March 2021
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Technical update related to GRMS version 6.1 Valid from 1 April 2021

As a result of questions raised by auditors and issues raised at benchmarking and integrity monitoring activities it is necessary to issue a technical update with notes on clarification and interpretation to requirements in the standard.

Amendments will be made accordingly at the next update of the normative documents (standard and guideline), but the clarifications and interpretations shall be considered at audits.

This document is published at the GRMS web site and the Certification Bodies will be informed on any updates.

Clarification and interpretation of standard requirements

5.4.1 Buildings and facilities shall be suitable for the intended purpose. Production areas and process equipment shall not pose any risk of contamination and shall be maintained and easy to clean.

Note: This requirement shall be supported by site inspections to ensure that site environment, buildings, facilities and process equipment are maintained in a suitable condition to ensure food safety, as applicable to the activity of the site.

5.4.5 Building plans showing water and waste pipes shall be available.

Note: To minimize food safety risk, water not intended for use in food production, if available on site, shall be managed to avoid use in production or mixing with water used in production.

5.8.2 Appropriate facilities and procedures shall be in place to control the risk of physical, chemical or biological contamination of product. Any handling of products shall not pose a contamination risk. This includes the use of processing aids and packaging materials.

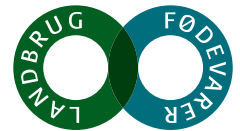
Note: Processing aids include air and compressed gases in any form which shall be regularly monitored and adequately stored and handled in order to minimise food safety risks – if available on site.

5.4.7 The company shall perform planned maintenance for process equipment, buildings and external areas. A system of planned maintenance shall be in place for all items of equipment, which may be critical to product safety.

Note: The implementation of maintenance activities shall be controlled to minimise food safety risks.

9.1.2 The company shall have procedures in place to ensure that all external labour follow the hygiene regulations.

Note: This requirement shall include visitors.



Maintaining auditor competence

The intention is that auditors shall carry out as many GRMS audits as possible, preferably at least 5 GRMS audits at different sites in a calendar year.

This may not always be possible due to for example a low number of GRMS certificates handled by the Certification Body, rotation of auditors, new auditors, auditors only employed part of the year, pregnancy, illness or extraordinary circumstances.

If it is not possible to meet the intention of 5 GRMS audits annually, the number of audits at other GFSI approved programmes shall be considered.

In the current version of GRMS (version 6.1) it is required that the Certification Body shall have a documented programme to maintain auditor qualifications, which shall include at least 5 on site audits annually at different sites against GFSI approved certification programmes. To ensure specific GRMS knowledge each auditor shall carry out at least one on site audit annually against GRMS.

This is regarded as the minimum requirement for auditors to maintain auditor qualification and to maintain GRMS knowledge.

Unannounced audits

From 1 January 2021 (GRMS version 6.1) one out of three audits shall be unannounced.

For existing certified production sites in the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023 one audit at each production site shall be unannounced.

For new certified production sites (GRMS version 6.1) one audit shall be unannounced within the first three years of certification.

Audits with a 24-hour warning (or any other warning period) are regarded as announced audits. Only audits with no warning are to be regarded as unannounced audits.

It shall be indicated on the certificate and in the audit report whether the audit was announced or unannounced.