

	UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP			Procedure
DOC.NO: UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01	ISSUE 01	01 JAN 2026	Revision 01 29.04.2026	

AUDIT PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

To describe the procedure for Hygiene Rating audit planning, and audit techniques for appropriate operations of Hygiene Rating Audit Systems.

2. SCOPE

This process covers audit techniques, planning and sampling used in the operations of UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP .

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The Technical Manager is responsible for defining Hygiene Rating Audit planning and techniques.

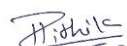
4. PROCEDURE

4.1 AUDIT PLANNING

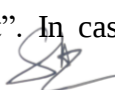
4.1.1 Inquiries can come through emails, phone calls, websites, etc. The inquiry form is made available upon request and can be downloaded from our website (<https://www.unicert.co.in/training.php>).

4.1.2 On receiving the application from the FSE, the Technical Manager shall review the application form and the organization's requirements. The Technical Manager may connect with the FSE if further information is required. All the inquiries are either filled by FSE or UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP. on behalf of FSE in the FSE Details Format. A suitable Auditor is selected for Hygiene Rating Audit according to the scope and expertise. The status of the application review is recorded in the form FSE Details Format. Selection of auditor shall be based on competence, sector experience, impartiality, and absence of conflict of interest.

4.1.3 After reviewing the application, man days are calculated for the audit based on the time schedule provided by the FSSAI in the HRAA Guidance document for hygiene rating audit. The calculated man days are recorded in the form FSE Details Format. After reviewing all the details and calculating man-days., quotation is sent to the client mentioning the audit man-days, assigned auditor, proposed audit dates, and audit fee details, in the format "Quotation for Hygiene Rating Audit". In case, any observer is required to witness the



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audit, the approval is taken from the client and his travel arrangements are borne by the Audit Agency.

This procedure implements Clause 4.1.3 of the FSSAI Hygiene Rating Scheme. The communication of audit status is defined across Clauses 4.2, 4.5, and 4.6. Misleading and unauthorized use of audit status is controlled as per Clause 4.6 and made legally binding through Client Audit Agreement QM-01/4.1/F01.

Once the client approves the quotation, a formal Client Agreement is signed with the client in the format “Client Audit Agreement (QM-01/4.1/F01)”, which includes legally binding conditions on the use and communication of Hygiene Rating Audit status as defined in Clause 4.6 of this procedure.

4.1.4 Once the agreement is signed & the audit date is confirmed, the travel arrangements are made by the Administration head and the auditor is provided with the client details so he can forward the Audit plan in the prescribed Audit Plan format to the FE.

4.1.5 The auditor is required to follow FSSAI regulations (Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Regulations, 2011; Part II & Part V of Schedule 4.) during the auditing and the Hygiene rating checklist must be available to him.

4.1.6 The equipment requirements are identified on the basis of the organizational process. The Technical Manager will ensure the availability of the equipment along with proper calibration. Calibration records and identification details of equipment used during audit activities shall be maintained.

4.1.7 For local travel, the auditor shall not demand from the client anything other than the audit fees by way of reimbursement for travel, accommodation, etc. For outstation travel, the reimbursement for travel and lodging shall be done by the client on an actual basis or as per the agreed amount with the HRAA. The Arrangements between the client and the auditor regarding travel and accommodation are not controlled by FSSAI and FSSAI shall not be responsible for the travel, accommodation & dining facilities of auditors.

4.1.8 The Hygiene Rating Audit shall be conducted onsite. The online audit may be considered on an individual basis under exceptional circumstances.

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4.2 Audit Techniques

4.2.1 UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP has adopted the methods and procedures for audit which are defined in Chapter 3 of the Hygiene Rating Scheme, issued by FSSAI. The updated version of the inspection checklist issued by FSSAI as per Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Regulations, 2011; Part II & Part V of Schedule 4 is used for performing the audit.

Only the latest approved versions of applicable procedures, formats, checklists, guidelines, and regulatory documents shall be used during audit activities. Obsolete documents shall be removed from unintended use.

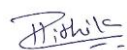
4.2.2 Opening Meeting

4.2.2.1 The auditor shall give a brief introduction about himself, the organization and the confidentiality and impartiality policy of the organization. He should explain the Hygiene rating scheme and the audit plan to the FSE. The auditor shall inform the client about the equipment that he shall be using during the audit. Also, the auditor shall inform the client about Major and Minor Non-conformity.

4.2.2.2 He shall inform the client that in case it is found during the course of the audit that there is a food safety threat or any statutory requirements are not met, the auditor has the authority to immediately terminate the audit with due information to the Technical Manager.

4.2.2.3 The auditor shall also explain the procedure for conducting the physical inspection, document review, evidence collection, and the marking scheme.

4.2.2.4 An attendance sheet shall be filled out at the time of the opening &



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closing meeting. The time for opening and closing the meeting shall also be filled out.

4.2.2.5 Auditor shall disclose his or her identity with the proper evidence such as an I-Card on demand at the client's place.

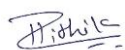
4.2.3 Conducting Audit

4.2.3.1 After the opening meeting, the Auditor will visit the food preparation, serving, storage, transport area, etc. to ensure food safety compliance on the premises. It is followed by the document review to support that the compliances are met and records are maintained.

4.2.3.2 The audit is conducted on the basis of the requirements as laid down in the updated/latest version of the inspection checklist provided by FSSAI. The auditor shall ensure that the latest version of the inspection checklist is being used and the same can be cross-verified from the official website of FSSAI. The auditor shall obey the requirements stated in the matrix provided under the Hygiene Rating matrix.

4.2.3.3 During the audit, the observation shall be classified as Compliance, Partial Compliance, Non- Compliance and Not Applicable and scoring shall be done accordingly. The Serve Safe Portal is capable of auto-scoring. Where the deficiencies or non-conformances are detected, they shall be documented clearly and concisely and shall point out the regulatory requirements that are being contravened. Each non-conformance must be recorded, and the gap must be highlighted which can be viewed by both FSE and FSSAI.

4.2.3.4 Partial Compliance and Non-Compliance should be classified as Major or Minor based on the available evidence.



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i. Major Non-Compliance: When there is a serious failure in the Food Safety Management System of the catering establishment, which may result in adverse health consequences possibly even fatal, these findings shall be categorized as Major Non-Compliance. The auditor shall report such findings to FSSAI within 24 hours. FSSAI after ascertaining the seriousness of the situation shall take regulatory action against the concerned FSE.

ii. Minor Non- Compliance: When there is a shortcoming in the Food Safety Management System or regulatory contravention of a catering establishment, which may not cause any adverse health consequence, these findings shall be categorized as Minor Non-Compliance. The software application has a built-in capability to define appropriate rectification timeframe. Failure by the food business operator to rectify the minor non-conformity within the specified timeframe shall be referred to FSSAI. In case the FSE fails to provide corrective action within the agreed timeline, the Technical Manager shall inform FSSAI regarding the same.

4.2.3.5 The auditor is required to fill out the inspection checklist and collect all possible objective evidence in the form of photographs, Interviews/interactions, questionnaires, audit notes, etc. The evidence shall be collected against the matrix relevant to the industry.

4.2.3.6 The auditors will make Audit Notes in the prescribed format of the ‘Audit Note Sheet (Technical Observation Sheet)’ and all objective evidence will be saved in soft copy and the same will be preserved in the office of UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP . In case of requirement, it can be shared with FSSAI.

4.2.3.7 The auditor shall at all times refer to the auditee on any doubt which is likely to arise and record the explanation properly in the audit notes and audit reports.

4.2.3.8 The auditor shall have a detailed audit report (apart from the online saved audit notes) prepared during the audit other than the audit report that he submits or enters into the hygiene rating port portal. The evidence report collected

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by the auditor will remain with the auditor and auditing agency for a period of not less than 1 year.

4.2.3.9 The auditor shall also verify the authenticity of the external test reports such as water test reports, final product test reports, etc., and certifications such as FoSTaC certificate, FSSAI licenses, external calibration, etc. through trail investigation of the document. The data provided by the third party for the audit process on behalf of the FSE shall be verified for integrity.

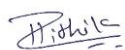
4.2.3.10 The UNICERT may conduct an on-spot audit using a checklist available on the Serve Safe portal. The scores submitted will be converted into ratings and stickers. But in case of unavailability of an online option for Audit, physical Audits may be carried out using the assessment checklist available on Serve Safe Portal. The same results may be uploaded later by filling out the assessment checklist on Serve Safe Portal.

4.2.3.11 The auditors must create their login ID and login on Serve Safe Portal on the dashboard of HRAA and upload scores along with a copy of the Audit checklist. Observations or data obtained in the course of audits shall be recorded in a timely manner so as to prevent loss of relevant information. Only authorized auditors using approved login credentials shall upload audit findings on the Serve Safe Portal.

4.2.3.12 The auditor at any time of the audit or otherwise shall not misuse the name of FSSAI directly or indirectly to harass the clients.

4.2.4 Closing Meeting

4.2.4.1 After conducting the audit, the auditor will discuss and inform the FSE about the major and minor non-compliance along with the timeline for the rectification.



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4.2.4.2 The auditor will inform the FSE that it shall respond with corrective actions for the non-conformances to the UNICERT and FSSAI within 24 hours of conducting the audits in case of major Non-compliances.

4.2.4.3 The auditor also briefs the FSE about the process for the verification of the report, the process for getting the certificate along with the procedure to complain and appeal.

4.2.4.4 The auditor must inform the FSE that in case the Food Safety Establishment gets a rating of fewer than 4 stars, re-verification audit is scheduled.

4.2.4.5 The auditor must give sufficient chance to the FSE to ask any question/doubt or seek clarification etc. and answer the same in the most satisfactory way.

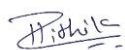
4.2.4.6 Towards the end when the audit is concluded by the auditor, the FSE acknowledges the audit checklist/report by signing the same.

4.3 Safe manner for conducting the audit

4.3.1 The audit must be conducted in a safe manner by the auditor to ensure the safety of him as well as the other employees. The auditor will be responsible for his personal safety during the audit and FSSAI will not be held responsible for any mis-happening.

4.3.2 The auditor must have a proper understanding of the procedure and the equipment used in the premises to ensure safe operations.

4.3.3 The auditor may ask for necessary details about the process and the equipment if the same is novel to him.



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4.3.4 The auditor shall be conscious of the surroundings and observe safety signs. He should maintain a safe space from flammable items and other high-risk operations to avoid the occurrence of any accidents.

4.3.5 The auditor must wear suitable Personnel Protective Equipment to ensure there is no hazard to food safety.

4.4 Audit Records

4.4.1 After the completion of the audit, the records and evidence collected are compiled and handed over to Administration head as well in order to compile the hard copy of the same which will further demonstrate the effectiveness of the system. All the records related to the audit shall be retained for a period of 3 years.

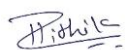
4.4.2 All instructions, standards or written procedures, worksheets and reference data relevant to the work of the Hygiene Rating Audit Agency shall be maintained up-to-date and be readily available to the personnel.

4.4.3 FSSAI has the right to scrutinize the audit notes, audit reports, evidence, etc and UNICERT will provide the same to the FSSAI for scrutiny purposes.

Confidentiality of audit records and client information shall be maintained at all times and access shall be restricted to authorized personnel only.

4.5 Audit Reports and Audit Certificates

4.5.1 The UNICERT and its auditor shall register on the FSSAI-Hygiene Rating Portal to obtain login credentials for uploading audit checklist, objective evidence, and related documents. Before final submission on the portal, the audit report, checklist, objective evidence, and scoring shall be reviewed by the Technical Manager or authorized competent personnel.



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4.5.2 On completing the verification process, findings are uploaded on FSSAI Hygiene Rating Portal basis which the Hygiene Rating certificate for the FSE is generated. The certificate issued from the FSSAI portal contains the following information:

- A) Identification Of The Issuing Body (FSSAI) B) Unique Identification And Date Of Issue
- C) Date(S) Of Audit
- D) Date Of Certificate Generated
- E) Name Of HRAA F) Name Of Auditor
- G) Validity Of The Certificate
- H) Identification Of The Areas/Processes Inspected
- I) Hygiene Rating
- J) Signature Or Other Indication Of Approval, By Authorized Personnel
- K) QR Code

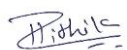
4.5.3 UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP will download the ‘Verified Hygiene Rating Certificate’ and hand over the certificate to the FSEs to display the same at prominent locations on the premises.

4.5.4 The Hygiene Rating certificate will also be sent to the FBO's registered email ID.

4.6 Control of Information Related to Audit Status

UNICERT CONFORMITY LLP controls the communication and use of information related to Hygiene Rating Audit status by Food Establishments in accordance with Clause 4.1.3 of the FSSAI Hygiene Rating Scheme requirements for HRAA.

The following shall be treated as misleading and unauthorized use of audit status by the Food Establishment:



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- Claiming hygiene rating before certificate generation from FSSAI portal
- Using audit checklist/report for marketing or promotional purposes
- Misuse of name/logo of FSSAI, HRAA, or Auditor
- Display of expired, altered, or photocopied certificate
- Misrepresentation of hygiene rating status in any form (print, digital, verbal)

These requirements are made legally binding through the Client Audit Agreement (QM-01/4.1/F01). Any violation shall be reported to FSSAI and may lead to suspension or termination of the agreement.

5 REFERENCES

UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01/WI	Work instruction for safe inspections
UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01/F01	Inspection Checklist
UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01/F02	Work order Register
UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01/F03	Auditor Allocation Form
UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01/F04	Audit Planning
UNICERT-HRAA/P7.1/01/F05	FSE Details Format



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