SALSA

Safe and Local Supplier Approval

SALSA Food & Drink Production Audit Standard

Issue 7, June 2026

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Introduction

Developed by experienced food safety experts, SALSA is a robust and effective food safety certification scheme for micro and small food and drink producers in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The SALSA Standard incorporates the legal requirements for UK and ROI food and drink producers, as well as the enhanced expectations of food buyers.

SALSA is a non-profit-making joint venture of The Food & Drink Federation, NFU and UK Hospitality. The Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) monitors the delivery of the Scheme on behalf of the owner, SALSA Scheme Ltd, which is made up of representatives from these three trade associations. IFST also runs the professional register that verifies the competence of SALSA Auditors.

Membership

SALSA membership provides guidance to achieve Approval through achievable and affordable steps. Exclusive resources enable members to create robust food safety management systems or to align their current systems with the SALSA Standard.

SALSA Approval is granted to members who can demonstrate to an auditor that they can produce and supply safe and legal food and are committed to continually meeting the requirements of the SALSA Standard.

Who is Eligible to join SALSA?

- Food and drink producers based in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- Businesses that operate from commercial (not domestic) premises.
- Businesses that employ between 1 and 50 full-time people.

SALSA Membership Includes:

- An extensive library of tools and resources to support audit preparation and to meet the SALSA Standard, including **Interpretation Guides** with requirement-by-requirement compliance and evidence guidance, **Tools & Tips** and **Self-Assessment Checklists**.
- Access to SALSA Mentoring from our cohort of professionally qualified and trained mentors.
- Discounted rates on SALSA training courses.
- A company profile in the SALSA Directory, visible to regional, national and international buyers.
- The ‘SALSA Approved’ logo pack, providing a recognised mark of credibility and a competitive edge in the marketplace (available with a valid certificate).

SALSA & Food Safety Culture

Joining SALSA and implementing the Standard supports the development and maintenance of an effective food safety culture.

Food Safety Culture encompasses 'the attitudes, values and/or beliefs which are prevalent at the site, relating to the importance of product safety and the confidence in the product safety systems, processes and procedures used by the site.'

This includes:

- **Leadership**, strategy and a plan to ensure the consistent production of safe food.
- Awareness, **engagement** and commitment of all employees in the importance of safe production and distribution of food.
- Clear **communication** and understanding of roles and responsibilities and their interactions for all employees in the food business.
- Maintaining the **integrity** of the food safety management system through verifying controls in a timely and efficient manner and ensuring that documentation is up to date.
- Continual **improvement** of the food safety management system, considering changes and developments in science, technology and best practices.
- Availability of sufficient **resources** and facilities to ensure the consistent, safe and hygienic handling of food.

See SALSA's guide 'Success with SALSA - Food Safety Culture' for more information.

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SECTION 1 - PREREQUISITE CONTROLS

Statement of Intent: Prerequisite food safety controls shall be identified, documented, implemented, legally compliant and maintained throughout the business. Staff are aware of the impact they can have on achieving and maintaining SALSA certification, and consistently producing and handling safe & legal food and drink. Roles and responsibilities are clear, and the business management provides sufficient resource for an effective prerequisite control programme throughout all aspects of the business.

1.1 Training and Supervision

1.1.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing all the training requirements of the business.

1.1.2 Training records shall be in place to provide evidence that all staff can competently carry out their specific job function.

1.1.3 There shall be a documented programme and/or plan of annual refresher training requirements.

Records shall be kept of refresher training for food handlers and key staff.

1.1.4 All personnel shall be adequately supervised throughout the working period.

1.2 Personal Hygiene

1.2.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing the personal hygiene rules and requirements.

To include the rules and controls to reduce the risk of contamination from personnel and personal items.

It shall be evident that these rules are understood and implemented by all personnel to prevent product contamination.

1.2.2 Protective clothing, workwear and footwear worn by employees, visitors and contractors working in, or entering food handling/storage areas shall be suitable for the food being handled and shall not pose a contamination risk to the product.

A procedure shall be in place to detail the requirements for the frequency of change and hygienic laundering.

1.2.3 A procedure shall be in place detailing the changing requirements for workwear and protective clothing.

1.2.4 A procedure shall be in place for the production of High Risk/High Care products, that describes the type of protective clothing to be worn, how to wear it and the order of changing when entering or leaving the designated changing area.

1.2.5 The consumption of personal food and drink should not be permitted within food production and storage areas.

1.2.6 Hand cleaning shall always be performed before entering production, handling food, after visiting the toilet and thereafter at a frequency that is appropriate to minimise risk to product.

1.2.7 The business shall have a procedure for establishing the health status of food handlers and for the notification by employees, temporary employees, contractors and visitors of any relevant infectious disease or condition with which they may be suffering or have been in contact with.

1.3 Cleaning

1.3.1 All areas of the site shall be visually clean and tidy and the standard of cleaning and housekeeping shall be suitable to minimise the potential for contaminating the product.

1.3.2 Documented cleaning schedules, procedures, methodology and records shall be in place for all equipment whether direct or indirect food contact, building, services, plant, cleaning equipment and hoses.

The cleaning procedures and methodology shall be validated to confirm they are effective for the products manufactured.

1.3.3 The business shall have a documented system and list of approved cleaning chemical products used.

Ensuring the cleaning products are food safe and effective for the cleaning required and used as appropriate to manufactures guidelines.

All cleaning chemicals shall be correctly labelled, identifiable and safely stored.

1.3.4 Verification of the effectiveness of the methodology, cleaning and disinfecting processes, and chemicals used shall be routinely completed.

Records shall be kept.

1.3.5 An environmental sampling plan shall be in place to verify the hygiene standards for High Risk/High Care areas based on risk assessment to test for the presence or absence of Listeria species.

Records shall be kept.

1.3.6 Procedures shall be in place to detail the controls required for the use of returnable & reusable food contact containers.

Records shall be kept.

1.4 Allergen Management

1.4.1 The business shall document and identify all raw materials and products brought onsite, with the allergens contained or may contain.

1.4.2 The business shall document in a risk assessment the allergens at each process step and the risk of unintended allergens and cross contamination.

1.4.3 A procedure shall be in place detailing the allergen management controls based on the outcome of the allergen risk assessment.

This shall be implemented to prevent or minimise the potential for cross contamination at all stages of production and throughout all processes, from intake to despatch.

Records shall be kept.

1.4.4 A procedure shall be in place to verify that allergen labelling information is correct, legal and accurate based on ingredient specifications, product recipes and risk of cross contamination.

This includes all product labels and labelling information at point of sale, including e-commerce, marketing copy, websites and printed materials.

Records shall be kept.

1.4.5 Where allergen suitability claims are made for a product, these shall be validated using accredited laboratory methods of testing.

1.5 Process, Environment and Equipment Control

1.5.1 Documented process controls shall be monitored to ensure products can be made safely, consistently and in compliance with the recipes, manufacturing instructions and finished product specifications.

Records shall be kept.

1.5.2 Documented environmental controls shall be monitored to ensure that facilities are adequate to maintain raw materials, work-in-progress, finished products and packaging within a safe temperature range and where applicable, under controlled humidity, atmospheric or other environmental parameters.

Records shall be kept.

1.5.3 Procedures shall be in place detailing the actions required in the event of equipment failure, and to establish the safety status of the product.

1.5.4 External Calibration:
Where identified as essential for legality and food safety, environment monitoring devices, such as temperature probes and recorders, and process control devices such as weighing equipment and metal detection, shall be calibrated to ensure accuracy within defined parameters at a pre-determined frequency.

1.5.5 Inhouse Equipment Verification
All measuring devices and equipment used for monitoring production processes and product quality shall have a regular in house verification check and be adjusted if necessary.

Records shall be kept.

1.5.6 Procedures shall be in place detailing the requirements for quantity control to ensure the product complies with Weights and Measures legislative requirements.

Records shall be kept.

1.5.7 A procedure shall be in place to document the controls required for metal control in production. Records shall be kept of the inspection and/or testing.

1.5.8 A procedure shall be in place to document the controls required for the packing into breakable packaging.

Records shall be kept.

1.5.9 A procedure shall be in place to detail the requirements and hygienic controls for Product Organoleptic and Taste Assessment.

Records shall be kept.

1.6 Control of Suppliers and Raw Materials

1.6.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing how all suppliers of raw materials, including packaging, processing aids and sub contracted service providers are approved.

The procedure shall consider the risks relevant to the supplier, raw materials or service supplied.

An approved supplier list shall be kept current and reviewed annually.

1.6.2 Specifications shall be held for all raw materials, including food contact packaging, processing aids and subcontracted packing or processing.

A review of specifications shall be completed annually.

1.6.3 A procedure shall be in place to describe the documented checks required on incoming raw materials including food contact packaging and processing aids.

1.6.4 The risks in relation to food fraud, adulteration or substitution for all raw materials, including food contact packaging, shall be assessed and documented.

Appropriate controls should be implemented.

Any changes in risk levels should be monitored.

There shall be a full review documented, at a minimum frequency of annually.

1.6.5 Water supply, including stored mains water or private water supply, shall be potable and shall not present a contamination risk to products.

1.7 Stock Control

1.7.1 Stock rotation shall be controlled to ensure that raw materials and work in progress are used within their allocated shelf-life.

1.7.2 Where surplus products, or those that do not meet specification, are sold to staff or passed to other organisations, records shall be kept to show products are fit for consumption, meet legal requirements and are traceable.

Where these products are customer branded, there shall be written consent of the brand owner.

1.8 Waste Control and Recycling

1.8.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing the requirements for handling, storage, removal and legal disposal of waste and recycling materials.

1.8.2 Internal and external waste and recycling collection containers and compactors shall be clearly identified and managed in such a manner as to minimise risk of contamination and pest harbourage.

1.8.3 Products that require specific conditions for disposal shall be separated and disposed of using licensed contractors or recycling collectors.

1.9 Pest Management

1.9.1 All premises shall be designed, constructed and maintained so as to minimise the risk of pest infestation and the methods of control shall be communicated to all staff.

1.9.2 The services of a competent pest control operator shall be contracted for the regular inspection and treatment of premises. The frequency of inspections shall be clearly defined, reflect the activities of the site, and shall be reviewed at least annually.

1.9.3 The location of all pest control measures shall be identified on a plan/diagram of the site.

The plan/diagram shall be reviewed, dated and signed at least annually.

1.9.4 Inspections shall be at regular intervals. Inspection records shall be kept to include details of any pest activity and pest control treatments undertaken at individual pest control points and actions taken in meeting recommendations made by the pest control operator/contractor.

1.9.5 Results of pest control inspections shall be assessed and analysed for trends at least annually. Where trends are identified, corrective action(s) shall be taken to eliminate further risk to product safety.

1.9.6 Baits and other materials such as insecticide sprays or fumigants shall be applied and used according to the documentation on their safe use, which shall be held on site.

1.10 Equipment

1.10.1 Equipment shall be fit for purpose, constructed of appropriate materials, designed to allow hygienic processing and shall not be a source of foreign body contamination.

1.11 Maintenance

1.11.1 A programme of planned maintenance shall be in place for premises and equipment.

Records shall be kept of work completed.

1.11.2 The business shall ensure that the safety, legality and quality of product is not jeopardised during maintenance operations.

Records shall be kept after maintenance work is completed, that the area/equipment has been inspected and is clean and free from contamination for release to production.

1.12 Vehicle Management, Storage and Distribution

1.12.1 Storage facilities and transport used for the storage and distribution of products shall be fit for purpose and capable of maintaining the integrity and safety of the product, including product and facility temperature where applicable.

All transport should be inspected before loading.

Records shall be kept.

1.12.2 Procedures for managing the security of the company owned vehicles and load during transit and where appropriate, during loading and unloading shall be documented and understood by drivers and delivery staff.

1.12.3 Where third party hauliers/distributors and storage facilities are contracted, a documented contract, service agreement or terms and conditions shall be in place to ensure product integrity and safety is not compromised.

1.12.4 Where products are distributed via couriers or the postal service, products shall be suitably packaged to ensure their integrity and safety is not compromised during distribution to the customer.

Records of transit trials shall be kept.

SECTION 2 - HACCP

Statement of Intent: The business management shall provide resource to enable and maintain the food safety system. All microbiological, chemical, physical and allergen hazards relating to product safety and legality shall be identified, analysed and assessed for risk. A documented HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) system, based on Codex Alimentarius HACCP principles, shall be in place and regularly reviewed.

2.1 HACCP Scope

2.1 A documented HACCP system with a scope that describes which products and processes are covered, shall be developed and maintained by a named and competent team or a person.

2.2 Product Description

2.2 Product descriptions for each product or product category shall be written that include all relevant safety factors and information for each product group. The business management shall demonstrate that they are aware of the food standards, legal regulations and industry codes of practice applying to the products they produce, trade, handle, store and/or distribute.

2.3 Intended Use

2.3 Identify the intended use based on the expected uses of each product group by the end user or consumer.

2.4 Process Flow Diagram

2.4 A flow diagram shall be constructed to cover each product or product category and process as outlined in the scope of the SALSA audit. All operational steps shall be covered from raw material receipt through processing, rework, storage and distribution.

2.5 Hazard Analysis

2.5 The HACCP team shall conduct a Hazard Analysis by identifying against each process step the cause/source of any microbiological, physical, chemical and allergen hazards that shall be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to acceptable levels.

2.6 Control Measures / Prerequisites

2.6 Control Measures and/or Prerequisite Controls relating to each hazard at each process step in the Hazard Analysis shall be identified.

2.7 Risk Assessment

2.7 Conduct a risk assessment for each microbiological, physical, chemical and allergen hazard identified in the Hazard Analysis study and identify which hazards are significant.

2.8 Critical Control Points

2.8 Consider the significant hazards identified in the risk assessment and determine which, if any, shall be identified as Critical Control Points.

2.9 Critical Limits

2.9 Critical limits which enable the prevention, elimination or reduction of identified hazards, shall be established for each Control Measure, at each Critical Control Point and shall be validated.

2.10 Monitoring Procedures

2.10 Establish and implement a monitoring procedure and system for each Critical Control Point.

2.11 Corrective Actions

2.11 Where monitoring indicates that a Critical Control Limit has not been met, there shall be an effective corrective action plan.

2.12 Verification

2.12 Establish verification procedures and records to verify that the critical limits and controls outlined in 2.9 to 2.11 are working effectively on an ongoing basis.

2.13 HACCP Documents and Records

2.13 Documents and records to demonstrate the effective implementation and monitoring of the HACCP system shall be maintained.

2.14 HACCP Review

2.14 Complete a documented HACCP system review annually and before any changes in raw materials, recipes, processing, equipment, packaging, storage or distribution are introduced.

2.15 HACCP Team

2.15 The HACCP team shall be trained and able to demonstrate understanding and competence of CODEX based HACCP principles and systems to ensure effective implementation and maintenance of an effective HACCP plan.

2.16 HACCP Operational Monitoring Competency

2.16 At all times during production there shall be specifically trained personnel on site able to demonstrate awareness and competence in the site's HACCP plans required operations, monitoring controls and corrective actions.

SECTION 3 - MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND DOCUMENTATION

Statement of Intent: An effective management system encompassing regular system reviews, procedures for corrective action, complaints, traceability, labelling control, incident management and product testing shall be in place and continuous improvement can be demonstrated. Documented systems, specifications and procedures relating to the business's food safety and quality systems shall be clear, organised and readily accessible.

3.1 Food Safety Systems Review

3.1.1 A food safety and internal systems review shall be carried out and recorded, at least annually.

It shall include all requirements of the SALSA Standard and identify areas for action or improvement.

3.1.2 Any actions and improvements identified in the food safety systems review shall be completed to an agreed timescale.

3.2 Non-Conformance Investigation and Corrective Action

3.2.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing the controls to identify, record and manage non-conforming materials occurring at all stages of production and throughout all processes, from intake to despatch including customer complaints.

3.2.2 A procedure shall be in place to investigate and remedy the cause of any product, process or procedural nonconformance.

Records shall be kept.

3.2.3 A procedure shall be in place to investigate the cause and ensure product complaints are logged, investigated, remedied and responded to.

Records shall be kept.

3.3 Traceability and Product Identification

3.3.1 A procedure shall be in place that details the traceability system of all raw materials, including food contact packaging, throughout all stages of production from intake forwards to despatch and delivery to customers and backwards from customer to raw material supplier.

3.3.2 The traceability system shall ensure that all raw materials, including food contact packaging, intermediate products, work in progress, rework, maturation, storage and distribution are identified and traceable at all stages.

3.3.3 Traceability of raw materials (including food contact packaging) shall be tested forwards at least annually, and more frequently if there are known risks in the supply chain.

3.3.4 Traceability of finished products shall be tested backwards at least annually, and more frequently if there are known risks in the supply chain.

3.4 Managing Incidents

3.4.1 A procedure shall be in place giving clear guidance on the response to any incident which may compromise the safety and/or legality of a product.

This procedure shall be reviewed at a minimum annually.

3.4.2 The incident procedure shall be challenge tested at least annually to ensure it is effective and accurate.

Records of the challenge test of the procedure, including the communication test, shall be kept.

3.4.3 Inform SALSA in the event of a product recall/withdrawal, improvement notice, or legal proceedings related to the safety and/or legality of a product within 3 working days. Send a summary of the subsequent investigation to SALSA.

3.5 Document Control

3.5.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing the control of documents and records relating to the safety, legality and quality of products.

3.5.2 All documents and completed records relating to the safety, legality and quality of products shall be genuine, legible, retained in good condition and stored securely for at least the shelf-life of the products plus one year.

3.6 Manufacturing and Finished Product Specifications

3.6.1 Manufacturing Specifications for recipes, finished products, business to business products, non prepacked products, sub contracted or outsourced processing shall be adequate, accurate and kept current.

3.6.2 Specifications shall include defined limits for microbiological, physical, chemical, allergen parameters, where these may affect the safety and/or quality of a finished product.

3.6.3 Procedures, working instructions and records shall be accurate, authentic, clearly legible and readily accessible at all times.

3.7 Labelling Control

3.7.1 A procedure shall be in place detailing how labelling information provided to consumers or business customers is generated to ensure that legislative and, where specified, customer requirements are met.

This includes all product labels and labelling information at point of sale, including e-commerce, marketing copy, websites and printed materials.

3.7.2 There shall be evidence to support the use of provenance, suitability, production method, nutritional/health claims, or logo claims on finished product labels and labelling information at point of sale, including ecommerce, websites and leaflets.

3.7.3 A procedure shall in place detailing how the correct label or printed packaging is applied to product.

Records shall be kept.

3.8 Product Shelf-Life and Product Testing

3.8.1 The shelf life applied to all products is based on safety and quality evidence.

This shall be reviewed and validated annually.

Records shall be kept.

3.8.2 A finished product testing programme shall be in place to ensure compliance with specification to the end of shelf life.

Records shall be kept.

3.8.3 Accredited laboratories and methodologies shall be used for all tests which are critical to product safety or legality.

3.9 Management of New Products, Packaging, Recipes or Processing Changes

3.9.1 A procedure shall be in place that details the documented processes and controls for the management of developing, trialling and approving any new products, recipes, packaging or processing changes.

Records shall be kept.

SECTION 4 - PREMISES, LAYOUT AND STRUCTURE

Statement of Intent: Premises and building structure shall be fit for purpose, clean, maintained, with a layout, segregation and flow designed to minimise the risks of cross contamination, secure and legally compliant, meeting product and digital security, production and staff requirements. Premises shall be registered with, or approved by, the appropriate authority.

4.1 Premises Approval

4.1.1 The production site shall be registered with, or approved by, the site's appropriate authority. Documented reports from the appropriate authority shall be made available and held on file for inspection.

4.2 External Areas and Product Security

4.2.1 External factors affecting the location which may contaminate or affect integrity of products shall be assessed.

4.2.2 The perimeter, grounds, drainage, external storage and utilities shall be maintained in good order.

4.2.3 There shall be a food security/defence plan that describes site and product security threats and how they are controlled. The plan shall always include the security measures and/or practices to ensure only authorised personnel have access to production and storage areas on site.

The plan shall be reviewed annually.

4.2.4 There shall be a digital security/defence plan that describes the systems and practices used to protect against digital failure and digital cyber security attacks.

The plan shall be reviewed annually.

4.3 Site Layout and Methods of Working

4.3.1 A site plan shall be in place to show how layout and methods of working minimise the potential for unintended physical, chemical, microbiological or allergen contamination of product and packaging at all process steps.

4.3.2 The factory layout, flow of processes and movement of personnel shall be managed to prevent the risk of cross contamination and ensure effective segregation between products and ingredients where required.

4.3.3 A procedure shall be in place detailing the controls required for the management of visitor tours & tastings.

4.4 Building Structure, Services and Fabrication

4.4.1 Building structure including walls, ceilings, doors, floors, drains and lighting shall be sound, fit for purpose and regularly maintained.

4.4.2 Building Services such as ventilation, compressed air and steam shall be sound, fit for purpose and regularly maintained.

4.4.3 Suitable and sufficient hand cleaning facilities shall be provided.

4.4.4 Staff Facilities shall be provided, well maintained and sited to prevent any cross contamination risk.

4.4.5 Facilities for tray and utensil washing and general-purpose cleaning shall, where appropriate, be adequately segregated from product handling and storage.

4.4.6 A procedure shall be in place to detail the glass and breakables controls. There shall be a list of relevant items with routine inspection checks.

Records shall be kept.

4.4.7 A procedure shall be in place to detail the controls and practice required for good manufacturing practice and prevention of contamination.

4.4.8 A program shall be in place of regular GMP standards inspection checks across the factory including all ancillary areas to demonstrate compliance.

Records shall be kept.