



SAFE QUALITY FOODS (SQF) AND GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE (GFSI)

[GFSI](#) is a business-driven initiative for the development of food safety management systems to ensure food facilities are operating in a manner conducive to food safety and processing safe food for consumers. GFSI is a private organization that oversees and approves different auditing platforms as meeting their criteria. These criteria provide a globally recognized benchmarking standard to specific food safety audits. In practice, this means that a food processor or manufacturer who can point to their GFSI certification can effectively and immediately show their customers and potential customers that their plant is operating with a structured, comprehensive, and effective food safety program. There are many standards that meet GFSI system requirements, such as British Retail Consortium, FS 22000 and SQF. Sysco uses the [SQF](#) standard for our owned meat and seafood companies.



**ENSURING FOOD SAFETY, QUALITY,
& SUPPORT** *with each delivery*

SQF FOOD SAFETY & QUALITY PROCESS

As mentioned, SQF is one of the GFSI recognized food safety processes, plus it also includes an optional food quality standard outside of GFSI requirements. Thus, SQF certification is the only program with a food quality component along with its food safety program. It uses science-based principles to apply standards of food safety. Once SQF certified, the facility is recognized globally by all in the food industry, including retailers, producers, and suppliers.

The SQF process is designed to control and prevent food safety risks. It meets industry, and regulatory requirements for all sectors of the food chain, from farm to retail. SQF stringent process requires that a HACCP program is part of the food safety management program, along with good manufacturing practices (GMP's), food defense, food fraud, sanitation, maintenance, and pest control. Management commitment and food safety culture are also key part of the requirement. The SQF quality standard is designed to control and prevent food quality risks. It includes a detailed food quality plan that includes quality control points in the system to lead the facility in areas to assess quality and a mechanism to detail quality performance to management. The system is based on the same systematic approach that HACCP takes for food safety. For more information about SQF programs, visit The SQF Institute website.



SYSCO SPECIALTY MEAT GROUP FOOD SAFETY & QUALITY PROCESS

Sysco has 26 specialty meat and seafood sites across the US and Canada. Each specialty meat and seafood site has a dedicated food safety and quality assurance professional that oversees and implements food safety and quality assurance requirements above and beyond basic regulatory requirements. Sysco further demonstrates our commitment to safe products and brand confidence by having their processing facilities certified to a GFSI SQF standards. These processing facilities are required to complete an annual audit by a third-party certification body as well as internal audits with a stringent internal standard score of 96 set by Sysco FSQA, which far exceeds the SQF minimum standard for a Good Score of 86. If a facility does not meet a Good audit score, it would require a re-audit by an SQF third-party auditor within six months and correction of all non-conformances in order to maintain its SQF certification. Additionally, that site would have another audit within six months of the re-audit to return to its original audit schedule. A score below 70 is a failure and results in immediate forfeiture of certification and the facility must reapply for certification as if starting from the beginning.

The audit is scored with minor, major and critical non-conformances. All can result in audit failure with a sliding scale of 1, 5 and 50 points lost for the respective non-conformances of minor, major and critical. All non-conformances require a response to the auditor with root cause analysis and a corrective action performed by the facility. Each facility meets with their SQF team monthly to review the past non-conformances, ensuring the corrective actions put in place are effective. During the meetings, they also review their current SQF programs including but not limited to customer complaints, changes to specifications, upcoming audits, testing of the SQF system and many more different aspects to the SQF programs that total over 180 different individual components of the SQF Code. Additionally, all of Sysco's meat and seafood location are certified to a quality assurance portion of the SQF standards that exceeds GFSI standards and addresses quality concerns in a similar process to the food safety concerns, and this is also done during the monthly meetings. This monthly review ensures the SQF program at each processing facility is always being maintained.