

**Canadian Food Safety and Quality Program
Food Safety Initiative
Implementation Element Fact Sheet**



Selecting a Food Safety Consultant

Activities in the FSI Implementation Element will require you to hire an experienced consultant to perform an initial assessment of your facility and to write a Proposed Work Plan for developing your food safety systems. Later, the consultant may help you to perform some of these activities.

A Food Safety or HACCP consultant will bring the technical knowledge and expertise that facilitates the implementation of the Good Manufacturing Practices* (GMPs) and Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems in your facility.

Role of the consultant

A consultant provides assistance according to your requirements and your current situation. Some services that a consultant should be able to provide are as follows:

- Initial assessment of your facility ('gap analysis'). This will determine your needs with respect to requirements for GMP/HACCP implementation.
- Assistance creating a work plan for developing and implementing your food safety system
- Development of written programs
- Implementation of GMP/HACCP systems
- Employee GMP/HACCP training to both management and staff members involved in your Food Safety System (e.g. personnel practices, sanitation, etc)
- Development of a record keeping system
- Assistance with the preparation for auditing and certification (e.g. internal audit)
- Maintenance of your GMP/HACCP system (follow-up after certification)
- Technical knowledge transfer to your staff (e.g. HACCP coordinator)

*Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) are also known as Prerequisite Programs.

How do you find and select a consultant?

At this point in time, there is no central list of BC food safety consultants. Your industry association may be able to provide you with contacts or advice on locating a consultant.

Before you hire a consultant you should discuss your needs and evaluate his/her qualifications:

- Technical knowledge in food processing and/or food production (e.g. diploma or degree in Food Science, Microbiology, qualifications as auditor, etc)
- Experience implementing Food Safety Systems (e.g. experience with written programs, conducting HACCP training courses, etc)
- Willingness to work on site identifying the needs of your facility. The consultant should be committed to spend significant amount of time learning the daily operations to ensure a well-designed system
- Interest of the consultant to maintain the system once implemented (e.g. would the consultant provide follow-up support, training?)
- Work history and references of previous jobs and previous clients (e.g. have any of his/her previous clients received third party recognition/certification?)

Preparing the agreement between you and your consultant

Once the consultant is selected, some key issues should be addressed before a contract is drawn up and signed. Some of these issues include:

- Development of the plan and the activities involved in the project
- Duration of the project
- Identification of milestones
- Deliverables. In addition to GMP auditing and writing a Work Plan, this may include training sessions, meetings, and preparation of forms and written programs.
- Cost of the project (e.g. cost per hour, total cost) and payment options
- Confidentiality (e.g. process, recipes) and Liability (e.g. Insurance coverage)

Working towards the implementation of your Food Safety System

- You need to understand and evaluate the programs developed by the consultant, by testing the procedures and documentation requirements.
- The programs should be feasible, effective and specific to your plant.
- Regulatory requirements should be met throughout the programs.
- Proper training of the staff involved with your operation is required for a successful implementation.
- Once the Food Safety System is implemented; the consultant should transfer the technical knowledge to your staff to maintain the program.

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