General information regarding elements of the SQF Scheme and certification process are described below however it is important that you visit www.sqfi.com to access and review all the SQF Scheme documents in full including any additional updates from SQF as any guidance documents usually available on the SQF website . Please feel free to contact us to discuss how we can better serve your organization.

SAI Global Full Service Team

Upon selection of SAI Global as your Registrar and submission of the signed Application for Certification, SAI Global will assign your dedicated service team.

Your service team will be selected to suit your specific industry and will consist of an Account Manager, a Regional Account Representative, a Lead Auditor and other team members as needed to support your certification. The roles of each member of your service team are as follows: your Account Manager will manage the business relationship, including contract negotiation and changes to your certification requirements; your Regional Account Representative will manage the back office processes including scheduling and customer service related to certificates and invoicing; your Lead Auditor will manage the delivery relationship. As your primary contact with SAI Global, the Lead Auditor assigned provides you with ongoing industry developments and interpretations and ensures coordination of all audit-related activities for your company. If additional audit team members are required, they are selected from our experienced auditor base. Your audits will be consistent in approach, technically sound and relevant to your business needs.

The supplier will be notified prior to the audit of the witness auditor accompanying the Lead auditor.

Preliminary Assessment (Gap audit) optional

A Preliminary Assessment is an on-site assessment conducted prior to the Document Review audit. The introductory visit allows for the identification of any major implementation issues and feedback regarding your implementation readiness. We recommend that your preliminary assessment be scheduled at least 30 days prior to the Certification audit.

Certification Audit

The goal of the certification audit is to assess the effective implementation of your management system to the requirements of the standard and your management system documentation. The audit is conducted on site and consists of one step certification process (except for V8.1 where the document review is done as a separate activity), With SQF V9 in the same audit will be done a documentation review and a review to ensure that the management system has been fully implemented and is in conformance to the requirements of the standard or normative document.

All audit activities are mutually planned with your assigned Auditor prior to the audit. An audit plan is provided detailing the scope and objectives of audit, the audit team members, the processes to be audited and the timelines. While onsite your audit team will work to verify that the management system meets the requirements of the standard and your system documentation by assessing objective evidence. At the conclusion of the onsite audit, you will be immediately informed of the results. A formal audit report will be issued after the audit. The report includes information relative to positive aspects of the system and system non-conformances.

Certificate Issuance

Upon successful completion of the certification process (including resolution of non-conformances if applicable), your Team Leader compiles a Certification Package for review by our Certification Team. Upon completion of the review, the Certification Team prepares and forwards your Certificate of Registration. Your certificate will include details such as: legal company name, site address, standard, scope of certification, the initial certification date and the expiration date.

The official certificate is forwarded, along with a link to our marketing website. The Marketing tools will provide you with useful ideas on how to capitalize on your certification, provide you with the official 'SAI Global registered mark' artwork and the guidelines of use. Your successful certification will also be published in our online Directory of Registered Companies, at www.saiglobal.com, SQFI public register, accreditation body register.

Surveillance Audits

Surveillance audits are a requirement of the scheme, in the event the audit rating is at "C" (Complies).
- Semi-Annual audits are conducted no later than six months after your certification/recertification audit.

Re-certification Audit

Re-certification Audits are scheduled yearly, within the audit window, before the certificate expiration date.
The purpose is to ensure:
- The effectiveness of the management system in its entirety in the light of internal and external changes and its continued relevance and applicability to the scope of the Certification
- Client demonstrated commitment to maintain the effectiveness and improvement of the management system in order to enhance overall performance.
- Whether the operation of the certified management system contributes to the achievement of the organization's policy and objectives
- These audits can be announced or optionally unannounced, per scheme requirement
- One in 3 recertifications must be conducted unannounced

Site Obligations

The SQF scheme has numerous obligations conditions that apply as well as SAI Global standard terms and conditions. You need to refer to SQF Code and all normative documents and below are some highlights:
- Allowing the supervised training/witnessing of new auditors by SAI Global
- routine SAI Global shadow witness audit program
- witness audits by Accreditation Bodies, SQF, GFSI or other stakeholders
- Witness audits by a specifier where a specifier specific additional audit module is included
- Any specific requirements for additional audit modules are to be in accordance with the respective protocols
- Certification details are published in various public registers including SQFI, SAI Global, Accreditation bodies.
- In the event of a significant food safety incident, including a product recall or regulatory food safety non-conformity (e.g. a regulatory enforcement notice), SQFI and the certification body issuing the current certificate for the site against this Standard shall be informed within 24 hours
- SQF reserves the right to contact the site or conduct its own audit or visit to a site once certified in response to complaints or as part of the routine SQF compliance activity to ensure the integrity of the Global Standards schemes. Such visits may be announced or unannounced.