



## How to Manage an Inspection (CFIA, Provincial, 3rd Party Audit do's and don'ts)

Even for experienced food safety practitioners, the thought of having an inspector/auditor onsite can make for a sleepless night or an unhappy day, especially if auditors arrive unannounced (yes, it happens). Here are helpful do's and don'ts that we have found work for others.

### DO

- Be on time, courteous and prepared for the inspection. The inspector/auditor will appreciate your organization and understand that you value their time.
- Practice proper good manufacturing/agricultural practices as well as proper implementation of your documented food safety plan every day. You have nothing to worry about if you have been practicing regularly.
- Approach your audit/inspection as a team when possible. The size and complexity of the operation may require more than the food safety representative to

meet with the auditor. This commitment to quality will flow into the products and more often than not, result in a successful inspection.

- Free up time to be attentive to the auditor. This will make the audit run smoothly and perhaps faster. It may be possible to learn something from their experience.
- Use the same checklist that the inspector uses, to conduct regular inspections in-house. Also, complete these inspections with employees and coworkers; these internal inspections will help to prepare and catch items prior to an audit and may be a learning experience for staff.
- Train the employees well in advance of any inspection, and document the training. A large percent of the time it's not the program or building itself that fails, it's something someone does without thinking during an inspection.
- Know what the requirements/regulations for your product are, prior to having an inspection. It's surprising how many people have never read or made an effort to understand the requirements before an auditor comes on site.



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### **DON'T**

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- Be late, get defensive, or be unprepared. The inspector is there as an independent representative to verify food safety practices at the facility. If employees are on the defensive the inspection will more than likely go down hill. The key to a successful inspection is preparation.
- Get audit ready the day or week before the audit. There are 51 other weeks in the year that are equally as important to ensuring success in an audit and the production of safe quality food.
- Expect the food safety person to do it all. Food safety is not a department, it's a companywide commitment.
- Leave an auditor unattended. This is sage advice from many auditors we have spoken to. This essentially shows a lack of commitment to the audit process and gives them more time to look around and find potential issues.
- Let the auditor be the one to find holes in your facility or program. Be proactive and document those deficiencies. No one is perfect, make sure to implement corrective actions and figure out the cause so the same issues do not happen again. In the case where a fix can't be made prior to an audit have a plan in place and protect the product from any risks.
- Assume that employees instructed once at the beginning of their employment will remember how to perform a task correctly. Everyone learns in different ways. Some learn from doing, others need visual cues, and others might learn best by reading. Make sure to perform an effectiveness check (watch a task being performed, ask questions) to ensure you were clear during training.
- Rely on your inspector/auditor to interpret the requirements or give you guidance on how to fix issues that have been identified. They are unable to consult as they must stay impartial to be able to conduct a fair unbiased audit.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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Elaine Grant  
Quality and Food Safety Specialist  
Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc.  
**Tel:** 1-902-956-3376  
**Email:** [egrant@perennia.ca](mailto:egrant@perennia.ca)