

FOOD SAFETY TOPIC: DOCUMENT CONTROL & RECORD COMPLETION

DOCUMENTING CONTROL

Document control is essential to ensure that only the correct version of documents, including forms, are available and in use, in hard copy and or electronic copy.

Effective document control guarantees that employees are reading and using the most current and relevant information. Using obsolete documents can lead to food safety, quality, or legality non-conformances.

For example, version 3 of a monitoring record was updated to version 4 because a box for lot code verification was added to the record. If an employee follows version 3 without the lot code verification box, then the lot code will likely not be verified. Product with an incorrect lot code may be sent to a customer.

For effective document control:

- Create a list of all controlled documents indicating the latest version number. Ensure the list is accessible to staff to know they are using the correct version.
- Establish a method for identifying and authorizing controlled documents. Who is responsible for document control? What is the process for having a document updated? How is a document obsoleted?

- Extra copies should not be made and then stored in a place where personnel updating the changes cannot update them. Keep them in a central location.
- Record any changes or amendments to documents in a Change Log.

Electronic documents must be stored securely (authorized access or password protected) and backed up to prevent loss.

RECORD COMPLETION

Genuine records are maintained to demonstrate the effective control of product safety, legality and quality. Retain records for a defined period, at minimum, the shelf life of the product plus 12 months in case they need to be referenced, e.g., for traceability purposes.

When filling out records, keep in mind the following best practices:

- Write legibly in pen, not pencil.
- Do not use liquid paper (White-Out) or correction tape.

- If you make a mistake when filling out a record, draw a line through the original information, keeping the original legible, then initial and date the correction. Example:

~~1750 kg~~ 1705 kg
AC 02-Dec-2022

- To prevent transcription errors, fill out records in real-time, not on scrap paper to be transcribed later.

Discussion point – Why is document control important? What are the risks of poorly filled-out records? Who do you contact at your company if you want to update a document and create a new version?



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [PERENNIA.CA/QUALITY-FOOD-SAFETY](https://perennia.ca/quality-food-safety)

