

A GUIDE TO AVA FOOD FACTORY GRADING SYSTEM

Introduction

The main objective of the Food Factory Grading System is to ensure that the food manufacturers observe good manufacturing practices so as to produce safe and wholesome quality food in their factories. They should be pro-active and develop food safety systems (e.g Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point, [HACCP], inspection, monitoring and documentation) based on the grading criteria to achieve a high factory standard.

Besides helping the food manufacturers meet with the required standards, this guide serves as a tool for them to strive for food excellence in the 21st century.

System of Grading

- All food factories are graded as follows: -

A (Excellence)

B (Good)

C (Average)

D (Pass)

- The grading system is based on the percentage of points obtained according to an assessment checklist.

Criteria for Assessment

- Food factories are assessed based on a checklist. The criteria for assessment are as follows:

- 1) Premises - General cleanliness and housekeeping
- 2) Food Storage
- 3) Food Processing Equipment and Facilities
- 4) Food Handling and Facilities
- 5) Product Identification and Transportation
- 6) Food Safety System
- 7) Food Hygiene Training
- 8) Documentation
- 9) Violations records

- Past performance of the premises will be taken into account. The details of the checklist are given in Annex 1.

Conduct of the Grading Assessment

- The food factory grading system is based on a continual assessment. This means that food factories can be upgraded or downgraded at any time based on findings of the inspections conducted. A licensee is allowed to request for a review of the grade if his premises undergoes major upgrading/ improvement works. However, the review of grading will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- For factories with more than one production line, the assessment will be based on overall findings.

Award of Certificate of Commendation

- Food factories which obtained an 'A' grading for 2 consecutive years and are free from any violations will be awarded with a certificate proclaiming "Excellence in Food Hygiene, Sanitation and Processing".

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR FOOD FACTORY

S/No	Aspects Assessed
1	PREMISES
1.1	Surroundings
1.1.1	General (satisfactory cleanliness & general maintenance, no overgrown vegetation, unauthorised storage, illegal discharge, no smell or other nuisances created)
1.1.2	Drains, roads etc are properly maintained
1.2	Design, construction & maintenance
1.2.1	Size and facilities are adequate and suitable for production eg air-conditioned processing room
1.2.2	Floors, walls, ceilings and doors are constructed of materials that are durable, impervious, smooth and suitable for the conditions and activities in the area and are clean and properly maintained
1.2.3	Floors are properly graded to drain liquid to gullies - no stagnation
1.2.4	Overhead structures, piping are designed, constructed and maintained to prevent dust and dirt accumulation and contamination
1.2.5	Premises are well protected from contamination; all openings are to be equipped with close fitting screens or kept closed
1.2.6	Activities are conducted in properly demarcated areas which are adequately separated by partitions or other effective physical means
1.2.7	Buildings/rooms/areas and facilities are designed to facilitate hygiene operations by means of a regulated process flow from the arrival of raw materials to the storage of finished products, with no criss-crossing of process lines
1.3	Lighting
1.3.1	Lighting is adequate such that the intended production or inspection activity can be carried out effectively
1.3.2	Lighting fixtures located in areas where there are exposed food or packaging materials are protected with shatter-proof covers, to prevent breakage and contamination
1.3.3	All lighting fixtures are clean, well maintained and are in good working condition
1.4	Ventilation
1.4.1	Ventilation provides sufficient air exchange to prevent unacceptable accumulation of steam, condensation, dust, odour or heat
1.4.2	All ventilation equipment and fixtures are clean, well maintained and are in good working condition

1.5	Waste disposal
1.5.1	Effluent or sewerage lines do not pass directly over or through production areas
1.5.2	Adequate and appropriate refuse containers are provided for the storage of waste prior to removal from the establishment. All waste is removed at regular frequency to minimise contamination
1.5.3	Containers used for waste are clearly identified covered, leak-proof and internally lined with a plastic bag
1.5.4	Refuse containers are cleaned and sanitised immediately after disposal of waste
2	STORAGE
2.1	Storage Facilities & Practices – Food Items
2.1.1	Adequate, well designed storage rooms / areas with appropriate storage facilities (racks and containers, etc) are available and which are impervious to moisture, clean, free from pest infestation and well maintained. All food items must be covered
2.1.2	All chilled / frozen ingredients, intermediate and finished products are stored and maintained at appropriate temperatures
2.1.3	Appropriate segregation of all cooked and ready-to-be consumed products from raw and semi-processed food
2.1.4	Ingredients, intermediate and finished products are handled and stored in a manner to prevent damage, contamination and spoilage
2.1.5	Proper stock rotation (First-In-First-Out) is practised to prevent deterioration and spoilage of raw materials and finished products
2.1.6	Returned defective or suspect products are clearly identified and isolated in designated areas or containers for appropriate disposition
2.2	Storage Facilities & Practices – Non Food Items
2.2.1	Adequate and appropriate rooms / areas with racks and containers are provided
2.2.2	Chemicals, detergents and other cleaning materials are stored in designated areas away from food items
2.2.3	Storage areas are clean, free from pest infestation and are properly maintained
3	FOOD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT
3.1	Design, Installation & Maintenance
3.1.1	All food processing equipment are resistant to corrosion and impervious to moisture, clean and are in proper working condition
3.1.2	All food processing equipment are easily accessible for cleaning, sanitising, maintenance and inspection
3.1.3	Food contact surfaces of food processing equipment are clean, smooth and free from rust or other possible contaminants

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3.2	Washing & Sanitising Facilities
3.2.1	Washing and sanitising facilities are adequately separated from food storage, processing and packaging areas to prevent contamination
3.2.2	Washing and sanitising facilities are constructed of corrosion resistant materials capable of being easily cleaned; to provide potable water at temperatures appropriate for cleaning
3.2.3	Washing and sanitising facilities are clean, well maintained and are in good working order
3.3	Process Automation
3.3.1	Degree of Automation - Continuous automated process; Semi automated process; or Manual operation
4	FOOD HANDLING & FACILITIES
4.1	Food Safety Measures
4.1.1	Food production personnel are provided with clean protective clothing, hair covering, footwear, gloves, facial mask, etc, which are appropriate to the operation that they are engaged in
4.1.2	Provision of disinfection facilities for food production personnel prior to entry into food processing areas
4.1.3	Provision of an adequate number of conveniently located hand washing facilities equipped with non-hand operated taps, liquid soap and appropriate hand drying facilities such as disposable paper towels in processing areas
4.2	Food & Personal Hygiene Practices
4.2.1	Control in the movement of personnel and visitors within food processing areas to prevent any possible contamination
4.2.2	All food production personnel remove all personal belongings that can contaminate food before entering food processing areas. Personal belongings are not kept in food processing / storage areas
4.2.3	All food preparation and food containers, utensils (including trays, baskets etc) are conducted / placed appropriately off the floor
4.2.4	All washing and sanitising of equipment and facilities are conducted away from food or processing operations
4.2.5	Food production personnel use disinfection and hand washing facilities whenever they enter or re-enter food processing areas
4.2.6	Food production personnel are appropriately attired in clean clothing (e.g clean uniform) and utilise appropriate protective wear
4.2.7	Restriction to unhygienic practices such as eating, smoking, spitting etc, in the food processing and handling areas are adhered to and strictly enforced

4.3	Facilities for Food Production Personnel
4.3.1	Sufficient changing rooms / lockers are provided which are clean and properly maintained
4.3.2	Toilets are well ventilated and are separated from and do not open directly into the food processing and storage areas
4.3.3	Toilets are provided with hand washing facilities equipped with non-hand operated taps, liquid soap, and appropriate hand drying facilities such as disposal paper towels and waste bins
4.3.4	Toilets are kept closed, clean and well maintained; toilet fittings and facilities are clean and in working order
5	PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION & TRANSPORTATION
5.1	Product Identification
5.1.1	Final products are appropriately batched or date marked
5.1.2	Product recall capability – Capability to identify and rapidly recall affected products
5.2	Transportation
5.2.1	Food vehicles are internally lined with appropriate material and provided with suitable facilities
5.2.2	Chilled / frozen raw materials are transported at correct temperatures
5.2.3	Vehicles are clean, free from pest infestation and other contamination
5.2.4	An effective loading / unloading system should be provided. Loading / unloading areas are separated from food processing areas and activities
5.2.5	Separate food vehicles should be used for raw and finished products
6	FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM
6.1	Hygiene Officer
6.1.1	Performance of Food Hygiene Officer in carrying out his assigned duties
6.2	Implementation Of Quality Control/Food Safety Programmes
6.2.1	Implementation of preventive quality control measures or Food Safety programmes (e.g HACCP)
7	FOOD HYGIENE TRAINING
7.1	Training Programmes
7.1.1	Continual food hygiene training for food production personnel
7.2	Trained Personnel
7.2.1	Percentage of production floor managers / supervisors undergone appropriate food hygiene training (supported by records)

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7.2.2	Percentage of food production personnel undergone appropriate food hygiene training (supported by records)
8	DOCUMENTATION
8.1	Operational Aspects
8.1.1	Daily inspection records on cleanliness/sanitation of premises/facilities and personal hygiene
8.1.2	All product and process control monitoring records
8.1.3	Food supplier and distribution records
8.1.4	Food recall and destruction procedure records
8.1.5	Medical records of all food production personnel
8.2	Maintenance Aspects
8.2.1	Proper sanitation standard operational procedures records including cleaning schedule and maintenance of general cleanliness of the establishment
8.2.2	Pest control records - premises & vehicles
8.2.3	Equipment maintenance and servicing schedules
8.2.4	Food vehicles cleaning and maintenance records
9	VIOLATION RECORDS
9.1	Premises
9.1.1	Written warnings & summary action
9.2	Food & Personal Hygiene Practices
9.2.1	Written warnings & summary action
9.3	Products
9.3.1	Written warnings & summary action