

Global Standard Food Safety, Issue 9

F929: Audit Duration Calculator

Document scope: This document is applicable to all audits associated with Issue 9 of the Global Standard Food Safety (hereafter referred to as the 'Standard'). This document replaces all previous versions of the calculator including F806 Audit Duration Calculator for Issue 8 of the Standard.

All audits shall be completed in accordance with this version of the calculator. (Where audits have already been agreed with sites audits prior to this date may continue to operate to the previous Audit Duration Calculator.)

Change log:

Version no.	Date	Description
1	08/04/2024	Creation of new Audit Duration Calculator for Global Standard Food Safety, Issue 9.
2	18/04/2024	Amends to wording, updates to module names and removal of Appendix.
3	28/03/2025	Inclusion of Appendix 1. Small formatting changes.

1. Background

As part of the audit planning process audit durations shall be based on the audit duration calculator.

Common practice is for BRCGS to review the auditor duration within 12 months of the launch of a new standard to ensure that the values within the calculator remain appropriate for the change in requirements and auditing techniques within the new Issue. In completing this review and update, BRCGS has considered international feedback from certification bodies, frequently asked questions to BRCGS and the first 6 months of audits against Issue 9 of the Standard.

In accordance with the calculator and current practice the typical audit duration of the audit is 2-3 days (typically 8- 9 hours, but never in excess of 10 hours/day) at the site. Announced audits are usually on consecutive days, although there may be circumstances when this is not the case. This calculator has been developed to assess the expected time required to undertake an audit of any site to ensure consistency, and this shall be used as the basis for calculating the total audit duration. Approximately half the audit shall be spent auditing the production environment, site facilities, interviewing staff, observing processes and reviewing documentation in production areas with the relevant staff.

2. Calculation of audit duration

The audit duration calculator is based on:

- The number of employees – as full time equivalent employees per main shift including seasonal workers. This should be based on the maximum number expected in a shift.
- The size of the manufacturing facility (in square metres) - including onsite storage facilities. The conversion from square feet to metres is 10.76 (e.g. 86,000 square feet equals 8,000 square metres).
- The number of HACCP (or food safety) plans included within scope – for the purpose of this calculator, a plan corresponds to a family of products with similar hazards and similar production technology and will therefore usually correspond to the number of product types.

The other factors identified in the Standard (see 2.1.5 Duration of the audit in the Standard) may influence the calculation but are considered less significant and therefore shall not influence the audit duration by more than 30% of the total calculated audit duration.

The pre-audit risk assessment is not included in the calculation of the audit duration.

The total audit duration is the same regardless of whether the audit is completed fully on site (announced or unannounced) or as a blended audit using both remote and on-site auditing.

Table of audit durations

When using the following table, it should be noted that a typical audit day is 8 to 10 hours (not including lunch breaks). Therefore an 18-hour audit could be completed as two 9-hour days, or alternatively as two 8-hour days with some additional time on the third day. An audit day must not exceed 10 hours.

	Audit duration based on 1 - 3 HACCP Plans (in days)		
	Size of manufacturing facility		
Nº Employees	<10k sq. m	10k-25k sq. m	>25k sq. m
1 – 50	18 hours (Completed in 2 - 2.5 days)	18 hours (Completed in 2 - 2.5 days)	20 hours (Completed in 2 - 2.5 days)
51 – 500	20 hours (Completed in 2 - 2.5 days)	24 hours (Completed in 2.5 - 3 days)	26 hours (Completed in 3 - 3.5 days)
501 – 1500	22 hours (Completed in 2.5 - 3 days)	26 hours (Completed in 3 - 3.5 days)	30 hours (Completed in 3.5 - 4 days)
>1501	22 hours (Completed in 2.5 - 3 days)	32 hours (Completed in 3.5 - 4 days)	34 hours (Completed in 4 - 4.5 days)

Where a site is exceptionally small, a shorter audit duration may be applicable. In this situation the site must meet all of the following criteria:

- there is only one, simple production process (for example, a small produce pack house, packing whole, fresh produce)
- the main shift consists of 5 or less employees
- the size of the manufacturing facility is 5k sq. m or less.

In these circumstances an audit duration of 12 hours may be applied. As mentioned below, the auditor may identify reasons for an adjustment in the audit duration (for example for a well prepared or poorly prepared site), but under no circumstances shall the audit duration be less than 8 hours.

Additional time allocation

There are several situations which require time to be added to the audit duration tabulated above. These are where a site has:

- more than 3 HACCP plans
- high risk, high care or ambient high care products and needs to be audited against Section 8 of the Standard
- traded products audited to Section 9 of the Standard an audit including one or more additional modules and the inclusion of the BRCGS Ethical Appraisal Tool.

Additional HACCP Plans	Additional time (This time to be split between document review and the production environment)
4 – 6 plans	4 hours (0.5 day)
7 or more plans	8 hours (1 day)

Additional sections of the Standard	Additional time (This time to be split between document review and the production environment)
Section 8 (High Risk, High Care and Ambient High Care)	2 hours per area
Section 9 (Traded Products)	≥1 hour

Additional module number	Module title	Typical additional time required
10	GlobalG.A.P. Chain of Custody	≥1 hour
11	Meat Supply Chain Assurance	2 - 4 hours (0.25 - 0.5 day)
13	Meeting FSMA Requirements for Food	2 - 4 hours (0.25 - 0.5 day)
Additional activity		Typical additional time required
The BRCGS Ethical Appraisal Tool		4 hours (0.5 day)

Time spent within the production environment

The audit of a site to the Standard will involve time spent both within the production environment and reviewing records and procedures within an office.

Wherever practicable, evidence should be gathered within the production environment through interviewing staff, observing working practices and reviewing process controls and records.

Therefore, for most sites, approximately 50% of the audit will be spent auditing production and site facilities, interviewing staff, observing processes and reviewing documentation in production areas with the relevant staff. However, it is recognised, that in smaller, simple operations, the time required may be less than 50% of the audit. In these circumstances the amount of time spent in production and site facilities can be reduced, but the expectation is that at least 30% of the audit (e.g. 0.5 day minimum for a 1.5-day audit), will still be spent in these areas. Where the size of the site is larger than 50 employees and 10,000 square metres then an increased proportion of the time allocated to the audit will be spent within these areas.

The production environment includes external site inspections as well as visits to ancillary services, for example maintenance departments, laboratories, NPD and despatch departments. Good practice is for the auditor to make multiple visits into the production areas to view different activities, processes, areas of the facility or shifts, rather than spending one day (or one block of time) in production and one reviewing paperwork.

The duration of the audit of production and site facilities must be recorded in man hours (using whole numbers e.g. 6 not 5.5) giving the total time that has been spent in these areas. Any deviation from the calculated audit duration (either for total audit duration or for the time spent in production and site facilities) needs a valid justification which is recorded on the audit report.

Multiple identical key processes, such as several identical packaging machines, need not extend audit duration as sampling during the audit should address those identical functions.

However, where there are significant variations, or the auditor has concerns that require additional investigation (e.g. auditing of additional examples of the process) additional time shall be allocated.

It must be noted that for blended audits the remote part of the audit shall not exceed 50% of the total audit duration.

3. Total time calculation

A typical audit day shall be 8 hours (not including lunch breaks) and should not exceed 10 hours. An on-site audit duration should be stated in total man hours (using whole numbers e.g. 17 not 16.5) giving the time at the site conducting the audit (including time in production).

The start and finish times each day shall be clearly stated on the audit report and reflect the actual times at the site. These should be agreed as correct between the auditor and the authorised site representative i.e. the site should sign a record of the start and finish times, for each day of the audit, a copy of which must be retained by the certification body. (This may be combined with other audit documentation, for example, by adding the information to the non-conformity record sheet).

The expected audit duration shall be notified to the site by the certification body in advance of the audit. Deviation from the expected audit duration must be justified and specified in the audit report.

Allowance should be made (to deduct time) where audit teams are used and both auditors are present e.g. at the opening and closing meetings. Those personnel not 'auditing independently' should not be included within the total time calculation e.g.:

- Witness auditor
- Trainee auditor
- Technical expert

Where a combination of audits has been undertaken e.g. BRCGS and ISO22000, or additional modules are added, then a calculation for the total time taken for the Standard audit only should be stated. BRCGS expect that additional time is allocated over and above the minimum time for the audit whenever a combination audit is undertaken. Details of combined audits and additional modules shall be specified on the audit report.

The total hours shall not include any calculation for writing of the final audit report away from site. This is additional time and is typically 4 – 8 hours.

The calculation for audit duration shall determine the amount of time the audit is expected to take at the site.

Appendix 1

Factors which may influence the duration of the audit are:

- Initial audit (i.e. the site's first ever audit) – it is likely that the auditor will require additional time, for example, during opening and closing meetings.
- complexity of the manufacturing process
- number of product lines – for example, this could mean there are a larger number of potential hazards (e.g. a large number of allergens onsite), making HACCAP review or auditing of control mechanisms longer than typical.
- size and age of site and impact on material flow
- labour-intensity of processes
- communication difficulties, e.g. language
- the number of non-conformities recorded in the previous audit – clause 1.1.12 requires the site to complete root cause analysis and preventive recurrence of non-conformities identified at the previous audit. Therefore, a large number of non-conformities at the last audit are likely to require increased time for the auditor to assess.
- difficulties experienced during the audit requiring further investigation
- the quality of company preparation, e.g. documentation, HACCP, QMS
- additional storage facilities, locations or head office assessments included within the audit process
- a separate audit of the central system (head office audit) completed before the manufacturing site audit may reduce the duration calculated for the manufacturing site audit to take account of systems already audited at the central (head) office. This is typically a reduction of 2 hours.