BRC Global Standard for Food Safety
F038: Audit Duration Calculator

Document Scope: This document is applicable to all audits associated with Issue 7 of the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety.

Change log:

Issue no.	Date	Description
1	October 2016	Updated for Issue 7: • Increase in audit duration by 2 hours in smaller sites • Inclusion of requirement for actual time on site to be confirmed by the site and auditor for each day of the audit • Recognition of the shorter percentage of time needed in the production facilities of small sites with simple operations • Addition of information for the Global Markets Programme

1. Background

The BRC have developed this audit duration calculator with the BRC Technical Advisory Committee and a working group of Certification Bodies in order to provide a more transparent and consistent approach to establishing audit duration. In accordance with the calculator and current practice the typical audit duration shall be 18 hours of which approximately 9 hours (ie approximately half of the audit) shall be spent auditing the production environment, site facilities, interviewing staff and observing processes.

2. Calculation of audit duration

The audit duration calculator is based on:

- 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.
- Size of the manufacturing facility (in square metres) - including onsite storage facilities. The conversion from square feet to metres is 10.76 (eg 86,000 square feet equals 8,000 square metres).
- The number of HACCP plans included within scope – A HACCP plan corresponds to a family of products with similar hazards and similar production technology for the purpose of the calculator

The other factors identified in the Standard (see appendix 1) may influence the calculation but are considered to be less significant. These other factors shall not influence the audit duration by more than 30% from the total calculated audit duration.

Table of audit duration:

	Audit duration based on 1 - 3 HACCP Plans (in hours)		
	Size of manufacturing facility		
Nº employees	**<10k sq. m**	**10k-25k sq. m**	**>25k sq. m**
1 - 50	16	16	18
51 - 500	18	20	24
501 - 1500	20	24	28
> 1501	20	28	32

Additional time allocation for sites with greater than 3 HACCP Plans

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

2.1 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 a majority of 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 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 (5 hours minimum), 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 (eg auditing of additional examples of the process) additional time shall be allocated.

2.2 Additional Voluntary Modules (AVMs)

The Standard has been designed to enable the addition of voluntary modules to the routine audit. Where a site requests that a voluntary module(s) is included with the audit, additional time will be needed for that audit. The amount of additional time will depend upon the module or combination of modules chosen. The typical additional time required is detailed in the protocol section of the individual modules. At the time of publication of this document, these times are:

Module number	Module title	Typical additional time required (in hours)
8	Traded Goods	1
9	Management of Food Materials for Animal Feed	1
10	GlobalG.A.P. Chain of Custody	≥1
11	Meat Supply Chain Assurance	2 – 4
12	AOECS Module for Gluten-Free Foods (publication expected Aug/Sept 2016)	2 – 4
14	Food Safety Culture	0
15	FSMA Preventive Controls Preparedness	2 - 4

3 Total time calculation

A typical audit day shall be 8 hours (not including lunch breaks) and should not exceed 10 hours, except where there are exceptional circumstances.

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 a BRC 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 ie 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).

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. BRC and ISO22000, then a calculation for the total time taken for the BRC audit only should be stated. BRC expect that additional time is allocated over and above the minimum time for the BRC audit whenever a combination audit is undertaken.

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 man hours.

3 Global Markets Programme

The BRC Global Markets programme is designed to recognise and encourage the development of food safety systems in small sites where the full requirements of the Standard may add less value and in sites that are still developing food safety management systems. As Global Markets audits do not cover all the requirements of the full Standard the audits are expected to be shorter than full certification audits:

Global Markets Level	Typical Audit Duration (in hours)
Basic	8
Intermediate	12

The other factors identified in the Standard (see appendix 1) may also influence Global Markets audit duration. These other factors shall not influence the audit duration by more than 30%.

Appendix 1

Factors which may influence the duration of the audit are:

- complexity of the manufacturing process
- number of product lines
- 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
- 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