

Checks, corrections and lot records your food safety plan can rely on.

For food safety, quality and operations teams choosing software to record monitoring, corrections, verification and traceability under the plan their qualified people wrote.



Know which rules frame the plan

Codex principles, US preventive controls and HACCP, EU hygiene law, voluntary schemes.

Follow one limit end to end

Monitoring, excursion, correction, verification and record.

Test traceability for real

A recall exercise, buyer tests and an evidence matrix.

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Who this is for

Food safety and quality managers, PCQIs and HACCP team leaders, plant and operations managers, and IT teams in food, beverage, ingredients, meat, produce and other food manufacturing.

Important. Software does not perform a hazard analysis, design your HACCP or food safety plan, or decide that food is safe. Your qualified people do. Software can make monitoring, corrections and records consistent and easy to retrieve. This guide is not legal advice.

How to use this guide. Read pages 4–5 with your food safety lead to agree which framework applies. Use pages 9–12 as the script for a demo with your own control points, and page 13 to score suppliers side by side.

1 • THE PROBLEM

Where food safety records fail

Most plants check the right things. Problems show up later: a missing entry, a correction with no follow-up, or a trace that takes a day.

WHAT AUDITORS FIND	USUAL CAUSE	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE
Blank monitoring entries	Paper log at the wrong place or time	Check prompted at the step, recorded with time and person
Out-of-limit reading, no action	Operator unsure what to do	Excursion flagged, correction recorded, product held
Corrective action never verified	No owner after the shift	Verification task with owner and due date
Records reviewed weeks late	Paper piles up	Review queue with exceptions first
Thermometer out of calibration	Calibration tracked separately	Calibration status visible when the check is done
Trace takes hours	Lots recorded inconsistently	Lot genealogy from intake to customer

The outcome to buy. For any lot, show every check against its limit, every correction and who verified it, and where the lot came from and went.

Not a substitute for people. Records help. A trained person still needs to respond correctly when a limit is missed.

Quick self-test

CHECK	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	OK
Last excursion	Can you show the reading, correction, product decision and verification?	☐
Last week's records	Were they reviewed and signed within your required time?	☐
One finished lot	Can you list its ingredient lots and customers in minutes?	☐

2 • SCOPE

Which framework applies to you

Food safety rules differ by country, product and type of business. Start from what applies to your sites and customers.

FRAMEWORK	TYPE	CORE IDEA
Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969)	International guidance	Good hygiene practices plus HACCP where needed; basis for many national rules
US 21 CFR Part 117	US law (FDA)	CGMPs and hazard analysis with risk-based preventive controls, written by a PCQI
US 9 CFR Part 417	US law (USDA FSIS)	HACCP systems for meat and poultry establishments
US 21 CFR Part 1 Subpart S (FSMA 204)	US law (FDA)	Additional traceability records for foods on the Food Traceability List
EU Regulation 852/2004	EU law	Food hygiene, with procedures based on HACCP principles
EU Regulation 178/2002, Article 18	EU law	One step back, one step forward traceability
GFSI-benchmarked schemes (e.g. BRCGS, SQF, FSSC 22000, IFS)	Voluntary certification	Customer-driven requirements, often beyond the law

FSMA 204 scope. Additional traceability records apply to foods on FDA's Food Traceability List and the entities handling them, not to every food. Check current dates with FDA.

Plan before software. Agree which framework and scheme you follow, then ask suppliers to show how their system records what that framework expects.

Scope worksheet: one row per site

SITE	LAWS THAT APPLY	CERTIFICATION SCHEME	FTL FOODS HANDLED?	PLAN OWNER

3 · CONCEPTS

HACCP, CCPs and preventive controls: the differences

The terms overlap but are not the same. Software should let you record whichever your plan uses, without forcing one model.

	HACCP (CODEX, 9 CFR 417, EU 852)	PREVENTIVE CONTROLS (21 CFR 117)
Starting point	Hazard analysis	Hazard analysis, including radiological hazards and economic adulteration
What controls hazards	Critical control points with critical limits	Process, allergen, sanitation, supply-chain and other controls; CCPs are one type
Limits	Critical limits at each CCP	Parameters with minimum/maximum values where appropriate
When a limit is missed	Corrective actions defined in the plan	Corrective actions or, in some cases, corrections
Checking it works	Verification and validation	Verification, including validation where required
Who writes it	HACCP team	Preventive controls qualified individual (PCQI)

Correction

Action to identify and fix a minor, isolated problem promptly (a defined term in Part 117).

Corrective action

Steps to deal with a missed limit: product, cause and prevention.

Verification

Activities showing controls work as intended, such as record review and calibration.

Software does not choose CCPs. It records checks against the limits your plan sets, and keeps the evidence together.

What a usable plan entry looks like in software

FIELD	EXAMPLE (ILLUSTRATIVE)
Control	CP-3 cooling, Line 4
Type	Process control / CCP, as your plan defines
Limit	From your plan
Monitoring	What, how, frequency, who
Corrective action	From your plan
Verification	Record review, calibration

4 • SUPPLIERS

Suppliers and incoming materials

Many hazards arrive with ingredients. Supplier approval and receiving checks are often where control starts.

1	Approve the supplier Questionnaire, certificates, audit as needed	RECORDED Approval status, evidence, review date	WHO DECIDES Supplier quality
2	Specify the material Specification, allergen status, CoA requirements	RECORDED Spec revision	WHO DECIDES Technical
3	Receive Check supplier status, documents, condition, temperature	RECORDED Receipt, lot, readings	WHO DECIDES Receiving
4	Hold or accept Hold when documents or checks fail	RECORDED Decision, reason, who	WHO DECIDES Quality

SUPPLY-CHAIN CONTROL	RECORD TO KEEP
Approved supplier list	Status, scope and review date for each supplier
Supplier verification activity	Audit, sampling or document review, with results
Receiving checks	Temperature, condition, seal, documents, with lot
Certificates of analysis	Values against your specification

Demo test. Receive a lot from an unapproved or expired supplier and show what happens on your configuration.

Certificates are evidence, not approval. A supplier's scheme certificate helps; your own approval decision, scope and review date still need recording.

5 • PREREQUISITES

Prerequisite programmes and sanitation

Hygiene, cleaning, pest control and maintenance underpin every plan. Their records are checked as often as CCP logs.

PROGRAMME	TYPICAL RECORDS	WHO VERIFIES
Cleaning and sanitation	Clean done, chemical and concentration, inspection before start-up	Supervisor / QA
Environmental monitoring	Swab sites, results, follow-up for positives	QA / lab
Personal hygiene	Hand-wash checks, illness reporting, PPE	Supervisor
Pest control	Device checks, findings, actions	Contractor / QA
Maintenance and calibration	Work orders, calibration of thermometers and probes	Engineering
Training	Who is trained on which procedure	Training lead

Changeover and pre-start checks

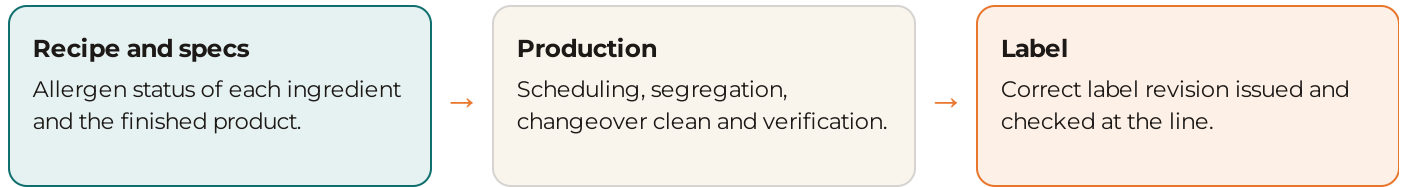
CHECK	WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	OK
Line clean verified	Inspection recorded before production starts	☐
Allergen changeover	Clean and verification recorded where allergen profiles change	☐
Instruments	Probes and thermometers in calibration on the day	☐
Release to start	Named person approves start-up	☐

Environmental monitoring follow-up. Ask how a positive swab result becomes a recorded investigation, extra sampling and a decision on affected product.

6 • ALLERGENS

Allergens and labels

Undeclared allergens are a frequent cause of food recalls. Control links recipe, production order, changeover and the label used.



CONTROL POINT	WHAT TO RECORD	TYPICAL FAILURE
Ingredient intake	Allergen status on specification; supplier change notified	Supplier reformulates without notice
Recipe change	Allergen impact reviewed and approved	Label not updated after a change
Changeover	Clean and verification between allergen profiles	Clean skipped under time pressure
Label check	Correct revision verified at start and on change	Old label stock used

Allergen lists differ by market. The US, EU, UK, Canada, Australia/New Zealand and others list different allergens. Your technical team decides declarations; software applies what you configure.

Changeover worked example

STEP	RECORDED
Run 1 contains milk; run 2 is milk-free	Schedule shows allergen change
Clean per allergen procedure	Who, when, procedure revision
Verification (visual and test where used)	Result, verifier
Line released for run 2	Named person, time
Label check for run 2	Revision verified at start

Demo test. Change a recipe to add an allergen and show what happens to the label revision, the schedule and the open orders on your configuration.

7 • MONITORING

Monitoring, limits and excursions

A monitoring record should show the reading, its limit, the time, the person and the instrument, captured at the step.

CP-3 COOLING, LINE 4 (EXAMPLE)	LIMIT	READING	STATUS
Product core temperature at 2 h	≤ 21 °C	19.4 °C	Within
Product core temperature at 6 h	≤ 5 °C	6.2 °C	Excursion
Probe P-17 calibration	In date	Due 14 Nov	OK

1 Prompt

Check appears at the right step.

2

Read

Value entered or captured from a connected device.

3

Compare

Against the limit in your plan.

4

Flag

Excursion highlighted at once.

5

Hold

Affected product held per your procedure.

6

Respond

Person records the correction.

Example values are illustrative. Use the limits in your own plan; this guide does not set safe temperatures or times.

Continuous data. Where sensors feed readings, confirm alerting, gaps and who acknowledges alarms. Do not assume sensor capture without testing it.

What reviewers look for in monitoring records

PATTERN	WHY IT MATTERS
Identical readings every time	May indicate entries not taken live
Entries recorded after the event	Records should be contemporaneous
Readings with no instrument ID	Cannot show the instrument was calibrated
Excursions with no linked action	Plan's corrective action not evidenced

8 • RESPONSE

Corrections, corrective actions and verification

What happens after an excursion is what auditors look at most. Four questions: what happened to the product, why, what prevents a repeat, and who checked.

1	Product Identify and hold affected product	RECORDED Lots, quantity, location	WHO DECIDES Quality
2	Evaluate Assess safety; decide disposition	RECORDED Assessment, decision, signature	WHO DECIDES Qualified person
3	Cause Find and fix the cause	RECORDED Cause, action taken	WHO DECIDES Owner
4	Prevent Change process or training if needed	RECORDED CAPA link	WHO DECIDES Quality
5	Verify Review records within required time	RECORDED Reviewer, date, findings	WHO DECIDES Verifier

VERIFICATION ACTIVITY	EXAMPLE FREQUENCY (SET BY YOUR PLAN)
Review monitoring and corrective-action records	Within a set number of working days
Calibrate monitoring instruments	Per instrument schedule
Product or environmental testing	Per plan
Reanalyse the plan	At least every three years or after change (Part 117)

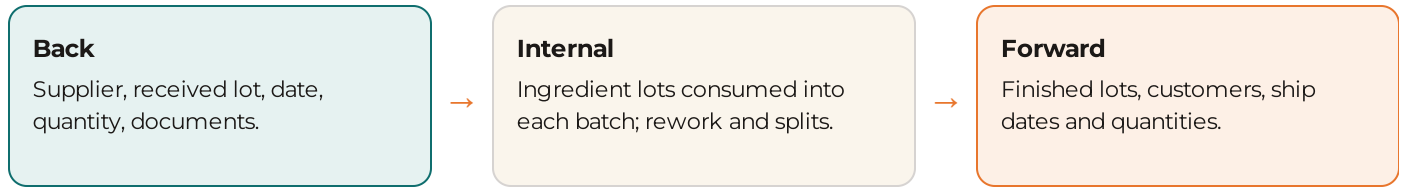
People decide disposition. Software can hold a lot and record the decision. It should never release product after an excursion on its own.

Link it all. The excursion, held lots, disposition, CAPA and verification should open from each other, so the auditor never sees half a story.

9 • TRACEABILITY

Traceability: one step back, one step forward

Traceability depends on consistent lot recording at each step: intake, transformation, packing and shipping.



FSMA 204 TERM	MEANING (FOR COVERED FOODS)
Critical tracking event (CTE)	Harvesting, cooling, initial packing, first land-based receiving, shipping, receiving, transformation
Key data element (KDE)	Data recorded for each CTE, including traceability lot code
Traceability lot code	Assigned at specified events and passed along the chain
Traceability plan	Written description of procedures and contacts
Sortable spreadsheet	Provided to FDA on request within the required time

Rework and splits. Ask how rework, partial lots and mixed pallets are recorded. These are where traces usually break.

Publishing to partners. Some customers require trace data in GSI EPCIS format through a third-party platform. Ask exactly which events and fields are produced and test with a real lot.

Lot-code questions to settle early

QUESTION	WHY
Do you keep the supplier's lot code as well as your own?	Trace back needs the supplier's code
How are partial pallets and splits coded?	Each part must stay traceable
How is rework identified when reused?	Rework links two batches
What appears on the shipping record?	Trace forward starts here

10 • RECALL

Running a recall exercise

A recall exercise tests people, records and contacts together. Run it with a real lot and time each stage.

STAGE	WHAT TO PRODUCE	TIME TAKEN
Identify the lot	Finished lot and its production date	_____
Trace back	All ingredient and packaging lots used	_____
Trace forward	All customers, quantities and dates	_____
Mass balance	Made vs shipped vs in stock vs used	_____
Contact list	Current customer and regulator contacts	_____
Review	What was slow, what was missing, actions	_____

Make it realistic

- Pick a lot that included rework or a lot split.
- Start from a supplier ingredient lot, not only from finished goods.
- Record the result and any gaps as actions with owners.

No guaranteed times. How fast a trace runs depends on how consistently lots were recorded, not on software alone.

Mass balance check

LOT FG-2207 (EXAMPLE)	QUANTITY
Produced	1,200 cases
Shipped to 4 customers	1,050 cases
In stock	130 cases
Samples and losses recorded	20 cases
Unaccounted	0 cases

Buyer tests, evidence matrix and RFP

AREA	WHAT TO SEE DEMONSTRATED	SYSTEM A	SYSTEM B
Monitoring	Your control point recorded at the step against your limit.	_____	_____
Excursion	Reading over limit flagged; product held per your rule.	_____	_____
Correction	Correction and disposition recorded with signature.	_____	_____
Verification	Records reviewed in a queue with exceptions first.	_____	_____
Suppliers	Unapproved supplier handled at receipt.	_____	_____
Allergens	Changeover and label check recorded.	_____	_____
Calibration	Probe status visible at the check.	_____	_____
Trace	Back and forward trace on a lot with rework.	_____	_____
Reports	Records retrievable for an audit.	_____	_____
Total (0–3 each)		_____	_____

RFP questions

- Can we configure checks to match our plan's control points and limits?
- What happens on screen when a limit is missed?
- Which plan includes deviations, CAPA and signatures?

Ask for evidence

- A sample monitoring record with an excursion.
- A trace report on a lot with rework.
- How FSMA 204 data is produced, if you handle covered foods.

Before the demo, write down: countries you make and sell in · the law covering each site · whether you handle Food Traceability List foods · the certification scheme customers require.

Where V5 fits, plans and sources

- **Every plan:** checks at the step against limits, flagged when outside; lots and traceability; calibration due dates; QA review queue.
- **Professional and Enterprise:** deviation management, CAPA, electronic signatures for product decisions.
- **Confirm in evaluation:** FSMA 204 / EPCIS publishing (listed in entitlements), sensor capture for your instruments, and how your plan's control points are configured.
- **Your responsibility:** hazard analysis, the food safety plan, limits, disposition decisions and regulatory obligations.

Primary sources; applicability depends on your products, sites and markets. Links reviewed 1 October 2026.

International guidance

- **Codex Alimentarius — codes of practice, incl. General Principles of Food Hygiene CXC 1-1969** — www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/codex-texts/codes-of-practice/en/

US law

- **21 CFR Part 117 — CGMP and hazard analysis and risk-based preventive controls** — www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-117
- **21 CFR Part 1 Subpart S — additional traceability records (FSMA 204)** — www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-1/subpart-S
- **9 CFR Part 417 — HACCP systems (meat and poultry)** — www.ecfr.gov/current/title-9/chapter-III/subchapter-E/part-417
- **FDA — FSMA final rule on additional traceability records** — www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma/fsma-final-rule-requirements-additional-traceability-records-certain-foods

EU law

- **Regulation (EC) 852/2004 — hygiene of foodstuffs** — eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2004/852/oj
- **Regulation (EC) 178/2002 — general food law, incl. Article 18 traceability** — eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2002/178/oj

Voluntary schemes

- **Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) — benchmarked certification programmes** — mygfsi.com/

Try it with one of your control points. 7-day free trial, no card required, at v5ultimate.com.

No food safety claims. V5 records what your team does under your plan. It does not certify, approve or guarantee food safety outcomes.