

# Recipe for Success

*It's recognised that last July's introduction of updated food safety guidelines courtesy of BRC Global Standards set a new benchmark for Best Practice in food manufacturing. Richard Samwell describes why, in the food sector in particular, it's nothing less than a mistake to regard security simply as a necessary and unwelcome cost on the bottom line*



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Issue 7 of the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety<sup>1</sup> has been developed to specify the food safety, quality and operational criteria required to be in place within a food manufacturing organisation in order to fulfil stated obligations with regard to legal compliance and protection of the consumer.

The format and content of the document is designed to allow thorough assessment of a company's premises, operational systems and procedures by a competent third party – ie the certification body – against the requirements of the standard, which itself focuses on a number of key areas. These include:

- \*ensuring consistency of the auditing process
- \*flexibility to allow extra voluntary modules to reduce the audit burden
- \*encouraging systems designed to reduce exposure to fraud
- \*promoting greater transparency and traceability within the supply chain
- \*encouraging adoption of the standard at smaller sites and facilities where processes are still in the development phase

Issue 7 focuses audits towards the implementation of good manufacturing practices within production. Increased emphasis has been placed on areas which usually have the highest rate of recalls and withdrawals, such as labelling and packing. Issue 7 continues to highlight management

commitment and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)-based food safety programmes. Support for quality management systems is another key area.

This detailed document serves as a useful reminder for all businesses involved in food processing, storage and supply to review their security arrangements on a regular basis. In practice, such reviews can include random inspections, testing and mock exercises, the overriding aim being to identify weaknesses in both systems and individual performance.

Importantly, reviews also offer an opportunity to look more strategically at operations.

Complying with standards, even mandatory ones, isn't the only reason – even if it's the most important one – for looking at ways in which to improve your organisation's resilience against threats such as malicious, criminal or terrorist actions. Adopting smarter security measures and improved technology can bring with it all sorts of additional benefits.

Particularly within the food sector, it's a mistake to regard security as an unwelcome cost. The operational benefits that may be delivered by the latest integrated security solutions and improved on-site supervision can realise savings and efficiencies that quickly repay the end user's initial investment.

## People and processing

A basic access control system does its job if it separates people from processing and ensures that only authorised members of staff enter particular areas. A more capable system is a key management tool, allowing the host organisation to measure the movement of its people and continually analyse efficiencies across production cycles.

For those companies dealing with high staff turnover or hiring lower paid and/or agency workers, this enhanced management capability can be particularly valuable.

An important enhancement for any access control system is to integrate the solution with CCTV, ensuring that entrance and exit points are covered by surveillance. This not only allows for efficiency savings – potentially removing the need for reception staff to check visitors in, yet not compromising on security – but also permits management to see and record activity at these key locations.

Used to its full potential, CCTV's a vital tool for businesses involved in all aspects of production, not just because it delivers improved security, but also due to the fact that it protects against liability risks.

For example, at one production site, we recently installed a system comprising 45 HD IP

cameras to cover key risk areas, both internal and external. At the entrance to loading bays, where ambient light conditions change from bright outdoors to artificially-lit indoors, there was known to be a greater risk of accidents (a risk far from unique to this particular site).

In such locations, it's common for both delivery vehicles and forklifts to be operating, as well as for staff and visitors being present on foot. That being so, the cameras in this location – as well as others dotted around the site – are used to monitor activity, identify risks and investigate either real or alleged incidents.

As a footnote, this particular system paid for itself within three months when monitoring staff spotted a major accident in the making and were able to prevent it from escalating.

## Reputational damage

The costs to an organisation in terms of material losses, liability and reputational damage hardly need spelling out, notably so for businesses in the food production sector.

Where reputation matters, companies need to be open and able to demonstrate that profits are being made fairly without exploiting employees, cutting corners or acting unethically towards other parties who may be further up or down the supply chain.

In an age where media and public attention is focused ever more sharply on the way in which companies behave, reputation is perhaps now more important than it has ever been. While CCTV by itself will not guarantee that problems don't occur, its use demonstrates that the organisation is both vigilant and equipped to investigate potential breaches of Best Practice.

The cost of a good CCTV system remains an important factor for organisations to consider, but today's IP technology – which is both expandable and highly reliable – renders the investment a safe bet for security professionals.

When monitored remotely, either off site or at a central location on an in-house basis, CCTV can pay for itself by reducing the need for relatively expensive security guarding patrols or forms of continual on-site supervision.

Other financial savings may be somewhat less tangible, but they're no less real. In the event of a contamination incident or a theft episode, good CCTV coverage can be vital in investigating the cause quickly and reducing the impact of that occurrence.

Cameras can also play an important role when it comes to monitoring and recording industrial processes, so too in helping to continually improve them. Are members of staff dressed correctly and complying with hygiene requirements, for example? Are prohibited

personal items being brought into processing areas? Are there regular, but avoidable downtimes in particular production areas? Are inefficiencies creeping in to procedures?

For food handling businesses, stored recordings can provide evidence of compliance in areas such as animal welfare and hygiene.

## ANPR in view

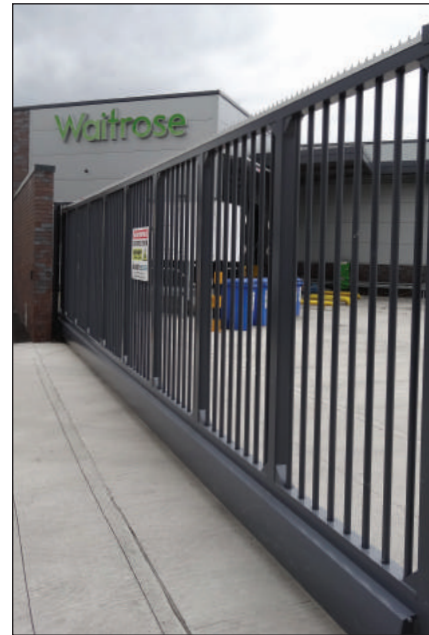
Another useful example of the ways in which security technology can benefit food-focused businesses far more than just in terms of crime prevention can be seen in the work we've conducted for LINPAC, the global food packaging leader employing upwards of 2,500 members of staff and which supplies its goods to over 70 countries worldwide.

At one of its sites, LINPAC grasped the opportunity to install Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at vehicle entrance points in order to review and improve the flow of delivery vehicles and other traffic. We assisted the business to design a true one-way system at relatively low cost, with new road markings and some – but not too much – necessary civil works. The result was improved traffic flow and a robust, efficient vehicle access system which is centrally monitored and removes the need for manual log-keeping.

Vehicle registration details are now typically entered into the system in advance and, when drivers arrive on site, the correct department is automatically notified without the need for security staff to be involved.

ANPR systems like this can be used to control automated gates, direct delivery vehicles to the correct bays and record the times that vehicles both arrive and depart. Such a system may be installed simply to reduce staffing levels 'on the gate' or as part of a wider review which improves vehicle flows and speeds up operations across the company.

By using the right technology and hardware, companies can make significant improvements to their day-to-day workflow at production facilities. In the case of LINPAC, the business also decided to install duty-rated sliding gates which perform rapidly and are designed to cope with continual and repeat operation. At 2.4 metres high and topped with anti-climb spikes, as well as 358 mesh, they're much more secure than traditional rising barrier solutions.



## Reference

<sup>1</sup>BRC Global Standard for Food Safety (Issue 7, July 2015)



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