



Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety, Inc.

In recent weeks, I have seen the effects of COVID-19 in Canada, the USA and across the world, however, I have also seen the best of each other between our staff, our clients and our colleagues. I see it in doctors, nurses, and first responders who are on the front lines helping people directly affected by this situation. We applaud you all. And we see it in grocery store clerks, delivery persons, sanitation workers and good neighbors, who are helping to keep us all moving forward. Thank you to everyone for doing their part to get us through this unprecedented time.

At Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety Inc., “PJRF SI”, we are fully committed to the health and wellbeing of our staff, customers and communities during this time.

The Certification and Inspection industry has been deemed an essential service, what does that mean, and why?

Here is a link of all [Essential Services Canada](#)

Here is a link of all [Essential Services USA](#)

But why is Certification important and an Essential Service? **Because** food safety certification is based on the results of tests, inspections and audits and gives confidence to the consumer because an organization’s products and/or system are being thoroughly evaluated against accepted national and international industry standards by a competent third body. In today’s market, this is even more critical.

This does not mean it is **business as usual**, far from it actually as there are several required changes to how our businesses will run during this time to ensure we continue to provide high-quality service while maintaining safety and doing our part to reduce the impacts of COVID-19.

We are not taking this lightly and have used every recommended precaution in our business today. The safety of our auditors, staff and customers are paramount during this time. Our goal is to reduce or eliminate direct physical interaction that could promote the transmission of the virus. We actively promote social distancing and follow the recommendations of health authorities around handwashing and sanitizing.

Here are some of the changes in place so far:

1. Currently the Global Food Safety Initiative, “GFSI” does not allow virtual audits to take the place of initial or recertification audits.
2. However, PJRF SI is working closely with all GFSI scheme owners including (SQF, BRC, GLOBALGAP, PrimusGFS & FSSC 22000) to name a few and have many pertinent webinars coming soon to address what you should be doing during this time and how to more effectively manage this crisis and protect your business. [Upcoming Webinars Click Here](#)
3. In some cases, a virtual audit may be required to extend a current certificate. This is based on a risk assessment.
4. Your PJRF SI Scheduler will send you the required forms and request specific documentation to help us understand what is happening at your organization and to perform the required risk assessment.
5. The risk assessment will take into consideration:
 - a. Are you still operational?
 - b. Are you allowing visitors?
 - c. Are there procedures in place so that safe products can still be produced?
 - d. Past audit history
 - e. Product types
 - f. Recent recalls
6. Further on Virtual Audits,
 - a. Should the scheme owner allow/require a virtual audit of your system we will schedule your virtual audit event using secure software. You will receive a link to join the virtual audit.
 - b. Once you receive your audit plan, you will need to plan resources for the processes that are going to be audited.
 - c. Site and facility tours can be conducted virtually by using the web conferencing software through an app on a smart phone, tablet or iPad.



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- d. As more people are working remotely, it is entirely possible that the PJRF SI auditor may be auditing people who are working from their home offices. If relevant documents are accessible in your systems, then we can still conduct the audit.
- e. Opening and closing meetings will also be held virtually, so be sure to forward the log-in information to anyone in your organization who should be participating.
- f. We have a team dedicated to providing support, but we still ask for your patience during this time. It may take some time for everyone to become comfortable with the software.

Again, we want nothing more than to maintain your certificate during this difficult time. These are uncharted waters. Deep breaths, we will get through this together.

We appreciate all the hard work of our community members especially front-line workers, health care workers and everyone who is committed to limiting the impacts of COVID-19.

As we work with all our clients and our communities to address their pressing concerns, our hope is that we're able to make the short term better, while we plan together for the long term.

We are all in this together!

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