

How to become a qualified and recognised verifier?

The following two sections provide you with the steps you need to take in order to become recognised by MPI, as a verifier.

Section 1: sets out the steps you need to take in order to gain sufficient experience and qualifications before you can apply to become recognised by MPI.

Section 2: provides you with the skills and knowledge (competencies) that you need to meet in order to be able to become recognised by MPI as a **verifier**.

Section 1:

Step	What you need to do.....	What you need to have.....	Refer to Section 2 for competencies	Do you have...? Yes/No	What you may want to do.....
1	Acquire knowledge and experience in the food industry relevant to the role, food sector(s) and processes you wish to be recognised for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 years practical experience in the food industry. Specific food sector and process knowledge. Food safety hazards and control measures. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> General Food Sector Skills Food Sector and Process Skills 		<p>Work in the food industry where you can become familiar with food safety and good operating practices.</p> <p>For example you need to acquire knowledge as to how to source, receive and process food and apply good personal hygiene practices to manage food safety risks.</p>
2	Gain some basic formal food related qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A relevant tertiary qualification at NZQA Level 4 or higher. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> General Food Sector Skills 		<p>Acquire broad operational and theoretical knowledge on the processes and food sectors you wish to work in.</p> <p>This can be done by completing a course, for example in a science, food or environmental health discipline, or providing evidence of equivalent training.</p>

Step	What you need to do.....	What you need to have.....	Refer to Section 2 for competencies	Do you have...? Yes/No	What you may want to do.....
3	Obtain formal qualifications relevant to Hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) and verification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZQA unit standard 19514 NZQA unit standard 8084 or equivalent qualification and/or experience 	1. General Food Sector Skills		Identify and complete appropriate verification, food processing and food safety related course(s) that are provided by one of the many education providers e.g. Polytechnic or University and/or gain technical knowledge, training and practical experience working in the food industry.
4	Learn about the requirements specific to the food sector you wish to operate in.	Meet the requirements to verify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> low acid canned food processing; aseptic processing and packaging operations. 	2. Specific Food Sector Skills		
5	Learn all about Food Act 2014 and associated legislation.	Knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Act 2014 Food Regulations 2015 Food Notices 2015 Food Standards Code 2002 Drinking-water standards Interface with other relevant Acts 	4. Food Legislation Skills		Complete Verifier & Evaluator Training Programme. For access to training programme go to: http://mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-act-2014/information-for-regulators-and-verifiers/working-as-a-verifier/
6	Learn about the verification requirements under Food Act 2014 and associated legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of and ability to apply verification skills. 	5. Verification Fundamental Skills		
7	If you are ready to become a recognised verifier, decide which food sector(s) and risk based measure(s) you wish to verify.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence confirming that you or the agency you work under meets ISO 17020 requirements (only required if you wish to verify Custom Food Control Plans) or 	n/a		Contact either IANZ or JAS-ANZ if you wish to be assessed against ISO 17020 or regulatory requirements.

Step	What you need to do.....	What you need to have.....	Refer to Section 2 for competencies	Do you have...? Yes/No	What you may want to do.....
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence confirming that the Quality Management System (QMS) you operate under meets all regulatory requirements (required for all National Programmes). 			
8	<p>Apply <i>(if new)</i> or Re-apply <i>(if existing)</i> with MPI to become “recognised as a Person” that can provide verification services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If applying to verify Custom FCPs – evidence confirming that you meet all of the ISO17020, regulatory and competency requirements. If applying to verify NP1, 2 or 3 – evidence confirming that you meet all of the regulatory and competency requirements. Record of completion of Verifier & Evaluator Training Programme. Application form & payment. 	n/a		<p>Apply with MPI to become recognised as a Verifier.</p> <p>For guidance and application form go to: http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-act-2014/information-for-regulators-and-verifiers/becoming-a-recognised-agency-or-person/</p>

Skills and knowledge required by Verifiers operating under Food Act 2014

These are the skills that are common to all verifier and regulatory compliance roles across government.

Section 2:

1. General Food Sector Skills

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
NZQA Level 4 (or equivalent qualification and/or experience)	Provide evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completion of at least an NZQA Level 4 qualification in science, food or public or environment health discipline; and/or • sufficient technical knowledge, training and practical experience to acquire broad operational and theoretical knowledge on the processes/sectors you wish to work in.
NZQA unit standard 19514 (or equivalent qualification and/or experience)	Has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfactorily completed a HACCP course (NZQA unit standard 19514 or equivalent); or • provided evidence of a combination of another relevant qualification and sufficient practical HACCP experience to demonstrate knowledge of food processing, types and sources of hazards and effectiveness of control measures.
NZQA unit standard 8084 (or equivalent qualification and/or experience)	Has satisfactorily completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an auditing course; or • a combination of another relevant qualification and sufficient verification experience to demonstrate fundamental verification skills.
Good Operating Practices (GOP)	Knows where to find and how to use GOP guidance material – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building facilities and equipment • Allergen management

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemical control• Cleaning and sanitising• Identification and traceability• Incoming materials• Personal hygiene and behaviour• Pest control• Product information (labelling and composition)• Process control• Complaints, non-confirming product, corrective action and recall• Repairs and maintenance• Storage and transport• Training, education and competency• Waste management• Water – council/network supply• Water – roof water supply• Water – ground or surface water

2. Specific Food Sector Skills

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
Persons who want to verify low acid canned food processing	
<p>Must have good knowledge of:</p> <p>a) Code of Hygienic Practice for Low and Acidified Low Acid Canned Foods, as published by the Codex Alimentarius Commission: (CAC/RCP 23-1979)</p> <p>b) The United States Food and Drug Administration Requirements for Thermally Processed Low-acid Foods Packaged in Hermetically Sealed Containers, as contained in 21 CFR Part 113, and Acidified Foods as contained in 21 CFR Part 114</p>	<p>Has successfully completed one of the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal of Thermal Process Control, Acidification and Container Closure Evaluation, Massey University, New Zealand. • Retort Supervisors Certification Course, DWC Food Tech Pty. Ltd, Australia. • New Zealand Retort Supervisors and Process Control School, Food Processing Specialists Pty., Australia. • Any other course that the Chief Executive accepts as equivalent as mentioned above. <p>The person must have completed the course within the previous 5 years, or if more than 5 years since having completed the course, have in those intervening years, sufficient experience to maintain their knowledge of acid canned food processing.</p>
Persons who want to verify aseptic processing and packaging operations	
<p>Must have good knowledge of:</p> <p>a) Code of Hygienic Practice for Low and Acidified Low Acid Canned Foods, as published by the Codex Alimentarius Commission: (CAC/RCP 23-1979)</p> <p>b) The Code of Hygienic Practice for Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-acid Foods, as published by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC/RCP 40-1993) and</p>	<p>Has successfully completed one of the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal of Thermal Process Control, Acidification and Container Closure Evaluation, Massey University, New Zealand. • Any other course that the Chief Executive accepts as equivalent as mentioned above. <p>The person must have completed the course within the previous 5 years, or if more than 5 years since having completed the course, have in those intervening years, sufficient experience to maintain their knowledge of aseptic processing and packaging operations.</p>

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
c) The United States Food and Drug Administration Requirements for Thermally Processed Low-acid Foods Packaged in Hermetically Sealed Containers, as contained in 21 CFR Part 113, and Acidified Foods as contained in 21 CFR Part 114.	

3. Food Sector and Process Skills

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
Food sector and process knowledge	<p>Has at least 2 years recent experience and can identify what needs to be verified in light of what the business does, the sector it operates in, the products types, the trading operations, compliance history and risk based measure.</p> <p>Knows the graduated approach to verifying the different risk based measures.</p> <p>Knows the mandatory audit topics and verification criteria.</p> <p>Can ascertain if a business has selected the appropriate scope of operations.</p>
Food business knowledge	<p>Knows and understands appropriate food safety practices across sourcing and receiving, processing, place and people to minimise food safety risks.</p> <p>Has technical knowledge of design and construction of premises, facilities and processes relating to food businesses.</p> <p>Is familiar with good operating practices for food businesses.</p>
Food safety hazards	<p>Knows how to identify and control food safety hazards, e.g. allergens, pathogens, toxins etc.</p> <p>Has knowledge of effectiveness of process controls.</p> <p>Has knowledge of effectiveness of environmental controls such as controls on cleanliness, pests and water supply.</p>

4. Food Legislation Skills

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
Food Act 2014 and application of the VADE operating model	<p>Explain the purposes of the Food Act 2014.</p> <p>Explain the VADE operating model.</p> <p>Describe MPI's, territorial authorities', third party organisations' and food business operators' roles and responsibilities within the VADE model and the relationship between them.</p>
Food Act 2014 – Risk Based Measures	<p>Find the requirements and legislation relating to Food Control Plans and National Programmes.</p> <p>Identify the risk based measure that a food business must operate under.</p> <p>Explain when to use a custom or a template Food Control Plan and what it needs to contain.</p>
<p>Food Act 2014 - Recognised Agencies and Recognised Persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Regulations 2015 • Food Notice: Recognised Agencies and Persons 2015 	<p>Knows what the requirements, roles and responsibilities are.</p> <p>Can explain the Quality Management System and accreditation requirements that a recognised person and recognised agency is required to operate under</p> <p>If applicable, knows the requirements for low acid canned food.</p> <p>If applicable, knows the requirements for aseptic processing and packaging operations.</p>
Food Act 2014 - Verification	<p>Explain the verification process for risk based measures and the role of the verifier.</p> <p>Describe performance based verification and why we use it.</p> <p>Explain the steps for verification of food control plans and national programmes.</p> <p>Describe the reasons for an unacceptable verification outcome.</p> <p>Recognise the escalation points for non-compliance.</p>

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
Food Act 2014 – Imported Food	<p>Name the responsibilities of verifiers with regard to imported food.</p> <p>State the responsibilities of food importers.</p> <p>Explain the process a food must go through to be imported for sale into New Zealand.</p> <p>Know when imported food requirements need to be verified. (tbc)</p>
Food Standards Code 2002 - General Labelling Requirements	<p>Know where to find the Code and associated guidance material.</p> <p>Be able to state the Code requirements for labelling of food for retail sale, food for catering purposes and food other than for retail sale.</p> <p>Know where to find further information about exemptions from labelling, health claims, what substances can be added to food, contaminants and residues and prohibited substances.</p>
Interface with and relevant requirements under other legislation	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Products Act 1999 • Fair Trading Act 1986 • Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997 • Consumers Guarantees Act 1993 • Drinking-water Standards for New Zealand 2005 (revised 2008)

5. Verification Fundamental Skills

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
Planning	<p>Can comply with the quality management system that he/she operates under.</p> <p>Can identify conflicts of interest (if any) and knows how to address them.</p> <p>Can identify whether he/she has the appropriate recognition to carry out verification.</p> <p>Can determine the correct verification frequency.</p> <p>Knows how to select sites for subsequent verifications of multi-site businesses.</p> <p>Can determine whether he/she has the capacity to carry out verification at the required frequency.</p> <p>Can identify if and when a technical expert is required to complete a verification.</p> <p>Can identify which members of staff should be available during the verification.</p> <p>Can identify appropriate scope of verification using the mandatory verification criteria and topics.</p> <p>Knows when an unscheduled verification can be carried out.</p> <p>Can identify where to find compliance history details.</p>
Communicating	<p>Knows the value of good communication skills as a Verifier e.g. asking open-ended questions.</p> <p>Is able to convey key messages clearly and tactfully, both in written and oral form.</p>
Entering a food business	<p>Knows the basic requirements when introducing yourself to the food business.</p> <p>Can understand and follow the health and safety rules that apply at the business to be verified.</p> <p>Can tailor approach to verification, depending on the verification experience of a business.</p> <p>Can explain the scope of the verification.</p> <p>Can explain the dispute resolution process and the actions that will be taken if a critical non-compliance or unacceptable verification outcome is identified.</p>
Verifying	<p>Can determine whether the design and construction of premises and facilities is fit for purpose, taking into account methods of risk management put in place by the business.</p> <p>Can determine if the scope of operation includes all the products and processes that the business uses.</p>

SKILL	KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED
	<p>Knows what actions to review, in order to ascertain if a business complies with its plan and/or applicable requirements of the Act.</p> <p>Knows what documentation and records to look for, and what to review, depending on the risk based measure.</p> <p>Can identify the details that need to be obtained by way of observation and interview to determine understanding and application of processes and control measures to manage hazards.</p> <p>Knows what evidence to collect to support decisions and how to do this efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Can identify and issue corrective actions that are appropriate in light of risk based measure.</p> <p>Knows how to ascertain, classify and rate verification topic outcomes and the overall verification outcome.</p>
Sampling	<p>Knows how to calibrate standard verifier equipment.</p> <p>Knows when and how to secure a Food Safety Officer or an accredited laboratory, to take samples.</p>
Completing the verification visit	<p>Can identify who the appropriate person is to conduct an exit meeting/interview with.</p> <p>Can advise the business of positive findings, deficiencies and the overall verification outcome.</p> <p>Knows who is responsible for what and when, in particular when the business has submitted a corrective action plan.</p> <p>Can explain what steps need to be taken in order to successfully complete the verification process.</p> <p>Can determine whether timeframes for completion of corrective actions are suitable given the risks involved.</p>
Reporting	<p>Understands the reporting requirements, process and timeframes.</p> <p>Knows when and how to escalate critical non-compliance and unacceptable outcomes to the registration authority.</p> <p>Knows what records to keep.</p>
Following up	<p>Can determine whether follow up can be achieved with written communication or if a visit to the business is required.</p> <p>Can determine whether corrective actions have effectively addressed the non-conformance (if applicable) or non-compliance within the agreed timeframes.</p>