

# Packaging Audit-Readiness Checklist

## Single & Multi-site Packaging Audit Review



### Purpose

Many Quality Managers use this **Packaging Audit-Readiness Checklist** not only before audits, but also as a **standardized review tool across sites** – to align scope, documentation, supplier controls, and planning logic before issues surface locally.

Typical completion time:

- **Single site:** 45-60 minutes
- **Multi-site / complex supply chains:** 1.5-2 hours

### 1 Packaging Scope & Responsibility

Confirm that packaging activities are clearly defined and auditable.


- All **primary and secondary packaging materials** are included in scope
- Responsibilities for **design, sourcing, approval, and change management** are defined
- Outsourced packaging processes are documented
- Scope aligns with food safety certification (e.g. BRCGS, IFS, FSSC)
- Packaging scope reflects **actual operations**, not legacy descriptions

 **Common audit issue:** packaging scope is incomplete or outdated.

### 2 Food Contact Material (FCM) Compliance

Verify regulatory compliance and evidence.

- Declarations of Compliance (DoC) available for all food contact materials
- DoCs are **current**, complete, and signed
- Migration testing or suitability assessments documented where required
- Intended use conditions are clearly defined and respected
- Regulatory references (EU 1935/2004, relevant plastics regs) are documented

 **Audit signal:** missing or outdated DoCs escalate quickly.

### 3 Supplier Approval & Monitoring

Packaging suppliers are often the weakest link.

- Packaging suppliers approved under a documented process
- Supplier certifications reviewed and up to date
- Change notifications from suppliers are formally managed
- Performance issues are tracked and addressed
- High-risk suppliers identified and reviewed more frequently

 **Audit signal:** lack of documented supplier monitoring.

### How Quality Managers Use This Checklist

Teams that apply this review report:

- fewer audit days on site
- fewer repeat non-conformances
- more predictable audit outcomes
- reduced stress during peak audit season

### Need a second opinion?

If you'd like to review your packaging audit readiness with an expert, our specialists can help you interpret findings and plan next steps – especially ahead of peak audit season.

## 4 Change Management for Packaging

Packaging changes introduce hidden risk.


- Material or supplier changes assessed **before implementation**
- Risk assessment updated for each change
- Food safety validation completed for new materials
- Sustainability-driven changes evaluated for food safety impact
- Change approvals documented and traceable

 **Audit signal:** sustainability changes not fully validated.

## 5 Traceability & Records

Packaging traceability must be demonstrable.

- Packaging materials traceable to **batch / lot level** where applicable
- Records link packaging batches to finished product lots
- Traceability exercises include packaging, not only ingredients
- Records are accessible during audits without delay
- Traceability tested during internal audits

 **Audit signal:** traceability exists but cannot be demonstrated quickly.

## 6 Hygiene & Handling Controls

Operational practices matter as much as paperwork.


- Packaging storage conditions prevent contamination
- Hygiene zoning defined and respected
- Handling procedures documented and followed
- Staff trained on packaging food safety risks
- Observed practices match documented procedures

 **Audit signal:** gap between procedures and reality.

## 7 Internal Audit & Corrective Actions

Packaging must be audited internally with intent.


- Packaging included in internal audit programme
- Findings categorized by risk
- Repeat issues tracked and addressed systemically
- Corrective actions closed before external audit
- Management review includes packaging performance

 **Audit signal:** recurring findings without root-cause analysis.

## 8 Audit Planning & Readiness

Timing determines audit outcomes.

- Packaging audits scheduled **months in advance**
- Internal reviews completed with sufficient lead time
- Evidence compiled and reviewed before audit
- Key staff available on audit days
- Contingency plans defined for peak periods

 **Audit signal:** last-minute preparation increases findings.

## Final Readiness Check

If any **section above contains gaps, address them before** confirming audit dates.

### High-performing Quality Managers use this checklist:

- 90–120 days before audits
- after major packaging or supplier changes
- to align food safety, packaging, and sustainability expectations