

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSPECTION AND AUDIT IN A FBO NIHARIKA GOEL

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ABSTRACT –

Inspection and audit are the two activities which are performed by food business organizations (FBO). Inspection and audit are not the same thing at all times. These activities are performed by a FBO or food industry for the following reasons. These are done to deal with risks within the food industry, to confirm the stage of conformity to a particular law, company policy or industry code of practice and also to deal with particular customers which may require third party certification. Inspection should be conducted in a planned manner and as per schedule only after approval by the designated officer. Inspection is the examination of food to assure wholesome and clean products free from unsafe microbes or chemical contamination, natural or added deleterious substances and decomposition during production processing, packaging, etc. It includes measuring, examining, testing of a product or process and comparing the results with specified requirements to determine whether the requirements are met for each characteristic. An audit is defined as systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled. It is a process in which authorized auditor visits the food industry or organization. FBO will get their businesses audited as per the audit plan on the scheduled date. The food authority shall conduct food safety audits and inspection from time to time on regular basis. Inspections and audits can save lives and reputation. They both are different in terms of depth and scope. Inspections are mostly observations, a review of sorts to inspect a particular product or service. This review is performed to ensure that the product or service works to specification. An audit, however deals with a more thorough examination of the entire process. This includes the process that goes into building of product and service.

Audit looks at overall processes that led to the product and service as an end result. Audits may use employee interviews, data, collection and observations of the work environment to produce a report on overall performance of the company. Unlike the inspections which may be carried out just to see the quality of the product or service, audits might be conducted with a different goal in mind. Audits are more formalized than inspections and they check whether the process of creating the product is reliable and effective. In contrast, inspections generally have a more defined frequency and schedule and usually their focus is to check a specific end state. It could be that a product is safe to use or it is being maintained correctly etc. Inspections are usually carried out using a checklist and may not identify underlying causes for observed deficiencies whereas on other hand audits will identify underlying root causes for observed deficiencies. Inspections are quantitative and create actions whereas audits are qualitative and create recommendations. The average internal audit report contains 6 – 10 recommendations. The audit report is as important as a good Remedial Work Plan, and a well-established monitoring process to ensure that all action items or recommendations are followed up until appropriate closure. In short we can say that audit is a quality assurance function which comes under the manage quality process and inspection is a quality control function which comes under the control quality process. Let's take an example of both the activities to explain the difference between them for more clarity.

During inspection, the inspector evaluates the building. It includes the checking of fire tenders, exit doors, etc. The inspector will evaluate the quality of produced goods. During the pre-shipment inspection, the quality controller picks a sample or the complete batch depending upon the client's requirements. Then he checks the products'

appearance and specifications.

Example of ISO 9001 Audit : It is based on the ISO 9001 standard and focuses on a supplier's quality management system ; factory, service , company, etc.. The auditor checks the documented procedures, forms and processes implemented. And most importantly it looks for records.

At a high level, inspections are a “do “and audits are a “check”. Audit and inspection are carried out to verify that a certain set of standards, guidelines, rules, and norms are being met. They are done on the site, at the production facility. Both the activities often work in team and their results highlight negative findings. Business decisions are made on the basis of audit and inspection reports.

Inspections are considered as limited time taking process whereas time allocated to audits is more extensive. Auditing provides transparency and reassurance that standards are being maintained which increases the mutual aptitude of stakeholders across the supply chain. Despite of auditing, inspections are basically normalized which looks at the present physical state of a FBO.

REFERENCES :

The material of Internal Audit course which has been provided by our mentors online.
The information available on various websites.
Report paper on various audits conducted.
Material taken from internet regarding the inspections held in different FBOs’.