

# International certification for catering company in Kazakhstan

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**T**upkaraganborg have become the first local company in Kazakhstan and one of the few catering companies in the world to achieve certification to ISO22000.

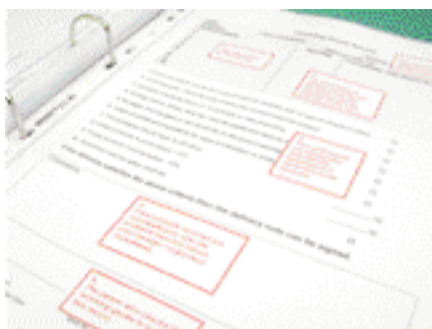
The decision to achieve formal certification was taken by the company to ensure the food safety of products supplied to their customers. Unlike previous certification projects managed by Advanced Food Safety Ltd (AFS) this was a little different.

Rather than their usual food manufacturing and processing clients, Tupkaraganborg are a contract catering company and in a very unique position in supplying their service on the oil fields both on and off shore in Kazakhstan.

Certification to ISO22000 was specified by the oil facilities contract management as this required a formal system based on Codex to be implemented and was food safety specific unlike ISO9000. The Global Food Standard for Food Safety was also considered but was not deemed to be suitable as it was based more on food manufacturing facilities.

So, how did this project start? With no food safety training or consultancy facilities in the region, Andy Van Hoyweghen, catering manager for Tupkaraganborg, had to look further afield. He contacted AFS enquiring if their award winning food safety distance learning courses would be suitable for their needs in upgrading skills levels for both himself and his staff. This led to Andy trialling the courses for himself and complet-

**The Tupkaraganborg ISO22000 team with Chris Hodge of Advanced Food Safety in the centre.**



**The Allsafe ISO22000 manual.**

ing the CPD certificated Level 2, Level 3 food safety courses and Foundation HACCP.

This was successful and he confirmed the courses would be more than suitable for his staff. Just one problem, Andy was fully conversant with English, not so for his staff, all the courses would have to be translated into Russian!

## Programme of training

Once this task was completed the catering staff embarked on the programme of training for all food handlers. Induction training, Level 2 food safety and Foundation level HACCP. This gave all staff a clear base knowledge which would be essential to underpin the requirements of the systems to be implemented.

This training was followed up with Andy attending one of AFS Level 4 Food Safety courses in the UK, to provide yet more knowledge at senior management level and a formal qualification to confirm the skills level attained.

With a credit pass in the RSPH Level 4 Award in Managing Food Safety in Catering, Andy was now well prepared for the development and implementation stages of the project.

Unlike typical Advanced Food Safety projects, with an initial gap analysis against the standard, followed by monthly development and implementation site visits, this would have been far too expensive an option. Therefore Tupkaraganborg purchased the Allsafe 22000 Pack. This is essentially a 'do it

yourself' ISO22000 manual which came complete with generic template policies, procedures and guidelines for their use and implementation.

This enabled Andy to work through the pack at his own pace developing systems in line with the ISO22000 standard. This method of implementation had already been successfully proven with many clients in the food manufacturing environment working towards BRC Global Standards for Food and Packaging using the Allsafe Food Safety and Packaging Packs.

Implementation began with development of general and operational pre-requisite programmes such as:

- Supplier quality assurance.
- Construction and fabrication of the premises.
- Layout of premises.
- Layout of equipment.
- Staff facilities.
- Utilities supplies, for example water, electricity and gas.
- Cleaning and disinfection procedures.
- Personnel management.
- Procedural and hygiene training.
- Planned maintenance.
- Waste management.
- Pest control.
- Traceability.
- Stock rotation.
- Glass/brittle plastic control.
- Metal/sharps procedure.
- Incoming goods procedures.
- Allergen management control.

This was then followed by work on the HACCP system itself. It was felt that the 'Safer Food Better Business' style of HACCP would not be suitable for this client due to the level of certification they were aiming for. Therefore, a full HACCP system based on Codex Alimentarius was required, which although AFS has carried this out for some high profile restaurants before it is not typical for a catering environment.

With the HACCP team selected and trained, work began on flow diagrams covering all of the catering activities which provided a meal service four times per day seven days a week. Hazard analysis was formally documented and was also used to differentiate hazards controlled by the pre-

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requisite programmes. Then the all important decision trees and likelihood and severity risk assessments to define the CCPs were completed. This was then followed by defining critical limits, monitoring procedures, corrective actions and responsibilities.

With the HACCP complete and verified, the implementation process began with the development of menu cards/work instructions and CCP records. An intensive programme of training was then initiated for the staff which also included the key pre-requisite programmes as well as CCP monitoring and corrective action.

## On site input

By November 2008, Andy and his team had gone as far as they could with the development and implementation of systems. It was now time for some on site input from Advanced Food Safety.

This is where their intrepid food safety consultant Chris Hodge enters the scene. Chris first arrived on site in Atyrau in November 2008 to carry out a gap analysis on the systems implemented to date. Further travel by helicopter was required to reach the off shore facilities – but only following the mandatory flight training and essential health and safety training required off shore.

Poor weather conditions, fog and snow delayed some of the flights, but eventually work began off shore. The weather was always going to be the unknown factor with this project, as in this region winter temperatures drop to minus 30°C and in summer temperatures soar to plus 40°C. Fog is not unusual in the short transition period between summer and winter and can severely restrict flights off shore.

With some issues highlighted in the gap analysis to finalise the systems, there was an intense week of work on-site to explain and develop further the additional system requirements one of the key issues being a system of internal audits.

This problem was solved with the newly

developed Internal Audit distance learning courses which had just been launched.

The decision was made at the end of the week to arrange the first stage of the 22000 audit. This would certainly focus everyone's attention for the final leg of implementation and give a final focus for the project. It was agreed that it would happen in the first week of March. But who should do the actual certification? After some discussion with Tupkaraganborg it was decided that a UK based certification body should be used as it was thought this would give even more credibility to the certification. AFS contacted several UK based certification bodies but some were concerned about the location and safety issues.

Finally, the decision was made to use NSF-CMi for the certification. Stage 1 of the audit took place as planned the first week of March 2009 with the auditor from NSF-CMi visiting the site for the initial documentation review. Poor weather yet again hampered inspection of the off shore facilities but it was a successful initial inspection. With no time to lose, this was followed four weeks later, the first week of April with the Stage 2 audit. This time there was no problem in visiting two off shore facilities to see them in action and the audit plan worked like clock-work.

So what did NSF-CMi have to say about this project and the certification?

Jon Burn, the visiting auditor, summed this up as follows: "As far as I am aware this is the first time an audit has been conducted by a representative of NSF-CMi on a man made island 100 miles off-shore. It was definitely the first time my journey to and from work was done via helicopter. I think as with most people from the UK my preconceptions of what to expect were based on what I have seen on TV and popular film and TV characters. I am happy to say for the most part this is not what I encountered. I was especially impressed with the level of work and the attitude of the people running the operations in Kazakhstan who performed very well during both stage 1 and stage 2 of the assessment especially when it is remembered that they are operating 100 miles off the Kazakhstan coast.

The head office in Atyrau has been working with Advanced Food Safety Ltd and have developed a Food Safety Management System that not only meets the requirements of the standard but is also able to be managed remotely in both of the off-shore kitchen units."

There was a wait of several weeks after the stage 2 audit for the final confirmation that certification to ISO22000 standard had been awarded.

This came through on Friday 22nd May and was met with literally a flood of congratulatory email to Tupkaraganborg on becoming the first company in Kazakhstan to achieve ISO 22000 certification and the first catering company audited to ISO22000 by the UK office of NSF-CMi, a company represented in over 40 countries worldwide.

This has been an excellent project for Advanced Food Safety. Being able to assist a company so far away achieve what is a very stringent food safety standard is a great achievement.

It is a credit to the management and staff of Tupkaraganborg who made the commitment to achieve high standards of food safety in their catering operations. It is a great first in setting the standards in their industry, not only in Kazakhstan but by demonstrating that formal certification to ISO22000 is possible in a catering environment.

## The next stage

ISO22000 will be implemented in all other Tupkaraganborg facilities. A number of other organisations in the country have now expressed an interest in ISO22000 certification and Advanced Food Safety is now working on several more implementation projects.

Andy and members of his team also returned to the UK in June. This was for further higher level HACCP training to expand their knowledge of HACCP in order to have the skills in-house to develop and maintain their newly accredited systems. ■

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### Poor conditions off shore.

