

Quality Assurance within the Brakes Group

January 2013

Brakes has achieved Higher Level Status for the NSF-International Certification Standard for Food Wholesaling, Storage and Distribution, and apply the principles of HACCP throughout the operation - from source of supply to final delivery to the customer. This standard is recognised as an industry `benchmark` for the delivered food service sector.

Brakes has a fully documented Quality Management System covering the main aspects of sourcing, receipt, storage and distribution of all products.

The Central Technical Department, based at the Head Office in Ashford, has responsibility for all product quality, safety, legality, and integrity matters within the Group.

Core Requirements for the Brakes Brand

These are applicable to any brand registered to the Brakes Group of Companies, which includes Brakes, Country Choice, M & J Seafood, Pauleys, Woodward's Foodservice, Freshfayre and O'Kanes:

- All suppliers of Brakes Brand Products either hold certification to the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety for the manufacture of 'own brand' food products (or equivalent), or are formally approved by our own Technical Managers. Non-Food suppliers must hold the BRC Global standard for Consumer Products.
- All suppliers must supply products in accordance with Brakes Terms and Conditions, and Product Standards requirements.
- All Brakes Brand products are purchased against written, agreed specifications to comply with all current UK and EU Legislation, and with all statutory compositional requirements. The use of irradiated components or Genetically Modified ingredients is prohibited in Brakes Brand food products.

Overview of Management Controls

1. All Brakes Brand products are developed by our Product Development team and produced only by approved suppliers to formally agreed specifications, which include strict microbiological and chemical contaminant standards, as well as ingredient origin and traceability information ensuring conformance to all relevant legislation and codes of practice.
2. The Brakes Head Office Technical Function and the Brakes storage and distribution operation have been inspected by NSF-International to ensure compliance with the Certification Standard for Food Wholesaling, Storage and Distribution, and hold Higher Status certification.
3. All suppliers are subject to technical approval prior to supply. Where appropriate, audits may be carried out by our own qualified Technical Managers, or conducted by certificated third party auditors. Own label product manufacturers are required to attain minimum 'B' Grade against the UKAS accredited BRC Global Standard for Food Safety. All manufacturers must apply the principles of Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) in their manufacturing and distribution processes and includes allergen risk assessment and management.
4. In addition to the quality and analytical checks we require our suppliers to carry out, Brakes conduct quality control checks on products in order to ensure compliance with product specifications and product integrity. All such checks are carried out by fully trained staff and include:
 - a) temperature (where relevant)
 - b) physical appearance of product and packaging
 - c) labelling
 - d) checking and recording of durability dates and batch coding

Company statement

Our Hub Distribution Depot Quality Control teams check products for physical (weights, dimensions etc.) and organoleptic parameters, if relevant. Our suppliers use accredited laboratories to carry out analytical and microbiological checks on our products. We also conduct our own surveillance on products after they have been through the distribution chain, as a customer would receive them, to ensure they meet legal, quality and safety standards.

Any deviations from specification may render the product liable to rejection back to supplier.

5. All Brakes Distribution, Storage and Delivery locations have been registered with their local authorities in accordance with current legislation, and have comprehensive and documented Pest Control and Inspection contracts.
6. All Brakes Distribution, Storage and Delivery operations have been assessed by a multidisciplinary team using the principles and practices of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP), and are subject to continual review in line with these principles. All sites are subject to regular detailed assessment by our team of Distribution Quality Managers.
7. The operational divisions of the Brakes Group are also subject to ongoing assessment by Brakes' internal audit team. Issues of Business risk are reported at Board level.
8. All products are stored at optimum temperatures within cold, chill or ambient stores. Strict stock rotation is practiced to ensure that all products are delivered to the customer at optimum quality.
9. Products are delivered in a modern fleet of purpose built vehicles. Emphasis is placed upon the maintenance of optimum temperature throughout the delivery chain where relevant.
10. Brakes maintain a comprehensive computer based system for logging customer complaints. This enables the Central Technical Department to assess all quality complaint information within 24 hours of receipt so that appropriate corrective action can be taken.
11. Brakes has a tried and tested system for the recall of product. Within its storage and distribution system there is a controlled procedure for identifying and isolating non-conforming products.
12. Staff employed by Brakes throughout the manufacturing and distribution chain receive hygiene training in accordance with their job requirements. It is a requirement for all suppliers of Brakes Brand products to also have appropriate hygiene training for their workforce.
13. Brakes are members of several industry associations and trade bodies including the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF), Federation Of Wholesale Distributors (FWD), British Hospitality Association (BHA)], British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) and Campden BRI. Various members of the Brakes Technical Department sit on relevant committees and panels of these trade associations.

In the event of further information being required, please contact Customer Services on 0844 8004921, or our Technical Services Team on 01233 206002.

Brakes
Enterprise House
Eureka Business Park
Ashford
Kent
TN25 4AG