

Global Standards Newsletter

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New to the Packaging Standard?

Contemplating the implementation of the BRC Packaging Standard can seem daunting to sites unused to audited schemes. However, the typical results achieved by sites entering the system for the time suggest the scheme is challenging yet ultimately achievable.

In the first year of Packaging Issue 4, over 280 companies achieved certification for the first time. Of these, 56% achieved a grade A. While this percentage is lower than those sites who are already in the scheme (where 77% achieve grade A) it does demonstrate that appropriate resource allocation and input into implementation have good results.

A higher proportion of sites achieve a grade B at their initial audit, 39%, than those who are having re-certification audits (20%). It is unsurprising that sites undertaking an initial audit have a greater number of major and minor non-conformities as it's the initial audit that gives the site the best indication of how their efforts have paid off. It is interesting to note from these figures that once sites have passed this preliminary stage they find it much easier to maintain or improve their grade at the subsequent audit, having achieved a better understanding of the demands of the rigorous audit process.

Similar numbers of sites achieve a grade C: 4% of new sites who then move into a 6 month audit cycle, compared to 2% of grade C existing sites for Issue 4. Similarly, only 1% of new sites and 1% of re-audited sites are allocated a grade D and are therefore not certificated.

Typical non-conformities identified at sites undergoing an initial audit closely echo those raised at re-certification audits. These include controls around site standards (section 4), verifying the accuracy of the process flow in the Hazard and Risk Management system (2.2.4) and controls around glass and brittle plastics (5.8.1.4).

Traceability system testing (3.9.3) and ensuring maintenance work does not place the product at risk (4.7.4) are also common non-conformities from initial audits. This may be due to lack of awareness of traceability system testing, or not having conducted such a test before the audit, so sites approaching their first audit are recommended to ensure they have carried this activity out.

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