

The “Monitored Caterer Certification” (MC²) Scheme

1. Scheme Objectives

The “Monitored Caterer” Scheme (hereafter as “The Scheme”) is developed by CMA Testing and Certification Laboratories (hereafter as “CMA Testing”) to recognize and encourage those catering service providers meeting a satisfactory food hygiene standard. CMA Testing shall conduct an on-site inspection and a microbiological testing of food and swab samples to verify the performance of a caterer applicant.

2. Scope of The Scheme consists of

Part I On-site inspection (catering establishment): how hygienically the food is handled, the condition of the structure of buildings, and how the business manages and records what it does to make sure food is safe.

Part II Microbiological testing: food and swab samples shall be selected and collected by CMA Testing staff from the catering site.

3. General Requirement

CMA Testing shall assign competent staff with relevant experience and qualifications to conduct assessments, including on-site inspection, collect food and swab samples and then perform microbiological testing, as well as interpret the test results according to the Scheme.

According to the Scheme Scoring System (Clause 4), result of the assessments shall be rated and combined as a total score. A business can be given one of these four assessment results:

- i) “Excellent” – this means the business has achieved an excellent level of compliance;
- ii) “Good” – this means the business has achieved an acceptable level of compliance;
- iii) “Fair” - this means the business has marginally achieved an acceptable level of compliance but not good enough to reward a certificate;
- iv) “Require Improvement” – this means the business has not achieved an acceptable level of compliance.

Certificate shall only be granted to those caterers graded “Excellent” or “Good” level.

After certification, the frequency of assessment on a certified caterer shall be conducted at least 1 time in every 3 months, with a total of minimum 2 food samples and 2 swab samples collected for microbiological tests in each assessment.

4. Scheme Scoring System

4.1. Outline

Part I On-Site inspection.....	50%
Part II Microbiological	50%
(A) Food samples	(80%)
(B) Swab samples.....	(20%)

4.2. Part I: On-Site inspection

CMA Testing Inspector shall assess whether the operation and control of the processes within the catering site are effective in providing safe food. Five major areas: 1. Cross contamination; 2. Cleaning; 3. Chilling; 4. Cooking and 5. Management shall be assessed.

A. Cross Contamination

- a. Personal Hygiene
- b. Personal Fitness for Work
- c. Cloths
- d. Separating Foods
 - i. Delivery and Collection
 - ii. Storage
 - iii. Defrosting
 - iv. Preparation
 - v. Cooking e.g. grill, barbecue
- e. Physical and Chemical Contamination
- f. Pest Control
- g. Maintenance

B. Cleaning

- a. Hand Washing
- b. Cleaning effectively
- c. Clear and Clean as you go
- d. Cleaning schedule

C. Chilling

- a. Chilled Storage and Displaying Chilled Food
- b. Chilling Down Hot Food
- c. Defrosting
- d. Freezing

D. Cooking

- a. Cooking safely
- b. Foods that need extra care
 - i. Eggs
 - ii. Rice
 - iii. Pulses
 - iv. Shellfish
 - v. Fish
- c. Reheating
- d. Checks show that food is properly cooked
- e. Hot Holding

- f. Ready-to-eat Food
- E. Management**
 - a. Opening and closing checks
 - b. Prove operations are running as planned
 - i. Cooking and Reheating
 - ii. Hot Holding
 - iii. Chilling Down Hot Food / Chilled Storage and Displaying Chilled Food
 - iv. Temperature Probes
 - c. Training and supervision
 - d. Customers' feedback
 - e. Suppliers and Contractors
 - f. Stock Control
 - g. Product Withdrawal and Recall

For details, please kindly refers to “Site inspection Items for Monitored Caterer Scheme”.

4.2.1. Scoring system for On-Site inspection

The non-conformance findings are classified as major non-conformity, minor non- conformity and observation.

Findings	Score
Critical non-conformity	-60 %
e.g. - rodent infestation or vermin found in food	
- serious immediate food safety risk (e.g.: Rotten food for sell is found)	
- reoccurrence of same major non-conformity	
Major non-conformity	-10 %
e.g. - systematic failure in food safety management	
- sign of rodent or vermin infestation found	
- reoccurrence of same minor non-conformity	
Minor non-conformity	-1 %
e.g. - minor failure in following checklist items	
- failure not creating direct impact on food safety system	
Observation	- 0.1 %
e.g. - improper operation practice/procedure which may be up-graded to non-conformance	
- process meeting the minimum requirements, but the process can be improved	

Score of Part I = 100% - no. of critical non- conformity x 60% - no. of major non- conformity x 10% - no. of minor non- conformity x 1% - no. of observation x 0.1%

4.3. Part II: Microbiological testing

It includes (A) food samples and (B) swab samples taken from the catering outlets.

4.3.1. (A) Food samples

Food samples collected from each catering site shall be subject to microbiological testing of Aerobic Colony Count, *Escherichia coli* and pathogenic bacteria according to "Microbiological Guidelines for Food 2014", published by Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (Appendix I and II).

4.3.1.1. Scoring system for food samples

Testing item	Results	Score
Aerobic Colony Count ⁺	Unsatisfactory	-1
	Borderline	0
	Satisfactory	1
Any Pathogen and/or hygiene indicator *	Detected	-1
	Not Detected	1

⁺ Not applicable for food categories which do not have corresponding requirement in "Microbiological Guidelines for Food 2014"

* *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Salmonella species* has to be included at least

$$\text{Score of each food samples} = \frac{\text{sum of score of the sample}}{\text{total no. of test}}$$

$$\text{Score of (A) food sample} = (\text{average of score of all food sample}) \times 80\%$$

4.3.2. (B) Swab samples

To collect three swab samples from each catering outlet and to conduct microbiological tests according to the following table

4.3.2.1. Scoring system for swab samples

Testing item	Results	Score
Any Pathogen and/or hygiene indicator**	Detected	-1
	Not Detected	1

** *Escherichia coli* or Coliform Count has to be included as least

$$\text{Score of each swab samples} = \frac{\text{sum of score of the sample}}{\text{total no. of test}}$$

Score of (B) swab sample = (average of score of all swab sample) x 20%

4.3.3. Scoring System for Microbiological testing

Score of Part II = score of (A) + score of (B)

4.4. Overall score and grade representing the assessment result of catering site performance,

Part I	50 %
- Site inspection of food preparation hygiene	
Part II	50 %
- Food samples (80%) + Swab samples (20%) i.e. Score of (A) + Score of (B)	

Overall assessment score = Score of Part I x 50% + Score of Part II x 50%

Performance standard	Overall assessment score
Excellent Level	≥ 90%
Good Level	80 % ≤ and < 90%
Fair Level	60 % ≤ and < 80%
Require Improvement	< 60%

5. Report, Certificate and follow-up actions

- 5.1. A report will be issued in 7 working days after on-site inspection. All finding in the report are required to be answered with corrective actions, which will be assessed the effectiveness of implementation in the next site inspection.
- 5.2. For any microbiological test which is rated as “unsatisfactory”, the same test must be conducted again.
- 5.3. Certificate shall be granted only to those catering service providers graded “Excellent” or “Good” level after first assessment. Businesses which failed to reach “Excellent” or “Good” level in first application can decide either apply for reassessment after corrective actions implemented, or continue the inspection service without certificate.
- 5.4. For certificate granted businesses and “Fair” level is resulted in any assessment, certificate will be suspended immediately. Corrective actions are required to be defined and sent back “evidence of effective implement of corrective action” to CMA Testing within 7 working days after report is received. CMA Testing will decide if the effectiveness is satisfactory and reassessment is required or not.

- 5.5. For certificate granted businesses and “Require Improvement” level is resulted in any assessment, certificate will be suspended immediately. Corrective actions are required to be defined and sent back “evidence of effective implement of corrective action” to CMA Testing within 7 working days after report is received. CMA Testing will conduct within next 7 working days to ensure the corrective actions are effectively implemented.
- 5.6. In case of any serious health or hygiene issue at certificate granted business occurred and noticed by the public, the level of its certificate will be immediately decent to “Require Improvement” and corresponding actions listed in clause 5.5 are required to take place.
- 5.7. In case of the result of any reassessment is still not able to reach the level of “Excellent” or “Good”, the business can decide either apply for another reassessment, or terminate the certificate, or let the certificate be withdrawn.
- 5.8. For certificate withdrawn businesses, or granted business decided to terminate, the certificate is required to be returned to CMA Testing.
- 5.9. Other details please kindly refer to separate document, “Terms and conditions for certificate and certification mark use”.
- 5.10. Reassessment or any extra on-site inspection and test cost will be charged correspondingly.

Appendix I: The interpretation of results for ACC levels [30°C/48 hours] in various ready-to-eat foods

Food Category ^a	Examples	Result (colony-forming unit (cfu)/g)		
		Satisfactory	Borderline	Unsatisfactory
1. Ambient stable canned, bottled, cartoned and pouched foods immediately after removal from container ^b	Canned products such as tuna, salmon, corned beef, soups, stews, desserts and fruit; ultra-high-temperature (UHT) products	<10	N/A	Note ^c
2. Foods cooked immediately prior to sale or consumption	Takeaway food, burgers, kebabs, sausages, pizza, ready meals (cook/chill and cook/freeze) after regeneration, dim sum, rice, noodles	<10 ³	10 ³ -<10 ⁵	10 ⁵
3. Cooked foods chilled but with minimum handling prior to sale or consumption; canned pasteurised foods requiring refrigeration	Whole pies, sausage rolls, samosas, flans, quiches, chicken portions; canned ham requiring refrigeration, pasteurised foods including fruit juice and soups; desserts	<10 ⁴	10 ⁴ -<10 ⁷	10 ⁷
4. Bakery and confectionery products without dairy cream, powdered foods	Cakes without dairy cream, soup powders, milk powder, powdered dairy products, other reconstituted powdered foods ready to eat after reconstitution or warming	<10 ⁴	10 ⁴ -<10 ⁶	10 ⁶
5. Cooked foods chilled but with some handling prior to sale or consumption	Sliced meats, cut pies, pâté, sandwiches without salad, hot smoked fish (mackerel, etc.), molluscs, crustaceans and other shellfish out of shell, non-prepackaged cold beverages with solid ingredients but without dairy components (iced green tea with red bean, etc.)	<10 ⁵	10 ⁵ -<10 ⁷	10 ⁷
6. Non-fermented dairy products and dairy desserts, mayonnaise and mayonnaise based dressings, cooked sauces	Most butter, fresh cheese (mascarpone, paneer), trifle with dairy cream, satay, cakes with dairy cream, non-prepackaged cold beverages with solid ingredients and dairy components (iced milk tea with pearl tapioca, etc.)	<10 ⁵	10 ⁵ -<10 ⁷	10 ⁷
7. Food mixed with dressings, dips, pastes	Coleslaw, dips, taramasalata, houmous	<10 ⁶	10 ⁶ -<10 ⁷	10 ⁷
8. Extended shelf life food products requiring refrigeration	Modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) or vacuum packed products, e.g. meat, fish, fruit and vegetables	<10 ⁶	10 ⁶ -<10 ⁸	10 ⁸ ^d
9. Raw ready-to-eat meat and fish, cold smoked fish	Sushi, sashimi, smoked salmon, gravalax	<10 ⁶	10 ⁶ -<10 ⁷	10 ⁷
10. Preserved food products – pickled, marinated or salted	Pickled or salted fish, cooked shellfish in vinegar, vegetables in vinegar or oil, herbs, spices	N/A	N/A	N/A
11. Dried foods	Fruits, berries, vine fruits, nuts, sunflower seeds, herbs, spices, dried fish	N/A	N/A	N/A
12. Fresh fruit and vegetables, products containing raw vegetables	Whole fruit, pre-prepared fruit salads, vegetable crudités, salads, sandwiches with salad, mixed commodity salads containing raw vegetables, non-prepackaged cold beverages with solid and fresh fruit ingredients (chilled fresh mango juice with pomelo and sago, etc.)	N/A	N/A	N/A

13. Fermented, cured and dried meats, fermented vegetables, ripened cheeses	Continental sausages/salamis, jerky, sauerkraut, olives, bean curd, cheddar, stilton, brie, fermented milk drinks and butter, yoghurt, etc	N/A	N/A	N/A
14. Cooked meat products that may be displayed for sale at ambient temperature for a limited period of time e.g. siu-mei and lo-mei	Chinese poached chickens, roasted ducks and roasted pork	$<10^5$	10^5-10^6	10^6

Remarks

Classification of food category was according to "Microbiological Guidelines for Food 2014" published by Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. (

References:

1. Microbiological Guidelines for Food 2014, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.
2. How to Implement a Food Safety Plan, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.
3. Recommended International Code of Practice General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969. Rev. 4-2003), Codex Alimentarius.