

CHSA Audits Made Clear: A Definitive Guide for Accredited Distributor Members



Inspection Matters

The Independent Inspection process, or auditing, ensures 'what's on the box is what's in the box'. Supporting compliance, it protects members' reputation and gives customers confidence they are receiving high-quality, fit-for-purpose products from a supplier they can trust.

This is not just a compliance check; it's a collaborative process designed to help members succeed.

Welcome and purpose

Welcome to your definitive guide to the inspection process. This document is designed to help you understand what to expect, how to prepare, and where to find further information if needed.

This guide is intended to support your understanding of the audit process but is not a replacement for reading the full CHSA Standards, Technical Regulations, Code of Practice, and Ethical Marketing Commitment. Full compliance requires familiarity with all applicable documents.

Maintaining accurate contact details

To facilitate the process, the CHSA requires accurate contact details for every member. Please make sure you keep the CHSA Secretariat and Independent Inspector informed of any changes.

Scheduling the audit

You need to be audited every year to ensure compliance and retain membership. The number of audits required per distributor category is:

Accredited Distributor Scheme, independent distributors – at least 1 audit per year.

Accredited Distributor Scheme, group membership – at least 5 member audits per year, selected (at the sole discretion of the Inspector) from the list of members of the group.

The Independent Inspector will contact you to arrange the visit. Visits are arranged geographically to minimise travel and maximise efficiency (and not necessarily in 12-month intervals), so please respond promptly to the Inspector's request. Please also avoid cancellations unless absolutely necessary. If cancellation is unavoidable, please notify the Independent Inspector and CHSA Secretariat as early as possible. Late cancellations or repeated rescheduling may delay your audit, affect compliance status, and be recorded as part of your audit history.

CHSA Audits Made Clear: A Definitive Guide for Accredited Distributor Members



Preparing for your audit

There are several key steps to follow to ensure the process is smooth and efficient:

- Appoint a Nominated Person. Each Accredited Distributor must designate a Nominated Person responsible for ensuring compliance with:
 - The CHSA Distributor Accreditation Scheme Technical Regulation and Standard.
 - The relevant CHSA Manufacturing Accreditation Scheme Technical Regulations and Standard (especially when sourcing from non-accredited manufacturers).
- Submit your stocklist:
 - Please provide a password-protected Excel file listing all products in scope, providing the password separately. In scope are those within the remit of the CHSA's four manufacturing schemes:
 - Soft Tissue (e.g. hygiene rolls, hand towels, toilet tissue, paper napkins).
 - Plastic Sacks (e.g. refuse sacks, compactor sacks, FFP-rated products, LINs and OTH).
 - Cotton Mops ($\geq 70\%$ cotton, CHSA standard and non-standard weights).
 - Cleaning Chemicals (e.g. sanitisers, wipes, liquids for professional use).
 - If in doubt if the product is in scope, please ask the Independent Inspector.
 - The minimum requirements for the stock list are:
 - Product name.
 - Supplier name.
 - Bin location (if used).
 - Quantity.
 - The Independent Inspector will annotate the stocklist with classifications and potential 'Products of Interest'. This list is anonymised before being returned to you.

Tip: To password-protect your Excel file:

Go to File > Info > Protect Workbook > Encrypt with Password, then send the password separately.

Confirm audit location and site details

To ensure the audit process is smooth, please confirm the following information with the Independent Inspector prior to the audit:

- Full address of the audit location.
- Name and contact number of the person meeting and hosting the Independent Inspector.
- Other relevant site information, such as:
 - Access and location instructions.
 - Parking arrangements.
 - Security, safety and site procedures.
 - Special considerations for large sites or shared premises.

V3 January 2026

CHSA Audits Made Clear: A Definitive Guide for Accredited Distributor Members



Inspector Consultancy

If you're new to the Scheme and/or still have questions, the Independent Inspector can provide a short pre-audit briefing via phone or Microsoft Teams. This can take place ahead of the audit or on the day. For either option it needs to be scheduled in advance.

Additional use of Inspector Consultancy for longer briefings, training sessions, testing, etc, which is outside the normal audit process is available at an additional charge. It must be agreed in advance with the Inspector and administered through the CHSA.

What the audit covers

Your audit may assess compliance with some or all of the following areas, with the Inspector prioritising those most relevant or requiring closer review:

- The Accredited Distributor Scheme Standard and Technical Regulations.
- The relevant Accredited Manufacturer Scheme Standard and Technical Regulations for product that is within the scope of that scheme and sourced from a non-CHSA Accredited Manufacturer. CHSA Accredited Distributors are responsible for ensuring all in-scope products meet the relevant Technical Regulations and Standard whether or not they are sourced from CHSA Accredited Manufacturers.
- The CHSA's Code of Practice, which includes the Competition & Markets Authority's Green Claims Code.
- The CHSA's Ethical Marketing Commitment.
- The brand guidelines and relevant Scheme Technical Regulations specifying use of the CHSA logo and relevant Certification Mark.
- The ADS Compliance Checklist.
- Any additional areas the Inspector considers relevant, or the member wishes to discuss in relation to CHSA compliance, will be reviewed together during the audit before any further action.

Products in scope

All products that fall within the remit of one of the Accredited Manufacturer Schemes should be considered in scope, including 'retail' items. The Inspector will determine any exclusions during the audit.

Common pitfalls

- Working to an outdated CHSA Standard.
- Unclear or misleading labels: claims must be specific and accurate.
- Incomplete labelling: ensure all CHSA-required details are present.
- Unsupported product claims: claims must be backed with appropriate evidence.
- Missing documentation: Maintain ISO, SEDEX, and other relevant certifications.
- Incorrect use of the CHSA's Certification Marks: distributor marks for literature only; manufacturer marks only on own-brand products made by CHSA Accredited Manufacturers.

V3 January 2026

CHSA Audits Made Clear: A Definitive Guide for Accredited Distributor Members



Record-Keeping Requirements

You can buy product from any manufacturer. However, product that falls within the scope of a CHSA Manufacturing Accreditation Scheme must comply with the relevant Accreditation Scheme Technical Regulations and Standards, regardless of whether it is purchased from a CHSA Accredited Manufacturer or not.

It remains the responsibility of the Accredited Distributor to ensure compliance when purchasing product from an organisation that is not a member of the relevant CHSA Accredited Manufacturing Scheme. To support this, the CHSA will provide guidance documents for each manufacturing scheme. These documents will set out the minimum product and labelling requirements, minimum specification requirements, and minimum quality control evidence that non-CHSA manufacturers must conform to, in order to meet CHSA expectations during inspection.

All necessary documentation, as specified in the relevant guidance document, must be in your possession and available for the Inspector to review and, where appropriate, verify against your physical product stock and against CHSA standards.

Until these guidance documents are available, ADS members should take reasonable steps to confirm that products sourced from non-CHSA manufacturers meet the relevant CHSA standards. This includes obtaining evidence of compliance from the supplier wherever possible.

What to expect on the day

The audit will focus on:

- Compliance with the Accredited Distributor Technical Regulations and Standard, the CHSA's Code of Practice, and the CHSA's Ethical Marketing Commitment.
- Review of documentation, stocklist, and product compliance.
- 'Products of Interest': you will already have received the Inspector's pre-audit feedback, highlighting questions and 'Products of Interest' to review.
- Inspection of Certification Mark usage and supplier compliance.

Sampling and testing

Products within the scope of a CHSA Accredited Manufacturer Scheme but not sourced from a CHSA Accredited Manufacturer may be sampled. These are likely to have been identified in advance as 'Products of Interest' and will be visually inspected during the audit. They may be removed for testing. Typically, one full case (sales unit) is taken for testing. The cost of the samples is usually covered by the member.

Audit outcomes

The potential outcomes are:

- Compliant at Time of Test.
- Non-Compliant – Action Required.
- Critical Non-Compliance – Immediate action (e.g., quarantine).

V3 January 2026

CHSA Audits Made Clear: A Definitive Guide for Accredited Distributor Members



Declaration of Compliance (DoC)

The Declaration of Compliance is required for chemical products not sourced from CHSA Accredited Manufacturers. The purpose is to ensure all CHSA and Regulatory requirements are met and efficacy claims can be substantiated.

The process

1. The Independent Inspector prepares the form and sends it to the ADS member.
2. The ADS member forwards it to their supplier/manufacturer.
3. The supplier/manufacturer completes and returns it to the ADS member.
4. The ADS member returns it to the Inspector.

DoC contents

- Manufacturer and laboratory details.
- GB BPR / EU BPR compliance.
- Efficacy data tables for bacteria, yeast, fungi and viruses, where relevant.
- Supporting information and declaration.
- Confirmation signature from an authorised representative of the supplier or manufacturer.

After the audit

Following the audit you will receive the full Scheme Compliance Report. It will include:

- Anonymised, annotated stocklist.
- Audit outcome.
- Any relevant sample test reports.

If there are any issues the Independent Inspector will explain the findings. You may be asked to take corrective action and the CHSA may follow up to confirm resolution. Non-conformance levels may be increased if the issue is a repeat or part of a trend.

You may provide comments or context. If you would like your comments to be included in the Inspector's summary report to the CHSA Scheme Chair, please return them within five working days. The intention is that the audit be a collaborative process.

Additional support

- Website: <https://www.chsa.co.uk>
- CHSA Secretariat: secretary@chsa.co.uk
- Inspector Support: inspector@chsa.co.uk