

Solutions for food preparation, packaging, storage & cold chain

Health and safety are critical concerns for FMCG retail and wholesale stores, particularly when it comes to food preparation, packaging, storage, and maintaining an unbroken cold chain. While these processes are essential components of delivering fresh and safe products to consumers, they also pose specific challenges that demand innovative solutions.

No matter the economic and infrastructural challenges in South Africa, the well-being of both employees and shoppers must continue to take centre stage.

Food preparation: A delicate balance

Food preparation is the heart of any supermarket and wholesaler's daily routine, and ensuring safety here is paramount.

Employees engaged in chopping, slicing, and cooking face a heightened risk of cuts, burns, and other injuries. Proper training, strict adherence to standardised procedures, and the use of protective gear such as gloves and aprons, all play a pivotal role in minimising these risks.

Regular safety audits identify potential hazards and ensure compliance with safety protocols. Each individual store will also have its own specific risks that need to be evaluated and managed.

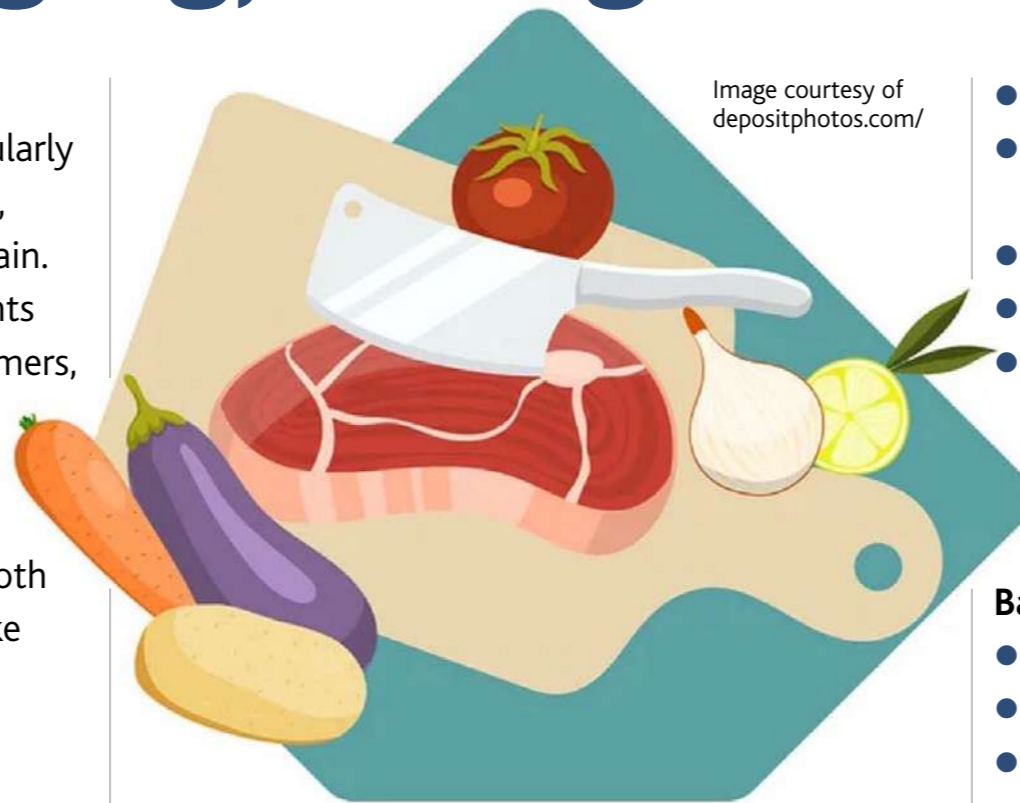


Image courtesy of depositphotos.com/

Safety in the butchery and bakery

Butcheries and bakeries have many potential safety risks for your staff. Lack of training or inadequate safety and protective gear and eye protection increases the risk of accidents or worsens injuries. Staff should wear close fitting clothing, hair nets and safety gloves to prevent injury.

Butchery health and safety risks

- Injuries from the incorrect use of knives, cleavers and handsaws
- Puncture wounds from hooks and needles
- Skin irritations and burns from cleaning chemicals

- Falls, trips and slips from wet floors or debris
- Electric shock from mishandling of or faulty electrical equipment
- Ongoing exposure to noisy machinery
- Chemical hazards from cleaning agents
- Bacterial outbreaks and food poisoning from contaminated meat
 - Machine entanglement in meat grinders and other equipment

Bakery health and safety risks

- Burns and scalds from hot ovens
- Trips and slips from slippery floors
- Injuries from lifting heavy equipment
- Cutting injuries
- Entanglement in machinery such as dough mixers, dough rollers, conveyor belts, bread slicers, pastry cutters, rotary ovens, packaging machinery, whipping machines, electric hand tools and food processors.
- Acute reactions and chronic respiratory problems from food allergens and flour dust
- Chemical irritants
- Repetitive motion injuries
- Fire or electric shock from poorly maintained electrical equipment

Source: <https://acss.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/butchers-haccp.pdf>



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using Saniwipes[®], you're not only keeping your surroundings clean, but you're also supporting a circular economy and creating job opportunities. Together, let's make a difference for our planet!



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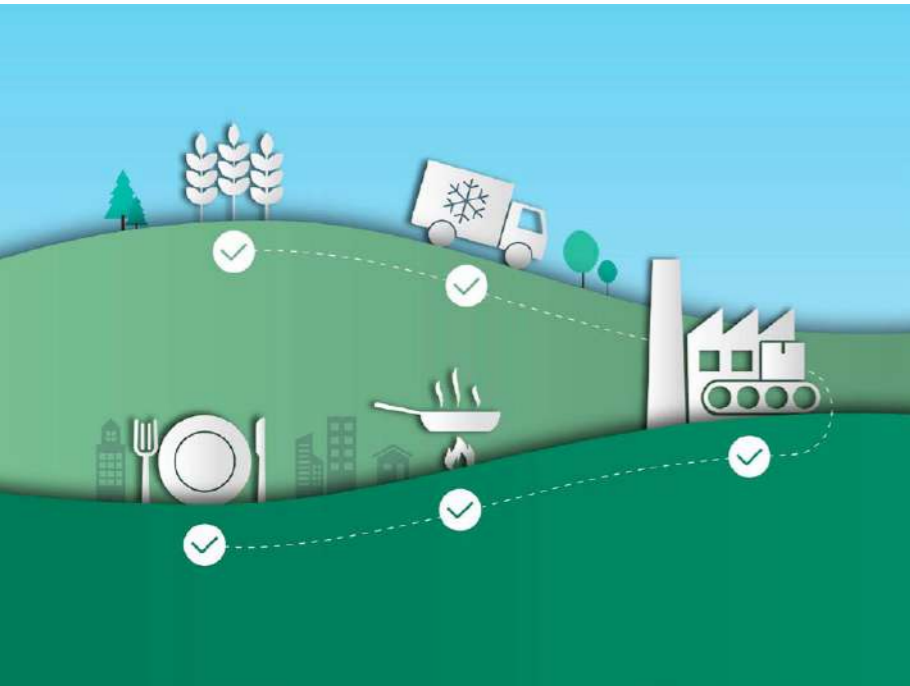


Image courtesy of www.testo.com/

HACCP

HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) includes 7 steps to assist retailers and wholesalers in how you look at food safety and to introduce procedures to make sure the food you prepare and sell is safe to eat. These 7 steps include:

1. What could go wrong (hazards)
2. At what point it could go wrong (the CCP or critical control point)
3. Setting critical limits at CCPs (for example, cooking temperatures);
4. Implementing checks at each CCP to prevent problems (monitoring);
5. Knowing what to do when something does go wrong (correction);
6. Proving that your HACCP Plan works (verification)
7. Keeping records of your Plan (documentation).

Sources: <https://www.workplace-rm.com/health-safety-fire-safety-for-retail-stores/>

Packaging safety for retail and wholesale stores

Packaging serves a dual purpose in supermarkets and wholesale stores – maintaining the quality and freshness of products while ensuring the safety of consumers

The improper handling of packaging materials can lead to physical injuries. Employees involved in tasks like packing fragile items or lifting heavy cartons face risks of strain, cuts, and falling objects.

Providing training on proper lifting techniques, using mechanical aids, and ensuring workspace ergonomics can significantly mitigate these risks. Moreover, supermarkets are increasingly opting for sustainable packaging materials, which often require different handling procedures. Proper training in the handling of these materials and the use of necessary protective gear are essential to prevent potential accidents. Make sure your suppliers use environmentally friendly packaging that minimises waste and impact on the environment and ensure that they have sustainability programmes in place.

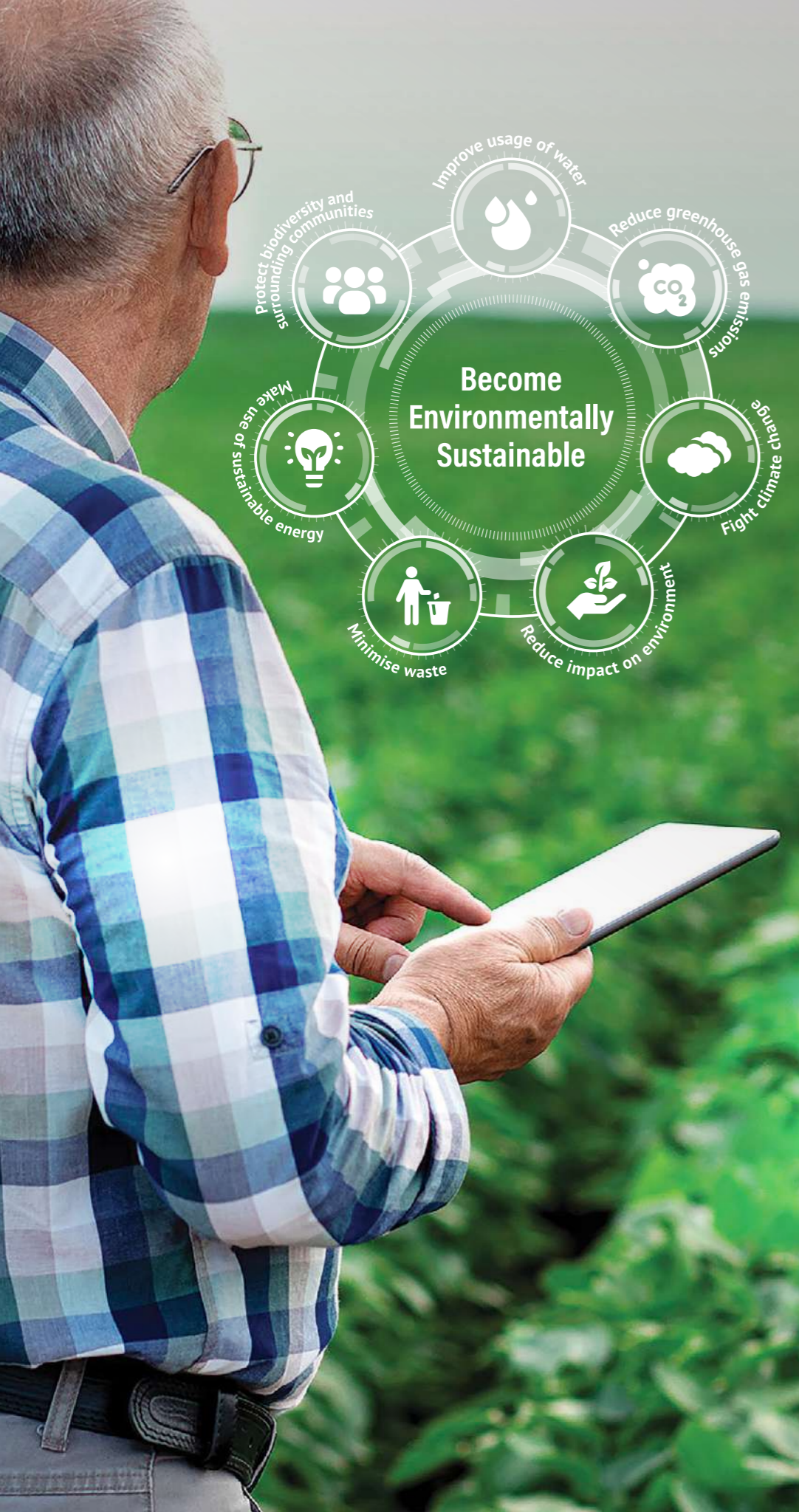
Regular equipment maintenance and checks also play a role in preventing packaging machinery mishaps.



Image courtesy of www.food-safety.com/

Packaging safety for retailers and wholesalers

- Packaging materials must comply with local and international standards
- Tamper evident packaging provides extra food safety
- Labelling should include ingredients, instructions and safety warnings
- Packaged goods should be stacked safely to avoid tipping and falling.
- Take into account the safety aspects of large containers and pallets, including how they are to be lifted and moved.
- Material handling equipment such as forklifts and pallet jacks must be regularly maintained and operated only by qualified and trained staff.
- All staff in goods receiving, warehousing or distribution centres must wear and use safety gear such as ...
 - Appropriate gloves for cold, heavy or sharp objects
 - Wrist supports, elbow pads
 - Back supports and harnesses
 - Hard hats
 - Face masks, safety glasses or goggles, ear muffs or earplugs
 - High visibility vests, aprons & overalls
- Your sustainability programme should include correct disposal of packaging materials, recycling and a commitment to reducing your environmental impact.



SIZA Digital Recordkeeping

Source, Track, and Trace Sustainably with Confidence



The success of an agri-business is measured in its ability to keep track of the effectiveness of business management practices and proactively implement changes to improve areas of concern. The SIZA Digital Recordkeeping Programme will eliminate redundant and time-consuming processes that usually involve paperwork by streamlining business procedures, thereby allowing producers to:



Track real-time data



Stay effortlessly organised



Enjoy maximum data security



Take care of the planet



Prepare for carbon tax



Provide data visibility to buyers and retailers

Track Real-Time Data

The SIZA Digital Recordkeeping Programme was implemented to provide South African agriculture and retailers with a monitoring programme allowing access to production data throughout their supply chain at the click of a button. The functionality of the programme includes digital dashboards where buyers can track data such as production yields, water use, electricity use, waste information, and more input by their suppliers as well as automatically generated annual reports summarising the data for a full year. These reports and dashboards will provide the agri-business and buyers with an overview of their production cycle along with insight into the progress made towards sustainability targets over time. The benefits include visibility on producers' Carbon Footprint information which can be tracked by monitoring and comparing changes made to determine sustainability and the progress made to reducing their Carbon Footprint over time.

SIZA is on the forefront of innovation, providing a platform where evaluation and monitoring can be done while also providing visibility on impact data and your value chain, thereby becoming a one-stop-shop for markets and buyers requiring visibility on centralised producer data.

The SIZA Digital Recordkeeping Programme is integrated as part of the MySIZA platform, and is available to all businesses and all commodities both locally and internationally, and does not require a SIZA Social or SIZA Environmental membership or audit.

Find out more:

www.siza.co.za

To learn more about this programme and how it can be used throughout your supply chain, please contact the SIZA office on 021 852 8184 or send an email to admin@siza.co.za to enquire about webinars and videos we offer to assist you with this journey.



Top five DO and DON'T tips for supermarkets and wholesalers to maintain health and safety throughout their stores

DO **Employee training:** Train all staff involved in food preparation, packaging, and storage about proper hygiene, safe handling practices, and the correct use of equipment. Regularly update their knowledge about food safety protocols and health and safety guidelines.

Sanitation: Maintain a rigorous cleaning schedule for all areas where food is handled or stored. Regularly sanitise surfaces, equipment, and utensils to prevent cross-contamination and the growth of harmful microorganisms.

Temperature control: Monitor and control temperature conditions for perishable items during storage and display. Ensure that refrigeration units are functioning correctly, and regularly check and record temperature logs to prevent spoilage and bacterial growth.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Mandate the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for employees engaged in food handling. This reduces the risk of contamination and enhances hygiene standards.

Allergen management: Clearly label products containing common allergens and ensure that employees are aware of allergen-related risks. Implement procedures to prevent cross-contact between allergenic and non-allergenic products.

DON'T **Cross-contamination:** Do not allow cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods. Keep separate cutting boards, utensils, and work areas for different types of products to prevent the transfer of harmful pathogens.

Improper storage: Avoid overcrowding of shelves and refrigerators, as this can hinder proper air circulation and temperature control. Never store raw meats or seafood above ready-to-eat items to prevent potential drips and contamination.

Expired products: Never display or sell products that have passed their expiration dates. Regularly inspect shelves and storage areas to remove any expired items promptly.

Bare-hand contact: No employees should be touching or serving ready-to-eat foods with their bare hands. This reduces the risk of transmitting bacteria from hands to food items.

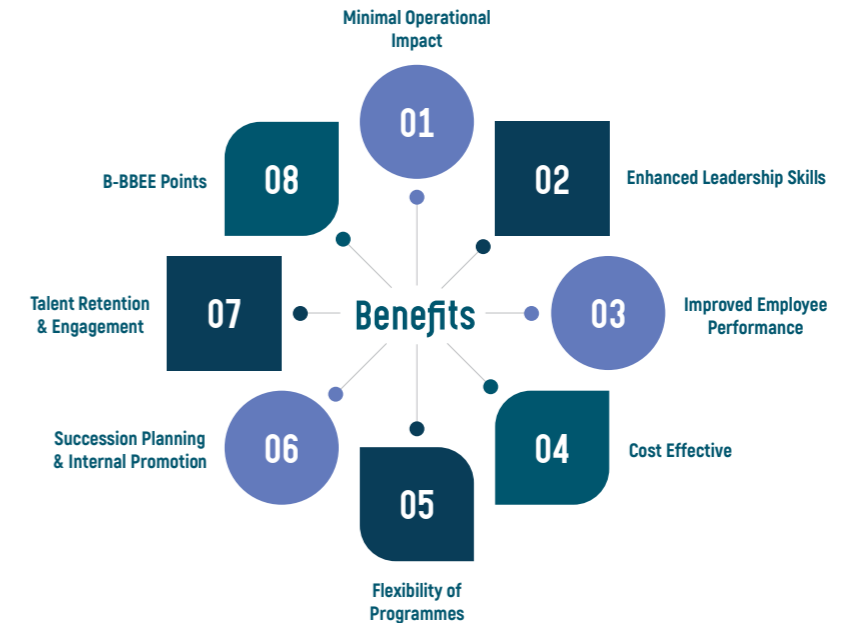
Inadequate communication: Do not overlook the importance of clear communication to your staff regarding safety protocols and updates. Neglecting to communicate changes in procedures or potential hazards can lead to mistakes and compromise food safety.



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CHAMPIONING CONSUMER PROTECTION FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS. #10YEARSFAIRPLAY

“ The ruling by the North Gauteng High Court proved to be a turning point for the organization as it freed us up to focus on our primary mandate, which is the provision of a free, functional, independent, accessible, and fair industry dispute resolution scheme. It also allows us to legally compel delinquent suppliers to pay membership fees, thereby spreading the burden of funding the Scheme among all players. ”



Ten years ago, the Consumer Goods & Services Ombud (CGSO) opened for business, ushering in a new era of access to redress for South African consumers. This was after the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa proposed an industry Code to the National Consumer Commission, that for the first time, would allow consumers to turn to an independent industry body to help them resolve disputes with suppliers in the consumer goods and services sector. The legitimacy of the CGSO was later confirmed by the Minister of Trade, Industry, and Competition when he promulgated the Industry Code of Good Practice on 30 March 2015, making it compulsory for qualifying suppliers to register with the CGSO and pay participation fees in accordance with the funding model approved by the CGSO Board. Since inception, the number of participants has grown from 24 founding companies to 1,356 as of the end of February 2023. Participants include most of the major retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers, and distributors with retailers representing more than 23 517 stores across the country.

CEO, Queen Munyai said over the last ten years, the CGSO has handled more than 66,438 complaints and responded to 170,344 calls, saving both consumers and suppliers millions of rands in legal fees and ensuring that justice and fair play

prevails through providing viable and trusted alternative dispute resolution mechanism as envisaged in section 70 of the Consumer Protection Act. The service is provided free of charge to consumers and is governed by a service-level agreement to ensure that complaints are dealt with expeditiously.

The successes of the last ten years have been hard-won though. Despite the obvious advantages for both suppliers and customers to have access to a fair and impartial alternate dispute resolution service, it has not been without its challenges. These included a five-year legal challenge to the constitutional validity of the industry Code of Conduct, including the CGSO's powers to levy annual participation fees on qualifying companies, prompting the organization to seek a declaratory order from the High Court. The challenge was finally settled in December 2022 when an appeal against an earlier High Court decision declaring the Consumer Goods and Services Industry Code of Conduct valid, was withdrawn.

According to Queen Munyai, “The ruling by the North Gauteng High Court proved to be a turning point for the organization as it freed us up to focus on our primary mandate, which is the provision of a free, functional, independent, accessible, and fair industry dispute resolution scheme. It also allows us to

legally compel delinquent suppliers to pay membership fees, thereby spreading the burden of funding the Scheme among all players.” In a victory for consumers, the court ruled that not only must all qualifying businesses in South Africa subscribe to the Code by registering with the CGSO, declaring their annual turnover, and paying the annual participation fees, but that the CGSO is entitled to approach a court or the National Consumer Commission (NCC) to report any contraventions of the Code.

New mobile complaints app set to make lodging complaints easier for consumers.

Queen Munyai added that (CGSO) has launched a mobile application to enable consumers to lodge, track the progress of their complaints, and interact with the CGSO office via their handheld devices. Consumers who wish to lodge a complaint can now do so by downloading the CGSO mobile complaints app from the google or App Store. It's free and allows users to upload and track the status of complaints, as well as submit supporting documentation, such as photos and invoices. Alternatively, they are welcome to call us at 0860 000 272, send an email to info@cgso.org.za, or visit our website www.cgso.org.za to submit a claim.

A culture of safety

Open communication and encouraging the reporting of potential hazards will lead to faster resolutions.

Incorporating automation in certain tasks can not only expedite processes but also reduce the need for manual intervention, subsequently decreasing the associated risks.

Health and safety responsibilities for retailers and wholesalers are laid out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993.

Safe storage

Effective storage practices are crucial to maintaining the quality and safety of products before they reach the consumer.

Improperly stored items can lead to spoilage, contamination, and accidents. One of the primary challenges in storage is organising inventory to prevent overcrowding and ensure accessibility. Overstacking shelves can also lead to items falling on employees or customers, causing injuries.

Implementing clear storage guidelines and routinely training employees in proper stacking and organisation techniques is essential.

Regular inspections of storage areas for potential hazards helps to prevent accidents and allows your staff to note potential safety hazards such as clutter, poor stacking or damaged shelving.

Adequate lighting and clear signage are essential for a safer storage environment.



Cold chain integrity

Maintaining the cold chain, which ensures products remain at the appropriate temperature from production to consumption, is vital for preserving freshness and preventing contamination.

South African supermarkets and wholesalers are under tremendous pressure to overcome challenges like temperature fluctuations, equipment failures and compliance with health regulations given the country's ongoing power crisis. As such, investing in solar power up and backup generators is a reality of retailing in South Africa.

Regular maintenance checks and temperature monitoring systems can promptly identify issues and prevent food spoilage. Moreover, training staff in proper cold chain management techniques ensures that everyone understands the significance of their role in preserving product quality and safety.

Turning to technology

As the landscape of retailing evolves, so too do the solutions available to enhance health and safety across food preparation, packaging, storage and the cold chain.

Technology has opened new avenues for improving safety in supermarkets and wholesale stores. For instance, wearable devices can track employees' movements, reminding them to maintain proper posture and take breaks to prevent fatigue-related accidents.

IoT (Internet of Things) sensors can monitor temperature and humidity in storage areas, alerting staff to potential deviations.

For more advanced applications, using virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in training programmes can provide employees with immersive experiences that simulate real-world scenarios. This helps them develop the skills needed to respond effectively to emergencies and handle everyday tasks safely.

Closing thoughts

Occupational health and safety is a continuous commitment that demands constant vigilance and adaptation. For supermarkets and wholesalers, the challenges in food preparation, packaging, storage, and maintaining the cold chain are nuanced and diverse.

However, with a combination of proper training, innovative technologies, a robust safety culture, and a commitment to regular inspections, every store can create an environment where employees are enabled to work safely and confidently, and customers can shop without worry. **SR**

The plastics industry taking action

More than **80%** of marine litter originates from inland sources and the plastics Industry in SA has identified river catchment projects to mitigate environmental pollution.

RIVER CATCHMENT PROJECTS

Waste Management



Recycling



Education, Training and Awareness



Litter booms



Clean-up campaigns

OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP



GLOBAL NETWORKS



With your support, Clean-up & Recycle last year saw

1 000+
clean-ups

500 000
refuse bags
distributed

1 600
tons of litter
removed

CLEAN-UP ACTIONS IN SEPTEMBER 2023

Clean-up and Recycle SA Week

11 -17 September 2023

National River Clean-up Day

13 September 2023

Recycling Day SA

15 September 2023

International Coastal Clean-up Day

16 September 2023

World Clean-Up Day

16 September 2023

The success of these projects is due to the dedicated support of and collaboration with our Industry partners such as the raw material producers, converters, recyclers, Producer Responsibility Organisations, brand owners, retailers, the packaging industry, Government, Non-Government Organisations and volunteers.

