



How to Buy Food Safety Management Software

Step-By-Step



fooddocs.com

Table of Contents

Why are paper-based systems ineffective?.....	3
What’s the biggest software adoption challenge?.....	4
8 Steps to choose the right software:.....	5
- Step 1. Understand your business needs.....	5
- Step 2. Identify the stakeholders who need to be involved.....	6
- Step 3. Determine your food safety software budget.....	7
- Step 4. Justify the budget required.....	8
- Step 5. Research the best vendors.....	10
- Step 6. Evaluate your vendor shortlist.....	11
- Step 7. Take advantage of free trials and demos.....	13
- Step 8. Make a final decision.....	14
Additional tips for buying food safety software.....	15
Why choose FoodDocs.....	18
Frequently asked questions.....	20

Why are paper-based systems ineffective?

Paper-based food safety systems can lead to significant inconsistencies. Here are just some of the cons:

- Staff can **forget to complete monitoring checks**
- Staff might **not fill them out completely**
- **Not everyone has legible** handwriting
- Physical documents can **easily be damaged or misplaced**
- **Version control becomes hard** to maintain

This is why food safety management software exists

Our guide specifically will walk you through how to choose and buy the right digital solution to save businesses like yours time and money on:

- Vetting software
- Aligning it to your needs
- And implementing the system

... the first time.



What's the biggest software adoption challenge?

The biggest concern regarding food safety software is whether or not staff can adapt to a digital solution.

However, neglecting digital solutions increases the risk of non-compliance, which could lead to fines, closures, or customers getting sick or worse.

*Our team has spoken to thousands of food safety stakeholders from restaurants to food production companies and one theme runs through them all: **change is hard.***

But **we'll show you how to overcome these change management hurdles** (and more) in the next sections.



8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 1: Understand your business needs for food safety management software

Every business is different but generally, there are four questions you can ask to gain a holistic understanding of your business.

binders we mentioned earlier. It's also impossible to see the exact moment a food safety issue arises by looking at a pile of paper. All this makes it incredibly hard to manage and enforce consistent food safety practices.

- **What are the most significant pain points in your food safety processes?**
 - Unmanageable recordkeeping and documentation
 - Poor time management
 - Inconsistent training and staff adoption
- **Does this digital food safety solution complement our existing systems?**
- **Is the food safety management software easy to use?**
 - Daily task completion for food handlers
 - Overseeing real-time compliance for managers



8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 2: Identify the stakeholders who need to be involved

Who are the key stakeholders? Not just the Food Safety or Quality Managers and the staff who will use the **food safety apps** daily. But the individuals who will have to vet and ultimately approve the solution that's best for your business. This could be someone from:

- **Legal** (Does the digital tool keep documents secure? What data is stored?)
- **IT** (Is any integrations or software support needed?)
- **Finance** (What budget can you allocate to food safety software?)
- **Subject matter experts** (Is there a person other than you who understands the ins and outs of how food safety management software affects the business?)
- **End users** (Who will interact with the product daily? This doesn't need to involve everyone and could also be a subject matter expert.)



8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 3: Determine your food safety software budget

The budget required for a proper digital **Food Safety Management System** (FSMS) varies from four to five figures per year depending on your business's unique needs.

If you don't already know your budget range, now is a good time to connect with that key stakeholder (i.e., Finance) and align on the desired and maximum price points you're working with.

Doing this will also play a factor in the food safety management vendors you can and cannot entertain.



8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 4: Justify the budget required for food safety management software to key stakeholders

Tell a story using a before and after structure. We suggest breaking your rationale for switching from a paper-based to digital food safety system into two categories:

First, how much time will managers save?

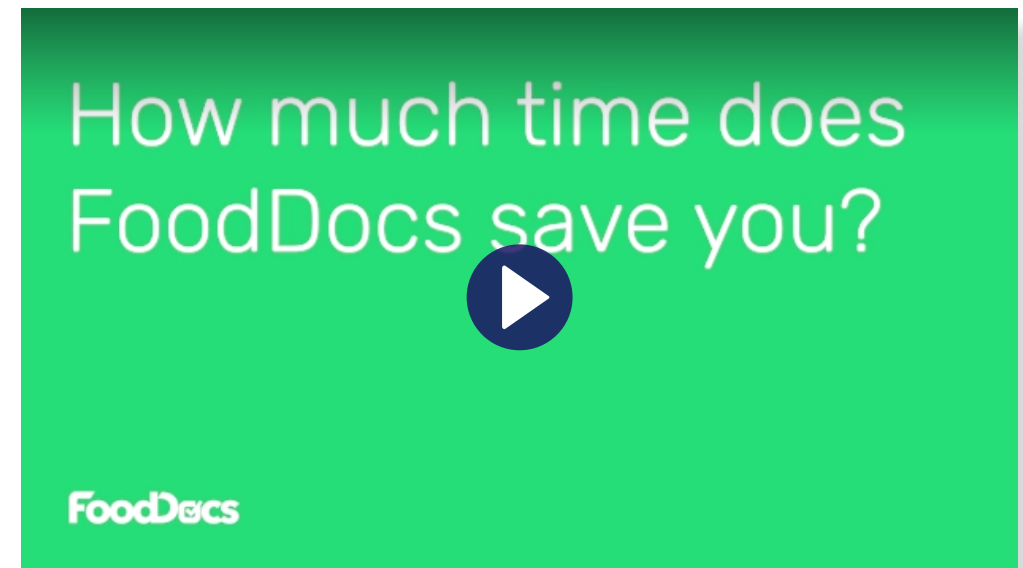
Here's an example from a customer of ours, Captain Grappo Gluten-Free Foods. **Before going digital, Ruth the Store Manager would spend two hours every day manually supervising monitoring tasks.**

With FoodDocs, Ruth says:

"Now I can sit down and it's just all there in one place. It takes me 5-10 minutes."

10 minutes a day versus 120 minutes a day is a 25x increase in supervisory efficiency. That's 60 hours a month (or 720 hours a year) saved in labor that would otherwise be spent on paper-based food safety management.

Financially, using a U.S. Quality Manager's average hourly rate of \$45.67, FoodDocs digital Food Safety Management System helps save the equivalent of \$23,738 over a year.



8 Steps to choose the right software

Second, how much time will kitchen teams or production line staff save?

Another customer had 5-7 employees spending 40-60 hours per month manually filling paper checks related to thermometer calibrations, daily tests, temperature checks, and traceability logs.

Taking an average hourly wage of \$15/hour for the workers handling the paperwork, the monthly labor costs amount to \$600 to \$900. **Over the course of year, those paper-based labor costs add up to \$7,200 to \$10,800.**

By switching to a digital food safety system such as FoodDocs, they can reduce the amount of time spent on paperwork by 10-20% on average.

That time savings translates into 8-18 hours per month instead of 40-60. The cost savings also decrease significantly to a new labor cost of \$120-\$270 per month (\$1,440-\$3,240 annually).

On FoodDocs' Enterprise plan, between an annual subscription and a one-time onboarding fee, the cost of going digital is:

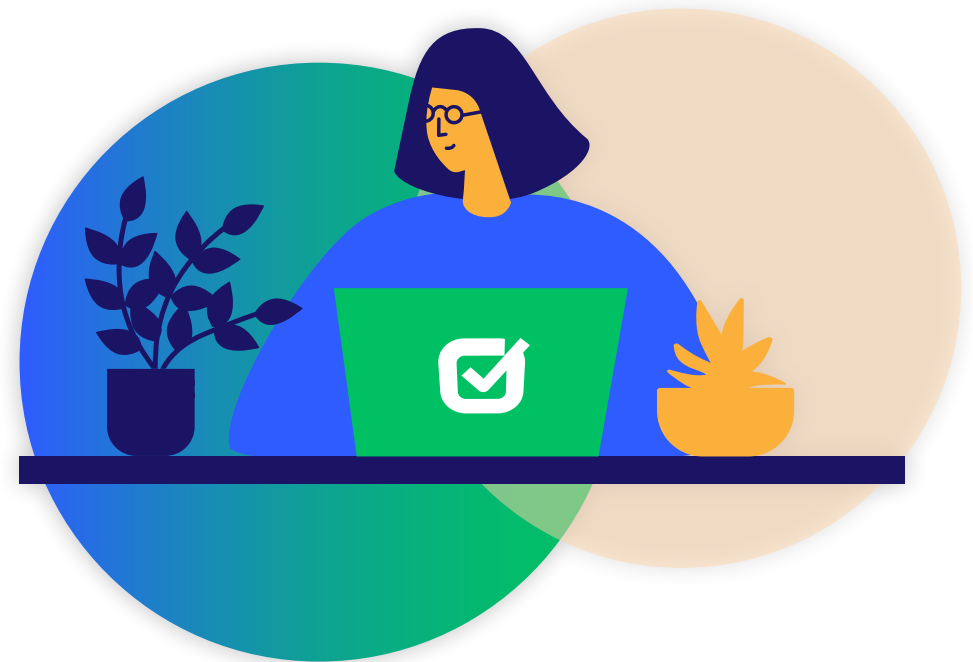
	Software cost + New labor cost	Total cost
Year 1 (low end)	\$6,887 + \$1,440	\$8,327
Year 2 (low end)	\$5,388 + \$1,440	\$6,828
Year 1 (high end)	\$6,887 + \$3,240	\$10,127
Year 2 (high end)	\$5,388 + \$3,240	\$8,628

8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 5: Research the best digital food safety management solutions

The research phase may look different from person to person. But here are some practical starting points:

- **Speak to industry peers:** You have approved suppliers. Why not ask what food safety management software they use?
- **Conduct online searches:** Google, ChatGPT, and industry forums such as ISFQN are all great resources to get a quick and quality list of food safety management software.
- **Check out online review sites:** Seeing a company's star rating and customer reviews will give you a quick gut check and confirm whether or not you should spend time looking into a company further.



8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 6: Evaluate your food safety software vendor shortlist

Map the food safety software providers you're considering.



Then, create a table similar to the one on the right that gives a high-level overview of some key components of each food safety software.

Category	Notes
Software Name	E.g., FoodDocs
Key Features	E.g., Real-time monitoring, Automated reporting, Incident management
Compliance	E.g., Complies with FDA, USDA, SQF, GMP, GFSI, FSMA standards
User Friendliness	E.g., Intuitive interface, Mobile app availability
Cost	E.g., Initial setup fee, Monthly subscription rates
Training and Support	E.g., 24/7 customer support, On-site training sessions
Customization Options	E.g., Customizable dashboards, Alerts setup
Scalability	E.g., Suitable for both small eateries and large chains
Security Features	E.g., Data encryption, Multi-factor authentication
Integration Capabilities	E.g., Integrates with existing sensors, ERP, systems
Customer Reviews	E.g., High ratings in customer service and reliability
Implementation Timeframe	E.g., Average setup and go-live period
ROI Potential	E.g., Expected cost savings from waste reduction, improved compliance

8 Steps to choose the right software

If a company has put comparison articles or PDFs together, you can include them in your research.

FoodDocs vs Xenia		
Key features	FoodDocs	Xenia
TARGET GROUP	<p>Perfect for both, food production and food services with several locations.</p> <p>Focus on food businesses.</p>	Focused on hospitality, but also construction and security sector.
EASE OF USE	<p>Intuitive app and desktop solution, making it easy to navigate for all users, from teams to management.</p> <p>Users consistently highlight ease of use and simplicity in customer reviews.</p>	<p>The workflow involves multiple clicks and steps, which might cause inefficiencies and slower task completion.</p> <p>UI might feel overwhelming because of the numerous options presented in the view.</p>
SETUP	<p>Common tasks are automatically set up after signup, letting you get started right away.</p> <p>Several templates available to fasten up the onboarding.</p>	Self-onboarding is supported with several templates available. However, manual setup is required, which can extend the onboarding time.
CUSTOMIZABILITY	All tasks are fully customizable to meet the chosen food safety standards.	Customizability is great, but building everything from scratch makes complex setups more time-consuming.
HACCP PLAN	<p>Enables you to create a HACCP Plan in 1 hour, using AI.</p> <p>The setup process is fast and straightforward, thanks to pre-filled fields.</p> <p>HACCP content is fully customizable for your company's specifics.</p>	✘

Sample of one of our food safety software features comparison charts

8 Steps to choose the right software

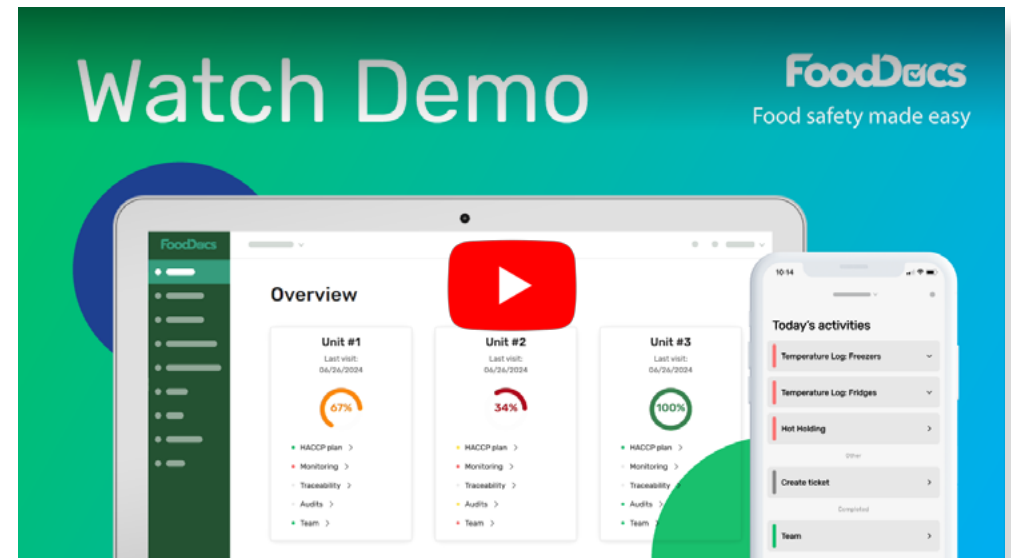
Step 7: Take advantage of free trials and product demos

You don't need to prove yourself to vendors; vendors need to prove themselves to you.

If free trials and demos are available, take advantage! Food safety management software such as Alert65 and Navitas Safety do not readily offer free trials. FoodDocs and some other vendors do have [14-day free trials](#).

By doing this, you'll:

- **Gain a better understanding** of the software's capabilities
- **Get real, tangible experience** with something your team could be using daily
- **Come to demos with thoughtful, practical questions** to maximize your research time



8 Steps to choose the right software

Step 8: Make a final decision to purchase your food safety management software of choice

As you and your team select the best vendor for your business, it's important to stay objective. Revisit the product comparison tables, the ROI calculations, and the pros and cons of each software.

If there were any red flags with your top one or two choices, have the companies sufficiently addressed your concerns?

Get answers to these questions before committing.

What happens next?

When you've said "yes" to a vendor and made necessary the payment, it's time for onboarding and implementation! The steps involved in this process will vary from vendor to vendor. **At FoodDocs, here's an example of what our typical onboarding experience looks like:**

- **Day 1 – Defining scope**
Covering your food safety requirements according to your specific needs, review of existing workflows.
- **Day 4 – Monitoring setup**
Setting up the Monitoring System, including the 5 most critical tasks. Inviting the first team members to use the Mobile App.
- **Day 7 – Customizing your monitoring system**
Customizing the Monitoring systems and adding additional or more complicated tasks.
- **Day 12 – Traceability system**
Setting up the Traceability System, Product-related monitoring, mockup of recall, and reporting.
- **Day 30 – HACCP**
Setting up the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), SOPs (Standard Operational Procedures) and PRPs (Prerequisite Programs). Customization of these documents.
- **Day 45 – Final touch**
Introduction to your Customer Success Manager.

Additional food safety software buying tips

6 Key features to look for in food safety management software

FoodDocs offers many **food safety features**, but these are critical ones that vendors should have:

1. HACCP Plan module: FoodDocs' AI-powered HACCP Plan builder automatically defines CCPs, creates SOPs, builds a HACCP flow chart, and gives you this necessary compliance-ready document in an hour (saving ~120 working hours).

Food Safety Software Features	Offered by FoodDocs
Automatic AI-powered HACCP Plan builder	✓
Automatic Flow Chart generator	✓
Critical Control Points (CCPs)	✓
Prerequisite Programs (PRPs)	✓
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	✓
Google Maps-integrated location plan builder	✓
Layouts builder	✓
In-house consultants	✗

2. Monitoring system and mobile app: Easily create, adjust, and complete personalized monitoring tasks with the help of an easy-to-use food safety mobile app.

Food Safety Software Features	Offered by FoodDocs
Real-time status overview (single- and multi-location)	✓
Pre-built and customizable tasks and checklists	✓
Monitoring logs (e.g., receiving, temperature, cleaning)	✓
Monitoring task instructions (text, photo, and video)	✓
Monitoring activity log	✓
Auto-triggered corrective actions (i.e., if a numeric value is out of range)	✓
Monitoring task verification	✓
Incidents, tickets, and accidents reporting	✓
One-time task creation (i.e., unscheduled entries)	✓
Batch monitoring	✓

Additional food safety software buying tips

6 Key features to look for in food safety management software

3. Traceability: If needed, FoodDocs' Traceability system helps to track your ingredients and food items through all stages of production. We built the software so you can complete a traceability log and attach a monitoring task to that traceability log right away.

Food Safety Software Features	Offered by FoodDocs
Traceability logs (e.g., preparation and dispatch)	✓
QR and barcode scanning	✓
Ingredient management	✓
Recipe management	✓
Batch tracking	✓
Automatic expiry date calculator	✓
Easy access to recall data	✓
Production planning	✗
Automated supplier document management	✗

4. Audits: Create, schedule, complete, and manage food safety audits. Promote team accountability with the help of custom audits that you can notify staff of and perform on the mobile app.

Food Safety Software Features	Offered by FoodDocs
Audit records	✓
Internal audit builder (from templates or scratch)	✓

5. Team management: When setting up your team, use role-based tasks to assign specific food safety tasks to relevant team members. Each team member will see only the tasks pertinent to them on that day.

Food Safety Software Features	Offered by FoodDocs
Role-based team member setup	✓
Training certification document management	✓
Training certification monitoring (i.e., auto-calculated valid until date)	✓

Additional food safety software buying tips

6 Key features to look for in food safety management software

6. Document management: Upload and store all your team-related documents such as food safety training documents, health certificates, and permits in our cloud service. Add their due dates to get notified when any of your documents are about to expire.

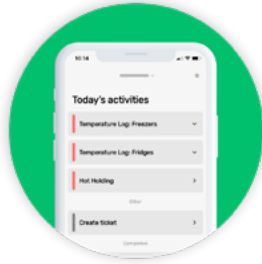
Food Safety Software Features	Offered by FoodDocs
Cloud-based file storage	✓
Data file exports	✓
Time-based file sharing (e.g., for auditors and inspectors)	✓

7. Integration: Integrate our system with smart devices and IoT temperature sensors, making monitoring faster and keeping all your food safety management information accessible from one dashboard. Automatically synced data helps you save time and avoid switching between different solutions.

Integrations partners	✓
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Why choose FoodDocs?



User-friendly

FoodDocs features an intuitive app and desktop solution praised for its ease of use.

“ The system provides us with an easy-to-use solution for standardizing our work processes, which helps support every employee’s role in maintaining food safety monitoring and best practices. **The value FoodDocs has added to our company goes well beyond the hours saved daily for our teams** through streamlining daily monitoring activities and processes! ”



Michael Worbanski
ex-Operations Safety Specialist
Gruppo Terroni

*Source



Fast and flexible

FoodDocs offers quick setup with user-friendly templates.

“ Karin worked with me step by step and got [our location] **set up to mirror exactly what we wanted. It took a day and it was ready, and we were live.** ”



Jacob Tew
Director of Culinary
Craft Culinary

*Source



All-in-one solution

FoodDocs includes all the essential food safety modules, such as monitoring, HACCP Plan, recipe management, documentation management, and more.

“ **It’s a nice, easy, simple software...** [FoodDocs] literally does it all. We can even put our recipes in here and it’ll keep it stored for us... **It’s just one source, everything all in one.** ”



Ruth Baker
Store Manager
Captain Grappo

*Source

Why choose FoodDocs?

One platform for everything – Smart, Simple, Safe



+2h daily
Saved on supervision

Save 10 hours weekly on routine tasks and monitor food safety procedures with a real-time dashboard.



15-minute
Implementation time

Your workspace is created based on your company profile. Adjust checklists and logs to meet your food safety standards.



4.9/5 rating
Recommended by customers

Users consistently praise our user-friendly interface, smart features, and exceptional customer support.

Digitize your Food Safety System in 15 minutes

Customize the digital solution to your exact business operations.



Frequently asked questions

Are free trials always available to try the software?

Not all food safety management software companies include free trials. FoodDocs offers a 14-day free trial.

How do I know which software is the easiest to use?

There's no "one size fits all" answer to this question because every food business has unique needs which suit their specific operations.

Ultimately, the best way to determine the usability of software is to try it before implementation, with a free trial.

Is there a contract or yearly commitment, or can you switch the platform easily afterwards?

We believe in flexibility and understand that business needs change – and quickly, sometimes. FoodDocs offers monthly and yearly plans that, if needed, you can cancel at any time. Compared to some other food safety management software vendors, we do not require a yearly commitment or ever lock you into multi-year contracts.

How much time and money can the software save you?

The right food safety management software can save you thousands of hours and thousands of dollars a year. This is because you're no longer wasting time going to and from locations for food safety clipboards, paper is kept to an absolute

minimum, and filling logs takes a few seconds versus many minutes – all while increasing data accuracy and team efficiency.

Is this food safety management software suitable for my business?

As businesses may be very different in terms of their processes and monitoring needs, it's important that the software is highly flexible to customize it according to your company's specific needs. So always check the software's customizability.

What do other customers say about the software?

Always check the most common software comparison sites, like Capterra, G2, etc., and read the reviews. Some of those resources even allow you to compare the software features side by side.