

Minor Non-Compliance Guidance

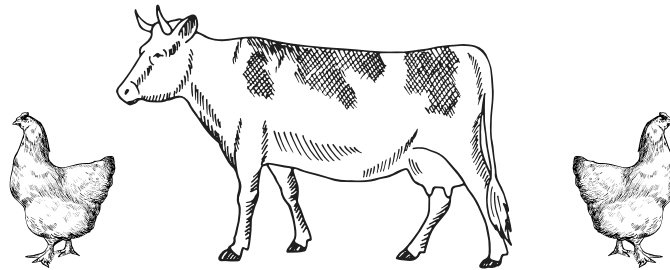
Minor non-compliance defined:

Minor non-compliances are issued for infractions observed at inspection that are not system-wide and can be easily corrected without needing a written corrective action plan.

Minor non-compliances must be addressed by an operation by their next annual renewal. Inspectors will note in their reports whether or not the issue has been corrected.

Notices of a minor non-compliances are only sent to the certified operation, and do not involve the NOP.

Issuing minor non-compliances helps uphold the integrity of the organic label by identifying aspects of an operation that do not comply with the National Organic Program.



How do you resolve a minor non-compliance?

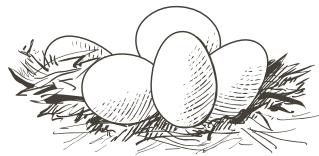
A minor non-compliance must be resolved internally by the certified operation, by correcting whatever issue was cited. QCS will look at corrective & preventative measures taken to address the matter at your next annual renewal inspection. If the issue hasn't been corrected and is still ongoing, QCS would need to address it with a Noncompliance.

It is important to respond to all communications regarding non-compliances. Failure to respond will lead to further compliance action.

What does a minor non-compliance mean for your certification status?

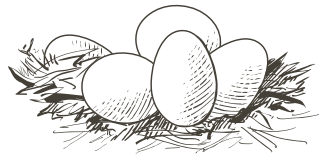
A minor noncompliance that is corrected does not impact your operation's organic certification status. It is only monitored by QCS as your certifier.

The USDA National Organic Program is federally regulated. Failure to engage with the noncompliance process can have significant ramifications.



Common Non-Compliances and how to avoid them:

- **Non-payment:** Ensure that all invoices are paid within 15 days of receipt.
- **Recordkeeping:** (Ex: Incomplete, ineffective, or missing records) Be sure to accurately document all activities at your operation, train all staff how to use templates & documentation systems, and maintain records for a minimum of five years.
- **Improper Labels:** For an infographic showing correct labeling practices, click [here](#).
- **Inaccurate/ Out-of-Date Organic System Plans:** (Ex: Changes to production practices, documentation systems, input sources, ingredient suppliers etc. not described in your OSP) Changes or updates to your OSP must be submitted for approval prior to implementation. Think of the OSP as a living document which you must keep current and accurate as updates are made.



Don't forget: you're not the only one!

Minor non-compliances can seem scary and intimidating. But...

They happen!

Operations, regardless of how long they have been certified, trip up every so often. Think of a noncompliance as an opportunity to improve your operation.

Non-compliances are not personal or intended as punishment - they help keep confidence in the USDA organic seal by ensuring everyone is adhering to the same standard.