



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

# INFOSAN Members' Guide

March 2020



International Food  
Safety Authorities  
Network

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**Suggested citation.** INFOSAN members' guide. Geneva: World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

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# Acknowledgements

The FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat would like to thank the members of the INFOSAN Advisory Group for their contributions to this members' guide as well as to several other INFOSAN members who provided feedback on earlier drafts.

We also wish to express gratitude and appreciation to all our partners and donors for their generous financial and in-kind contributions which enable INFOSAN to continue operating.



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# Acronyms

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Control
ECP	INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FP	INFOSAN Focal Point
GOARN	Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
ICW	INFOSAN Community Website
IHR (2005)	International Health Regulations (2005)
IHR NFP	National International Health Regulations (2005) Focal Point
INFOSAN	the International Food Safety Authorities Network
JEE	Joint External Evaluation Tool
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
RASFF	European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
WGS	Whole Genome Sequencing
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to serve as a functional reference guide for members of the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN). The guide is split into two parts covering both organizational and practical information about INFOSAN and member participation.

Part A of the guide provides a general overview of the INFOSAN structure, including the functions of INFOSAN, and it details the network organisation, including the roles and responsibilities of the members, the Secretariat and the Advisory Group. This part of the guide also provides details on the INFOSAN Community Website (ICW) and instructions pertaining to the designation and registration of new members.

Part B of the guide describes operational aspects around the communication of international food safety incidents (the main function of INFOSAN). Sources of information are described along with guidance on the process for reporting food safety incidents to the INFOSAN Secretariat.

INFOSAN members should note that this document has been drafted by the INFOSAN Secretariat with input from the INFOSAN Advisory Group following a consultative process whereby all INFOSAN members were invited to provide comments on an earlier draft. This guide complements other documentation that has been published with the support of the broader INFOSAN membership. Following the presentation and discussion of the Members' Guide at the Global Meeting of INFOSAN in December 2019, the INFOSAN Secretariat will develop and publish additional guidance to supplement the information in this guide which may also be included in future revisions. The table below outlines the purpose, authors and primary users of the different reference documents:

Documents	Purpose	Authors	Primary users
INFOSAN Secretariat Strategic Plan	To guide overall management of INFOSAN by the Secretariat	INFOSAN Secretariat together with the INFOSAN Advisory Group	FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat
Regional strategies to strengthen INFOSAN	To outline regional-specific actions for members to strengthen INFOSAN	INFOSAN Secretariat, together with Regional Food Safety Officers/Advisers and regional INFOSAN Members	INFOSAN Members in respective regions
INFOSAN Members' Guide	To ensure all INFOSAN members understand their roles and responsibilities	INFOSAN Secretariat together with the INFOSAN Advisory Group and all INFOSAN members	All INFOSAN Members

If you have questions about anything in this guide or about INFOSAN in general, please contact the INFOSAN Secretariat at [infosan@who.int](mailto:infosan@who.int).

# Background

The rapid globalization of food production and trade has increased the potential for international incidents involving unsafe food. As a result, food safety issues occurring in one country are often of concern to other countries.

While implementing effective prevention strategies throughout the entire food chain is the most effective way to produce safe food, it is impossible to eliminate all food safety hazards. Addressing incidents that result from contamination of food by foodborne hazards requires rapid access to, and exchange of, food safety information at the national, regional, and international levels.

## Key Point



INFOSAN was launched in 2004 and operates as a joint FAO/WHO programme

Clear, reliable, and authoritative information is essential to allow food safety authorities to implement effective prevention, response and risk management measures, and for the maintenance of international food trade and consumer confidence in the food supply.

- To address these challenges, WHO developed and launched INFOSAN in 2004, in cooperation with FAO. Today, INFOSAN is jointly managed by WHO and FAO with most operational functions led by a Secretariat located at WHO HQ.

Further information about the history and development of INFOSAN is available in another publication, titled: [The FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network in Review, 2004–2018: Learning from the Past and Looking to the Future](#)<sup>1</sup>

1. <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/fpd.2018.2582>



# Part A

## INFOSAN

### Structure and function



# 1. Network Structure

Food safety is a multidisciplinary area encompassing a range of national agency portfolios including, but not limited to, food safety, health, agriculture, trade and industry. It therefore is seldom dealt with by a single agency in any given country. When a food safety incident occurs, there is often the need to rapidly compile information from different sectors and establish a clear risk management plan to mitigate any risks. This can be a difficult and demanding task if collaboration between the various agencies has not been established prior to the occurrence of an event.

## Key Point

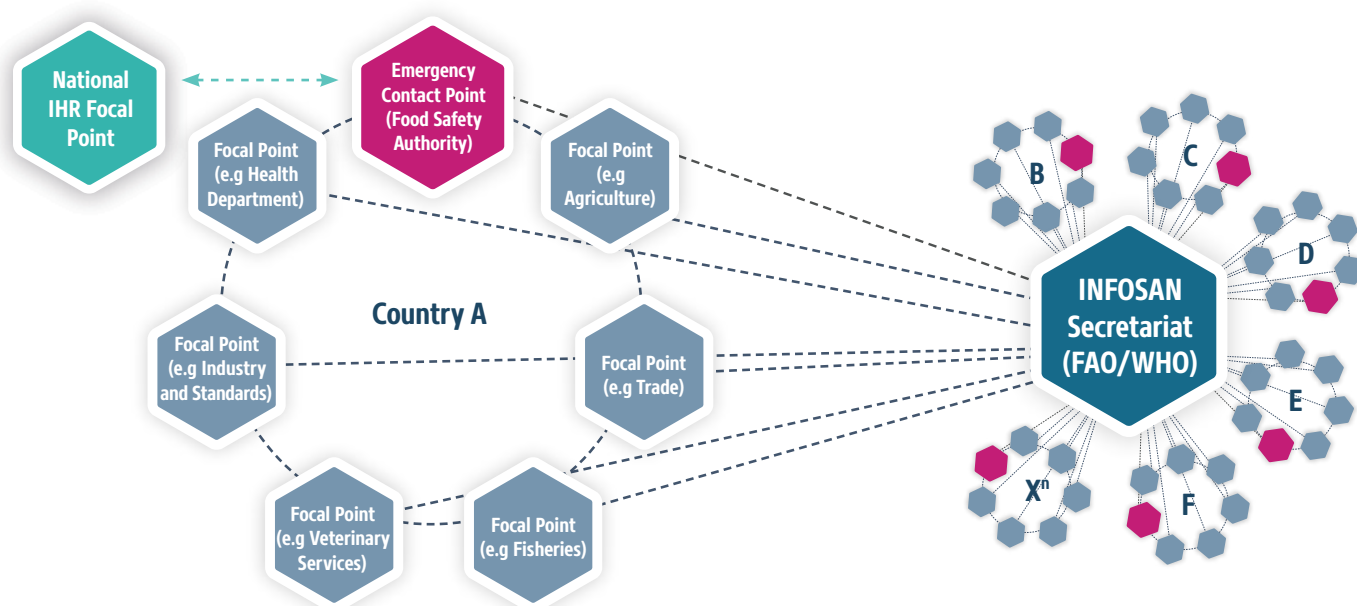


INFOSAN promotes multisectoral collaboration at national level

The structure of INFOSAN seeks to promote multisectoral collaboration and strengthen relationships, trust and mutual understanding among all stakeholders. This can be supported through the designation of INFOSAN Focal Points in each of the respective national agencies involved in food safety, including but not limited to; Agriculture, Trade, Fisheries, Veterinary Services, Industry and Standards, and Health. Such a structure is outlined in the [International Health Regulations \(2005\) \(IHR\) State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting Tool](#), in which the designation of an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point and at least one INFOSAN Focal Point from another sector in the country, is required to establish a multisectoral collaboration mechanism.

The structure of the INFOSAN Network includes several key interactions between the INFOSAN Secretariat and INFOSAN members, and the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point and the National IHR Focal Point. Figure 1 demonstrates the ideal membership structure at national level (Country A) and interactions. This figure is adapted from the short document on “[INFOSAN member roles and responsibilities](#)” to show the interaction with National IHR Focal Points.

Figure 1: Network Structure



## 1.1 INFOSAN Members: Roles and Responsibilities

**FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat:** INFOSAN is managed by FAO and WHO with most operational functions led by the Secretariat at WHO. As such, the emergency aspects of INFOSAN, the coordination and management of food safety incident response activities, are conducted at the WHO Secretariat in collaboration with FAO. When a response to a food safety incident is undertaken, the WHO Secretariat coordinates all related activities and liaises with the FAO Secretariat to leverage their technical expertise in agriculture and food production systems and assist with the dissemination of information, if necessary. The various non-emergency aspects of INFOSAN are jointly undertaken by the FAO/WHO Secretariat.

**INFOSAN Advisory Group:** Members of the INFOSAN Advisory Group, first established in 2006, bring unique knowledge, skills and experiences to complement that of the Secretariat, to more effectively govern the Network by offering innovative advice and dynamic perspectives. The purpose of the INFOSAN Advisory Group is to support INFOSAN activities by advising on ways to strengthen the Network, including: contributing to strategic planning; guiding quality improvement; advocating for the Network; supporting the Secretariat for technical consultation; and resource mobilization. FAO and WHO are responsible for selecting members by considering expertise related to INFOSAN activities and strategic planning ability. INFOSAN Advisory Group members act in their own capacity and do not represent their countries or institutions.<sup>2</sup> INFOSAN Advisory Group Member Roles and Responsibilities include the following:

- Support FAO and WHO in developing INFOSAN strategic planning
- Participate in an annual Advisory Group meeting (subject to availability of resources) and regular teleconferences
- Support INFOSAN in resource mobilization
- Advocate for INFOSAN and present information on INFOSAN at relevant forums and meetings
- Guide quality improvement through provision of structured feedback
- Advise the FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat on the implementation of INFOSAN network and technical aspects of issues relevant to INFOSAN activities
- Provide support and advice on any other issues raised by FAO/WHO INFOSAN Secretariat
- Support and advocate for the development of INFOSAN in Member States

### INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points:

- Report urgent food safety events of potential international significance to the INFOSAN Secretariat
- Respond to requests for assistance by the INFOSAN Secretariat in the verification and assessment of events by providing all necessary information, and review INFOSAN Alert messages pertaining to an event in their country

- Request international assistance through the INFOSAN Secretariat to respond to a food safety event or emergency, as necessary
- Take action on INFOSAN Alerts and disseminates information accordingly
- Collaborates with their National IHR Focal Point on food safety events that fall under the IHR
- Carry out additional functions outlined for Focal Points within their agency

### INFOSAN Focal Points:

- Collaborate with and provide technical support to the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point on food safety events and emergencies involving their respective agency
- Engage in sharing information with the INFOSAN Secretariat and other members on food safety issues that may be relevant at the international level and beneficial to all members, such as, but not limited to: risk assessments on emerging hazards, lessons learnt, identified good practices, etc.
- Disseminate INFOSAN resources, FAO/WHO guidelines, and other important food safety information from INFOSAN within their agency, as appropriate
- Provide comments to INFOSAN on information products disseminated to the Network
- Collaborate with their National IHR Focal Point on food safety events that fall under the IHR

## 1.2 INFOSAN members: Designation and Registration Process

### INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point

The INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point should be located in the national authority responsible for the coordination of food safety emergency response in their country and able to speak on behalf of the national government on issues pertaining to food safety<sup>3</sup>.

#### Key Point



All INFOSAN members must be officially designated by their respective government authority

In countries where the responsibility for responding to food safety emergencies is managed by more than one agency, an agreement, independent of the INFOSAN Secretariat, must be reached by the national authorities as to where the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point will be located.

It is the responsibility of all countries to ensure that they regularly provide updated information on their INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point to the INFOSAN Secretariat so that the contact details can be kept up-to-date on the INFOSAN Community Website.

Ideally, the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point should be a unit comprised of several people rather than a specific individual to ensure continuity and coverage during times when one person is on leave or otherwise unavailable. A contact name should be identified in case there are technical difficulties with e-mail or telephone

3. As per the Codex Alimentarius Commission guidelines [http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/fr/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252Fstandards%252FCAC%2BGL%2B19-1995%252FCXG\\_019e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/fr/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252Fstandards%252FCAC%2BGL%2B19-1995%252FCXG_019e.pdf)

## Key Point



In each country, there should be one Emergency Contact Point, but there can be as many Focal Points from different authorities as required

connections. Some countries have established a shared e-mail address<sup>4</sup> for receiving INFOSAN Emergency communications, which is monitored by a rotation of people, along with the email address and telephone number of a duty officer. This function should ideally be part of the national food safety emergency response plan, not a stand-alone function for participation in INFOSAN.

INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points must be officially designated by their respective national government authority. Submission of an official letter of designation to the INFOSAN Secretariat is required prior to registration on the INFOSAN Community Website. A template to assist with the drafting of the official letter of designation of Emergency Contact Points is contained in Appendix 1.

## INFOSAN Focal Points

## Key Point



Registration is not complete until access to the INFOSAN Community Website has been granted

INFOSAN Focal Points are in national authorities with a responsibility for food safety, other than the authority where the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point has already been designated. Like INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points, INFOSAN Focal Points are also required to submit an official letter of designation prior to registration on the INFOSAN Community Website. A template to assist with the drafting of the official letter of designation of Focal Points is contained in Appendix 2.

Once registered, INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points and Focal Points are encouraged to use the INFOSAN Community Website to identify other INFOSAN members in their country as a potential starting point for strengthening multisectoral collaboration at the national level.

A national authority wishing to become a member of INFOSAN should contact the INFOSAN Secretariat ([infosan@who.int](mailto:infosan@who.int)) with this request.

## 1.3 - Key Partner Interactions

Food safety is multidisciplinary in nature and necessitates multisectoral collaboration, not only within countries, but within and between multilateral organisations. INFOSAN works collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to prevent, detect, prepare for, and respond to food safety emergencies. Key partners and stakeholders that are linked in to INFOSAN include:

- **National IHR Focal Points:** IHR NFPs are included in communications by the INFOSAN Secretariat with INFOSAN members in their respective countries during a food safety incident response. During the drafting and finalisation process of a Global INFOSAN Alert, the INFOSAN Secretariat and the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point liaise with the relevant IHR NFPs in coordination with regional WHO offices to seek feedback and input.
- **FAO Regional Food Safety Officers and WHO Regional Food Safety Advisers:** during both routine and emergency activities, the INFOSAN Secretariat and INFOSAN members can engage FAO and WHO Regional Officers and Advisers to seek input as well as their technical and regional expertise.

4. The Emergency Contact Point should have a designated general email address (e.g. [food.emergency@xxx.abc](mailto:food.emergency@xxx.abc)) which is monitored during both work and after hours.

## Key Point



Regional networks can complement the work of INFOSAN; contact points in regional networks should also register as INFOSAN members to prevent parallel communication tracks

- **Regional networks:** Collaboration with several important regional initiatives and networks also supports the development of INFOSAN. The INFOSAN Secretariat collaborates closely with colleagues from the European Commission (EC), for example, to ensure complementarity between the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and INFOSAN. INFOSAN has been formally recognized by RASFF as the system to use for communication with non-European Union (EU) countries when unsafe food on the market poses risks to public health<sup>5</sup>. Several other regional networks exist at various stages of development; close collaboration with the INFOSAN Secretariat ensures complementarity of functions without duplication of efforts.
- **Regional Authorities:** Collaboration with regional authorities is also of great value to the INFOSAN Secretariat and several are registered members of the Network. For example, the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) is an important partner during outbreaks of foodborne illness involving multiple European countries. Another example is the African Union which is working towards the development of an Africa-wide rapid alert system with support from the INFOSAN Secretariat. There are many other examples and the INFOSAN Secretariat remains open for collaboration with other regional authorities in the future.
- **PulseNet International:** PulseNet International is a well-established network that builds capacity for the molecular surveillance of foodborne disease, outbreak detection, and response worldwide. Information generated by PulseNet International can be critical in linking international outbreaks of concern to members of INFOSAN and has been the source of such information during dozens of food safety events communicated through INFOSAN.
- **WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network:** During outbreaks, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) ensures that the right technical expertise and skills are on the ground where and when they are needed most. GOARN is a collaboration of existing institutions and networks, constantly alert and ready to respond. The network pools human and technical resources for rapid identification, confirmation and response to outbreaks of international importance. The INFOSAN Secretariat coordinates response to serious international outbreaks of foodborne diseases using resources from GOARN.
- **WHO Collaborating Centres:** WHO collaborating centres are institutions such as research institutes, universities or academies, which are designated to carry out activities in support of WHO programmes. Several WHO collaborating centres have joined INFOSAN and provide technical support in various ways, for example by facilitating the sharing of information related to microbial isolates during urgent situations, developing technical guidance, supporting training activities, etc.

5. Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/300 of 19 February 2019 establishing a general plan for crisis management in the field of the safety of food and feed, Article 21

## 2. Network Functions

### 2.1 Access to contact information for INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points and INFOSAN Focal Points

The INFOSAN Secretariat maintains the contact details of INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points and INFOSAN Focal Points on the INFOSAN Community Website. INFOSAN members' contact details are not publicly available. INFOSAN members are encouraged to use the INFOSAN Community Website to identify colleagues in other countries with whom they may wish to collaborate, seek information from, or notify of an issue or incident.

#### Key Point



INFOSAN members must register on the INFOSAN Community Website to access the contact information of other members

All INFOSAN members are reminded to contact the INFOSAN Secretariat if their contact details change or if they leave their position and are no longer serving as an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point or Focal Point. In this case, a replacement should be identified and officially designated.

### 2.2 Access to information about food safety incidents

Food safety incidents are diverse and can be related to microbiological, chemical, physical or other types of food contamination.

#### Key Point



Any food safety incident with potential international implications should be reported to the INFOSAN Secretariat

In general, the INFOSAN Secretariat will become involved in the management of an international food safety incident when:

1. an outbreak of foodborne illness is linked to imported or exported food; or
2. the contamination of imported or exported food (or feed) is likely to pose a risk to human health

A short summary of each of the food safety incidents involving the INFOSAN Secretariat is provided on the INFOSAN Community Website. Each summary indicates the food involved, the hazard, the countries affected, and provides an overview of the risk management measures taken.

In such instances, only the countries directly affected are involved in the information exchange by email, but all INFOSAN members can read the event summary on the INFOSAN Community Website. Refer to Part B of this guide for further details on communication exchange during food safety incidents.

Some real-life examples of food safety incidents that the INFOSAN Secretariat has been involved in are summarized in this guide to illustrate the management process in action.

Some of the larger and more complex food safety incidents summarized on the INFOSAN Community Website are accompanied by an INFOSAN Global Alert. These alerts are drafted by the INFOSAN Secretariat in close collaboration with the relevant INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points, National IHR Focal Points, and FAO and WHO colleagues prior to posting.



INFOSAN Global Alerts are generally issued during one of two types of incidents:

1. A serious international food safety incident with **potential or confirmed** widespread international distribution of contaminated products (e.g. a recalled food product distributed through international trade or available through e-commerce);
2. A serious public health event associated with the consumption of contaminated food with **potential or confirmed** international distribution (e.g. a large outbreak of foodborne illness)

An INFOSAN Global Alert will include the following information to provide INFOSAN members with a comprehensive overview of the incident, and the implications (if any) for their country:

### Key Point



INFOSAN Global Alerts are issued rarely and during larger, more complex incidents; all members are notified by email

- a summary of the situation
- the countries directly implicated
- the food and hazard involved
- whether illnesses have been reported
- the public health response
- risk assessment
- advice
- reference documents.

When an INFOSAN Global Alert is issued, the same information will also be shared with National IHR Focal Points via the WHO Event Information Site (EIS). This would follow an assessment of a given incident based on four main criteria: 1) **Serious public health impact** – weighs both the immediate and potential future consequences of an event on the health of human populations; 2) **Unusual or unexpected nature of the event** – seeks the atypical character of an event within the epidemiological context; 3) **Significant risk of international spread of disease** – assesses if the event either presents significant risk of dissemination of disease across national borders, or if the disease has in fact already spread; and 4) **Significant risk of international trade or travel restrictions** – refers to the event's potential to prompt other States or entities to adopt measures that limit or ban trade or travel with the State(s) experiencing the event.

When an INFOSAN Global Alert is issued, all members are notified by email and provided with a link to navigate to the INFOSAN Community Website where they can read the details of the alert. Subsequently, members in affected countries are encouraged to share on the INFOSAN Community Website in the related discussion forum, details related to the response effort in their country and whether any re-export has occurred.



### Real life example #1 : **Outbreak of Listeriosis in Europe linked to internationally distributed frozen vegetables from Hungary**

In June 2018, the INFOSAN Secretariat was notified of a prolonged outbreak including 47 cases of invasive *Listeria monocytogenes* in five European Union (EU) Member States linked to frozen corn and other frozen vegetables processed at a single plant in Hungary. The frozen corn and other frozen vegetables were further constituted into various products. Implicated products were distributed extensively within the EU, furthermore, secondary and tertiary distribution to recipient countries took place. In total, over 120 countries received the implicated products.

Due to the broad and complex distribution of the implicated products, the INFOSAN Secretariat issued a Global Alert, notifying all INFOSAN members of the ongoing outbreak and subsequent distribution, thereby informing them of whether they had or had not received implicated products, and allowing them to implement appropriate risk management measures accordingly.



## 2.3. Technical assistance in addressing food safety issues

### Key Point



Members can request technical support from the INFOSAN Secretariat at any time

INFOSAN Members can contact the INFOSAN Secretariat for technical advice or assistance with the management of specific food safety issues. This could be to address acute needs (e.g. during an unusual food safety incident) or to seek advice on technical issues or other longer-term needs (e.g. development of a national food safety emergency response plan). The INFOSAN Secretariat's response could range from the provision of technical advice online, via email or online seminars (i.e. webinars) or may result in the organization of a national or regional capacity building workshop. Support may also be provided by linking INFOSAN members to other experts within FAO or WHO or to Network members in other countries.

## 2.4 Notification of publications and information produced by FAO/WHO

### Key Point



The Resource Spotlight keeps members updated on new publications from FAO and WHO

FAO and WHO frequently publish technical guidance on a wide range of topics related to food safety and the management of food safety issues. One example is the Joint FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool, published in 2019, that Member States can use to assess and strengthen their national food control systems; INFOSAN is referred to as an integral component in the strengthening of these systems through enabling effective management of food safety emergencies. FAO and WHO assist Member Countries in strengthening national food control systems through: 1) assisting national authorities to formulate evidence-based, enabling and coherent policies; 2) helping governments review and update food legislation; and 3)

developing institutional and individual capacities to perform risk-based food inspections, sampling and analysis, risk-communication and food safety management. In doing so, FAO and WHO have been issuing a series of publications in relation to strengthening national food control systems, whose latest paper is the Joint FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool. The approach is based on the Codex principles and guidelines for national food control systems (CAC/GL 82-2013) and other relevant Codex standards.

Further, in 2019, the INFOSAN Secretariat launched a communication initiative called the “Resource Spotlight” which regularly highlights documents that may be of interest to INFOSAN members. Each Resource Spotlight provides some details on the specific publication and describes the purpose of the document and the intended target audience.

## 3. INFOSAN Community Website

### Key Point



The INFOSAN Community Website provides members with direct access to more than 600 food safety experts from 190 countries

In 2012, the INFOSAN Secretariat launched the INFOSAN Community Website (ICW) – an online, secure platform for INFOSAN members to connect and engage with one another. Since launching, the ICW has been used as the primary tool for disseminating food safety information to members during emergency situations. The ICW also provides a forum for members to discuss topical food safety issues with experts from around the globe and a chat-function to enable real-time communication with other members, including the INFOSAN Secretariat. In addition, the ICW serves as a repository of food safety documents of global interest to food safety professionals involved in emergency preparedness and response activities.

### 3.1 Registration on the INFOSAN Community Website

All INFOSAN members must be registered on the INFOSAN Community Website to be able to access food safety information from the INFOSAN Secretariat, as well as to be able to use the platform to contact members from around the globe and exchange information and lessons learned. The registration process is administrated by the INFOSAN Secretariat. See Figure 2 for an overview of the designation and registration process.

When the INFOSAN Secretariat is notified that a prospective INFOSAN member has been identified, the INFOSAN Secretariat will contact the prospective member and inform them that in order to register they must;

1. submit an official letter of designation signed by their institution, mentioning their status as an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point/INFOSAN Focal Point in their country; and
2. register on the INFOSAN Community Website at the following link: <https://extranet.who.int/infosan/registration>

Upon submission of a valid official letter of designation and completing the registration form contained within the above link, the INFOSAN Secretariat will review the details and if all details are satisfactory, confirm the account thereby granting the member access to the closed INFOSAN Community Website. If documentation is lacking or the INFOSAN Secretariat requires further information, the INFOSAN Secretariat will contact the prospective member and request clarification or the further information necessary.

### Key Point

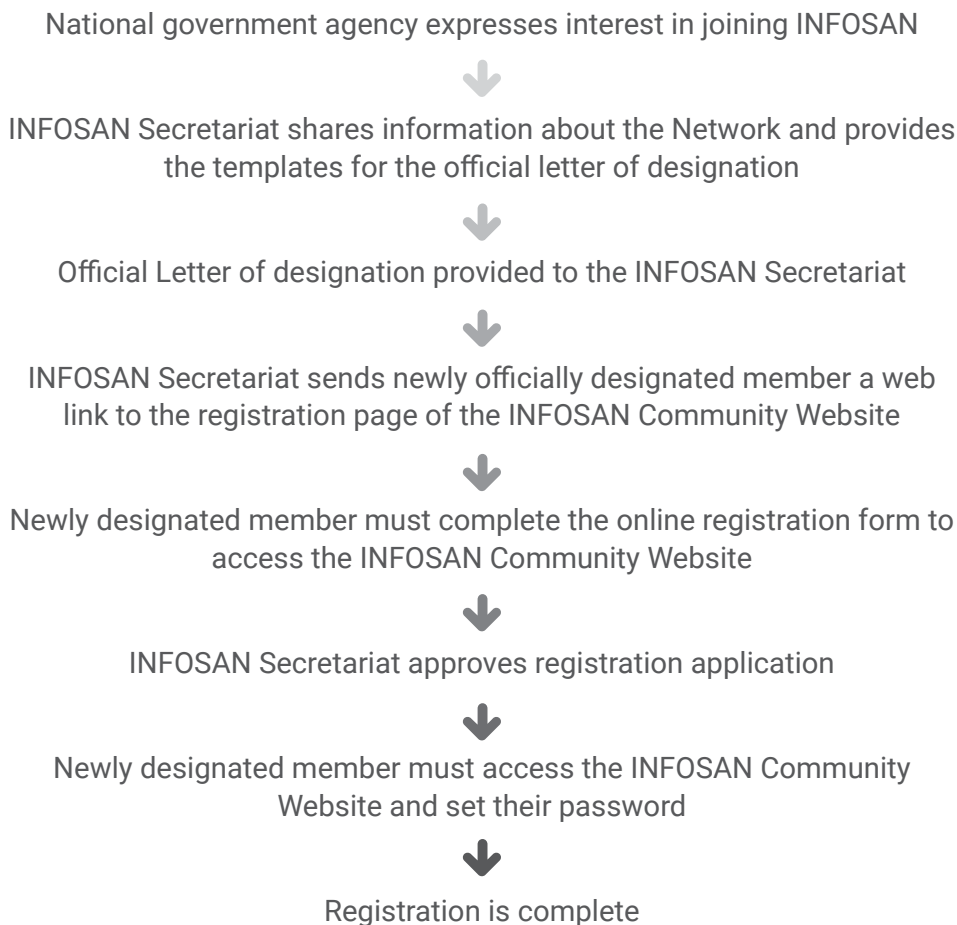


The INFOSAN Secretariat regularly offers one-on-one webinars to train new members on a range of topics

Upon granting access to the member to the INFOSAN Community Website, the INFOSAN Secretariat will provide the option of an introductory webinar about INFOSAN to the new member. The purpose of this webinar is to familiarise the new INFOSAN members with the network, how it functions, when and how to report food safety incidents, and to provide new members with some examples of recent food safety incidents that the INFOSAN Secretariat has managed. Further details of how to navigate the INFOSAN Community Website can be found in the INFOSAN Community Website User Manual (accessible [here](#)).

Once a member is registered, the INFOSAN Community website can be accessed at <https://extranet.who.int/infosan/>.

Figure 2: **Member designation and registration process**



# 4. INFOSAN and the International Health Regulations (2005)

## Key Point



Coordination between INFOSAN members and the IHR NFP is essential; the template provided by the Secretariat can be used to develop national operating procedures

The International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)<sup>6</sup> are an international legal instrument that is binding on 196 States Parties (countries) across the globe, including all Member States of the WHO. The purpose and scope of these Regulations are to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade. Pursuant to the IHR (2005), each State Party must establish or designate a National IHR Focal Point (NFP). The NFP is the national centre or office which is accessible at all times for IHR related communications with WHO IHR Contact Points and all relevant sectors of the State Party's administration.

## 4.1 Food safety and the IHR (2005)

International emergencies caused by contaminated food also fall within the scope of the IHR (2005). INFOSAN facilitates the identification, assessment and management of food safety incidents of international concern, including WHO Member States' IHR obligations. This includes the surveillance, notification, verification and assessment of food safety related events and information dissemination of public health risks associated with food.

The IHR (2005) are intended to cover a broad spectrum of incidents which are of public health concern. Concerning food safety, the spectrum includes incidents caused by biological, chemical, foreign matter and radionuclear hazards.

## 4.2 Reporting under the IHR (2005)

Since some food safety incidents fall under the IHR (2005), the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, in consultation with the National IHR Focal Point (IHR NFP), should evaluate any public health threat posed by a food safety incident using Annex 2 of the IHR (2005). Since food safety incidents require inter-sectoral collaboration, information pertinent for food safety authorities should also be communicated to WHO via the NFP and ECP using INFOSAN. This will help to ensure direct communication and prompt action.

To assist national governments in their coordination between INFOSAN members and the IHR NFP, a template for INFOSAN/IHR Communication has been developed, titled: National protocol for information sharing with national and international partners during food safety events and outbreaks of foodborne illness

The template can serve as a starting point for the development of a national protocol for information sharing among various stakeholders involved in food safety emergency response in your country. This includes members of INFOSAN, the IHR NFP, and other stakeholders as

6. Details on the IHR (2005) can be found at <http://www.who.int/ihr/en/>

appropriate. The final document, when adapted to your national context, should provide clear guidance about the procedures for communication between domestic authorities, as well with WHO, including the INFOSAN Secretariat.

## 4.3 The role of INFOSAN in the IHR Annual Reporting Tool and Joint External Evaluation Tool

Under the IHR, States Parties must have the capacity to timely detect, investigate and respond to food safety events involving foodborne diseases and/or food contamination that may constitute a public health emergency of national or international concern, through collaboration between the relevant authorities. These capacities are measured by States Parties through the IHR Annual Reporting Tool<sup>7</sup>, the results of which are reported by States Parties, to the WHO World Health Assembly annually. Due to the multisectoral nature of food safety, the food safety capacities contained within the Annual Reporting Tool concern the presence and capacity of a multisectoral collaboration mechanism in States Parties, for food safety events. Importantly for States Parties, this includes the designation of an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point and INFOSAN Focal Points, and the establishment of formal communication channels between the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, INFOSAN Focal Points and IHR-NFP.

A second tool used by the WHO to measure capacity in States Parties to the IHR (2005) is the Joint External Evaluation (JEE)<sup>8</sup> tool. The JEE is a voluntary, collaborative, multisectoral process used to assess country capacity to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to public health risks occurring naturally or due to deliberate or accidental events. The purpose of the JEE is to assess country-specific status, progress in achieving the targets under Annex 1 of the IHR (2005) and recommend priority actions to be taken across the 19 technical areas being evaluated, one of which is Food Safety. This section includes as an indicator, participation in INFOSAN by Member States, and the designation of an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point and at least one INFOSAN Focal Point.

7. <https://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO-WHE-CPI-2018.16/en/>

8. [https://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO\\_HSE\\_GCR\\_2018\\_2/en/](https://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_2018_2/en/)



## Part B

# Communication during food safety incidents



# 5. The importance of information exchange

INFOSAN's main activity is the detection and assessment of international food safety incidents (i.e. those that affect more than one country and pose a serious public health concern) and the subsequent facilitation of rapid information exchange across national borders. When such incidents are determined to meet these criteria, the INFOSAN Secretariat facilitates the exchange of information between the affected countries to minimize the public health impact. The type of information exchanged during an international food safety emergency varies depending on the specific event however it can include, product, export and distribution details, epidemiologic information, bacterial strain characteristics (including whole genome sequencing data), and any other relevant information. While the information exchanged is usually limited to the countries directly affected by an incident, some larger and more complex incidents, or incidents that gain widespread media attention, may warrant broader communication and are shared with the entire Network.

Each incident is different and varies in nature, geographic distribution and duration. Accordingly, the INFOSAN Secretariat's involvement also varies from one incident to the next and could range from relatively simple verification of information to complex event coordination, obtaining and disseminating information from multiple stakeholders and providing technical assistance. During each incident, the INFOSAN Secretariat determines the most effective and appropriate way to disseminate the necessary information utilising the INFOSAN Community Website.

The exchange of information during non-emergency situations is also a valuable activity of INFOSAN. This exchange may take the form of the preparation of guidance and its subsequent dissemination, or through the publication on the INFOSAN Community Website of relevant food safety information in the Discussion Forums where INFOSAN members can interact with each other, and the INFOSAN Secretariat, pose technical questions and share information on actions being taken in their country, for example the publication and dissemination of INFOSAN national action plans following Regional Meetings.

## 5.1 What information should be shared through INFOSAN?

### Key Point



INFOSAN members should contact the INFOSAN Secretariat if they are unsure about what information to share

The range of information to be shared across the Network is intended to be broad: it may be in the form of an urgent communication on an acute food safety incident or emergencies of international concern or interest.

Alternatively, it may be non-urgent in nature but nevertheless of interest to the INFOSAN community. Examples of information to share with INFOSAN members

include;



### Urgent communication:

- A food recall associated with an imported or exported food product, with or without associated cases of human illness;
- Cases of human illness associated with a food product (identified or unidentified), pending test results and subsequent risk management (e.g. no recall underway yet or unable to recall product);
- Awareness of a food safety issue, including food fraud, following investigations and testing (e.g. routine surveillance work) and potential for international relevance (e.g. internet sale of contaminated product); and
- Adulterated food product discovered in one country with potential for international relevance.

### Non-urgent communication:

- Recall guidance materials and risk management documents; and
- National and international information exchange protocols.

Emerging issues with a raw material or ingredient associated with a non-food product but with potential for association with a food product.

#### Real life example #2 : **Outbreak of Salmonella Agona infections linked to internationally distributed *infant formula***

In December 2017, an outbreak of Salmonella Agona among infants linked to domestically produced infant formula, was identified in France. The implicated infant formula products as well as all other products produced by the implicated manufacturer were subsequently issued and overseen by French authorities. Recalled products were exported to over 80 countries and territories. The INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point in France shared the distribution details of the affected products with the INFOSAN Secretariat and the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). Due to the large scale of international distribution in this food safety incident and media interest globally, the INFOSAN Secretariat issued a Global Alert to all INFOSAN members.

The INFOSAN Secretariat worked closely with INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points around the world, to monitor the international distribution of implicated infant formula and provide assistance to affected countries, as required.



## 5.2 Confidentiality of information exchanged within the network

Confidentiality issues relating to information shared through INFOSAN are a concern for all members.

### Key Point



INFOSAN exchanged through INFOSAN and shared on the INFOSAN Community Website is confidential.

Information provided to the INFOSAN Secretariat is always treated as confidential and is only communicated to relevant INFOSAN members after the provision of express permission from the relevant INFOSAN members. All information is communicated through the secure, password protected INFOSAN Community Website, or by email.

In some instances, INFOSAN members may need to discuss confidential information during an early indication that an incident may be occurring, prior to confirmation. The INFOSAN Secretariat will always verify with the relevant INFOSAN members, the information that can be shared before doing so.

When confidentiality concerns arise, for example regarding specific company trade information, the INFOSAN Secretariat works closely with all relevant INFOSAN members to safeguard confidentiality of information while ensuring that members are provided with a sufficient amount of information to allow risk management measures to be implemented to protect public health. It is often crucial for an importing country to be informed of a potential food safety issue and in such cases, the provision of redacted information is preferable to an absence of communication.

Information provided from or through the INFOSAN Secretariat and made available to Network members on the INFOSAN Community Website is confidential and should only be shared with the relevant food safety authorities. Network members need to use their own judgement on who to forward information to within the sphere of government agencies and other trusted affiliated agencies. It is advised that when information obtained through INFOSAN is forwarded beyond Network members, that the recipients are made aware of the confidential nature of the information and that it is provided with the specific purpose of reaching an effective and appropriate food safety and/or public health outcome.

## 5.3 Communication from the INFOSAN Secretariat to an INFOSAN member

### Urgent communication

During the systematic monitoring of potential food safety related incidents of international concern, the INFOSAN Secretariat may identify an incident that requires further information from a specific country to make a proper assessment. In this case, the INFOSAN Secretariat ([emergencyinfosan@who.int](mailto:emergencyinfosan@who.int)) will contact the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point via email with an 'Information Request'. Depending on the information already available, the Information Request may include all or some of the following components:

- A short summary of the information indicating the food safety incident
- The source of the information indicating the food safety incident
- A request for confirmation of the validity of the information
- A request for confirmation and/or (further) information on the product (s) involved, whether and where it has (they have) been imported or exported

- Epidemiologic information, bacterial strain characteristics (including whole genome sequencing data), if available
- Other relevant information specific to the event

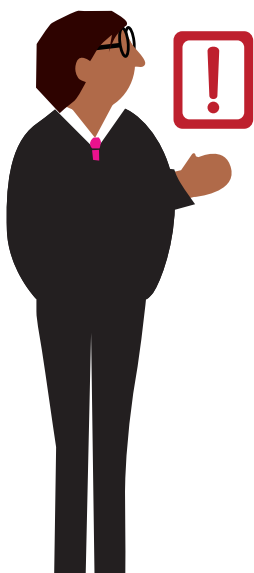
The INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point is asked to acknowledge the INFOSAN Secretariat Information Request within 24 hours. Further, the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point shall continue to communicate to the INFOSAN Secretariat timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed public health information available to it on the food safety incident. A comprehensive response to questions posed should, as far as practicable, be provided within 72 hours.

## Key Point



Information requests should be acknowledged within 24 hours and answered within 72 hours

Emails from the WHO INFOSAN Secretariat sent to the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point are also copied to the INFOSAN Focal Points in the Member State; National IHR Focal Point in the Member States; Regional IHR Office (WHO); Regional Food Safety Advisor (WHO); FAO HQ; Regional Food Safety Officer (FAO); and outbreak investigation colleagues at WHO HQ. This ensures that all communication loops are closed, and all relevant agencies and personnel have access to the same information.



### Real life example #3 : **Outbreak of Listeriosis in South Africa linked to ready-to-eat meat products**

In early December 2017, the INFOSAN Secretariat was alerted to a large outbreak (over 500 cases) of Listeriosis in South Africa not associated at that time, to a specific food product. The INFOSAN Secretariat sent an Information Request to the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point (ECP) in South Africa to seek confirmation and pertinent details to determine the possible international scope; the ECP in South Africa confirmed that the food product associated with the outbreak had not been identified. As this was the largest ever outbreak of Listeriosis ever detected, the INFOSAN Secretariat issued in December 2017, an [INFOSAN Global Alert](#) to notify all INFOSAN members.

Colleagues in South Africa worked closely with INFOSAN, WHO and partners to identify the implicated food product and share risk communication messages with the public. This close collaboration yielded the identification of the implicated product; ready-to-eat meat products manufactured in South Africa and distributed to 15 countries. Upon identification of the products and distribution patterns, the INFOSAN Secretariat shared the distribution details with the INFOSAN ECPs in the importing countries, assisted with recall and risk communication efforts, and published a second INFOSAN Global Alert in March 2018, to inform the global community.

A total of 1049 cases and 209 deaths in South Africa were reported. No illnesses in importing countries were reported.

## Non-urgent communication

To facilitate communication between countries, the INFOSAN Secretariat maintains the contact details of Emergency Contact Points and Focal Points, which are accessible on the INFOSAN Community Website<sup>9</sup>.

All INFOSAN members are encouraged to proactively contact each other if they have questions about a potential food safety issue or simply wish to share or seek information. Alternatively, INFOSAN members can post in the [Discussion Forum](#) on the INFOSAN Community Website thereby allowing all INFOSAN members the opportunity to provide assistance with a particular issue.

## 5.4 Communication from an INFOSAN member to the INFOSAN Secretariat (the process for reporting food safety incidents)

The INFOSAN Secretariat encourages members to share information (urgent and non-urgent) pertaining to a potential food safety incident or emerging issue(s).

Communication to the INFOSAN Secretariat of a potential food safety incident does not necessarily mean that this information will be shared on the INFOSAN Community Website, nor that an INFOSAN Global Alert will be issued. Rather, it allows the INFOSAN Secretariat to assess the potential food safety incident, gather more information from other stakeholders (INFOSAN members, relevant FAO/WHO programmes etc.) as needed and then determine any follow-up action. It is important to note that when a food in international trade is contaminated or implicated in an outbreak, the country of origin is always consulted before an INFOSAN Incident or Global Alert is communicated to other INFOSAN members.

For non-urgent information, the INFOSAN Community Website is an important medium for information exchange on topics that may be of interest to INFOSAN members and the INFOSAN Secretariat. For example, non-urgent communication could include; the dissemination of information pertaining to upcoming meetings or events, new or emerging technologies, questions to INFOSAN members on food safety related topics, or the sharing of information on a national outbreak of interest to the international community.

### Real life example #4 : **Sharing of non-urgent information on the INFOSAN Community Website**

The INFOSAN Secretariat works closely with INFOSAN colleagues in the United States of America (USA) to share with INFOSAN members around the globe via the [Discussion Forum](#) on the INFOSAN Community Website, information pertaining to outbreaks of foodborne illness in the USA.

Most of these outbreaks shared on the INFOSAN Community Website are restricted to the USA and have no international element. The aim of sharing information related to these outbreaks is to make INFOSAN members aware of food safety incidents in the USA, as well as to provide an opportunity for INFOSAN members to pose questions to colleagues in the USA concerning a food safety incident.



9. Detailed instructions for accessing the contact details are in the INFOSAN Community Website User Manual <https://extranet.who.int/infosan/node/112>

If a food safety incident involving imported or exported food has been identified by an INFOSAN member, pertinent information (as detailed below) should be sent to the INFOSAN Secretariat. Ideally this step should be taken at the outset of the INFOSAN member countries' own process for event assessment, analysis and decision making. This will enable the INFOSAN Secretariat to undertake a preliminary assessment and analysis of the event and facilitate communication of the information and the proposed action to the rest of the Network.

Information about food safety incidents received from different sources is sorted through a preliminary assessment made by the INFOSAN Secretariat. This assessment includes the risk factor of the food and/or pathogen or agent and associated public health impact, the real or potential international distribution of the implicated food product(s), and whether there are suspected or confirmed disease/illness cases. Once the preliminary assessment has been carried out, the INFOSAN Secretariat decides whether the incident requires intervention, and if so whether to monitor the situation, or contact the INFOSAN contact points in the country or countries concerned to seek further information, clarification or confirmation.

To assist in the effective use of resources, countries should clearly state in their public recall information if export of the affected product has occurred (see real life example 5).

If the food safety incident is assessed as a priority, and the INFOSAN Secretariat has sufficient information to inform INFOSAN members and allow them to take the necessary risk management measures, the Secretariat will contact the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points in the implicated Member States and provide them with this information.

If there is incomplete information about the food, hazard, public health aspect or international implications relating to the event, the INFOSAN Secretariat will engage the relevant INFOSAN members to seek further information to allow the INFOSAN Secretariat to make an accurate judgment as to the relevance and scope of the incident.

If the event is not of relevance to INFOSAN, or no further information is forthcoming, then no further action is taken.

An outline of the INFOSAN Secretariat's workflow process for event assessment, analysis and response is shown in Figure 3.

## Details of pertinent information to supply to the INFOSAN Secretariat

The level of detail provided by members may depend upon the urgency of the food safety incident and availability of information.

### 1. Basic details of the food safety incident

The following details should be supplied (where possible) to enable assessment to be undertaken by the INFOSAN Secretariat:

- details of the food and hazard (suspected or confirmed)
- a short summary of the food safety or foodborne disease incident
- the source of the information;
- a list of countries that have (or may have) received or exported the affected product or alternatively, clarification that distribution cannot be confirmed;

## Key Point



Do not wait until you have all the details to report an incident; early sharing of preliminary information is better than late sharing of full information

- epidemiological information;
- laboratory information (clinical or food related, including WGS data, if relevant and available);
- lot or batch identification of the affected product;
- detailed identification of the food packaging and any labelling present;
- shipping and related information, e.g. the name and contact information for the exporter, importer, consignee and shippers, invoices and shipment documentation; and
- any additional information that may be useful to assess the risk of this incident.

## 2. Consideration of criteria to assist the INFOSAN Secretariat to determine follow-up action

At this information gathering stage, the food safety incident is assessed by the INFOSAN Secretariat. To assist with this process, the notifying country should assess the event against key criteria. These criteria include assessing:

- the risk factor of the food and/or pathogen or agent and associated public health impact;
- the real or potential international distribution of the implicated food product(s);
- whether there are suspected or confirmed disease/illness cases;
- potential for effects on trade; and
- whether the event is likely to incite high media interest.

Questions to consider against these criteria are detailed in Table 1. Responses to these questions can be included in the notifying email to the INFOSAN Secretariat.

This list of criteria is not exhaustive and other factors, such as the countries' technical capabilities (e.g. laboratory, epidemiological, food safety), should also be considered. The notifying country may also wish to note whether it requires any further assistance from the INFOSAN Secretariat (for example with analysing the risk or with technical expertise).

**Table 1: Criteria for INFOSAN members to consider prior to notification of an incident to the INFOSAN Secretariat**

Criterion	Questions to consider
Risk factor and associated public health impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the public health impact of the event serious? (e.g. illness/death, high attack rate, unusually serious sequelae, required antidote or antitoxin not available)</li> <li>• is the event unusual or unexpected?</li> <li>• (e.g. is the event caused by a new or unknown pathogen/hazard, is the location, season or population affected inconsistent with past events)</li> <li>• are there vulnerable populations implicated?</li> <li>• is the food product known?</li> <li>• is it a new hazard in a known product?</li> <li>• is it new product with a known hazard?</li> </ul>
Risk of International Spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the product or ingredient imported from a country with multiple export destinations?</li> <li>• is the event linked to a food product or ingredient that has been exported through commerce or private movement, or is it likely?</li> <li>• is the food safety incident related to an international gathering?</li> <li>• Is the product or ingredient available through e-commerce?</li> </ul>
Suspected or confirmed disease/illness cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and characteristics of disease(s) (poisoning/infectious disease(s))?</li> <li>• Yes? How many? Case fatality ratio? In what populations?</li> <li>• If yes, is WGS data available? (microbes, species, serotype etc. and link to sequence identifiers in public repositories)</li> <li>• If no? How likely are disease/illness/injury cases?</li> </ul>
Risk of trade restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a border watch been implemented for a certain product or commodity?</li> <li>• Has a product been recalled?</li> <li>• Has a commodity or product been restricted from importation?</li> </ul>
Media attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the event likely to incite broad media attention?</li> <li>• Is there heightened consumer concern from real or perceived risks?</li> <li>• Has public messaging been disseminated in your country?</li> </ul>

The information referenced in **Table 1** is assessed by the INFOSAN Secretariat to determine the appropriate follow-up to each potential food safety incident.

Following each assessment, the INFOSAN Secretariat can then take the appropriate course of action:

1. After consultation with the exporting country, disseminate relevant information (product distribution details, identified hazard, importer/exporter details etc.) to INFOSAN members in the implicated countries (only countries implicated in the event will be contacted), followed by publishing a summary of this food safety incident on the INFOSAN Community Website;
2. If the food safety incident includes complex distribution or pathogen patterns, a significant number of countries, or international spread of disease is highly likely, the INFOSAN Secretariat will issue an INFOSAN Global Alert, notifying all INFOSAN members of the food safety incident, and providing them with the relevant information. The INFOSAN Secretariat will work with the countries involved to prepare an INFOSAN Global Alert; or
3. No action taken but the potential international implications of the food safety incident will continue to be monitored.



## 5.4.1 When to notify the INFOSAN Secretariat?

Network members may be unsure whether to notify the INFOSAN Secretariat of a food safety incident, and if so, when they should notify. It is always preferable to notify the INFOSAN Secretariat of an issue as early as possible, however, due to the nature of such incidents often only incomplete information can be shared in the first instance. **The sharing of incomplete information is preferable to not sharing any information at all.**

### Key Point



The sharing of incomplete information is preferable to not sharing any information at all

When sharing information through the network, a minimum level of detail is expected. This includes the food and hazard, the name of the country of origin and/or importing and exporting countries of the product<sup>10</sup>. This preliminary information may take the form of a 'heads up' which may help provide an early warning to other countries to be aware of a potential food safety incident or emerging issue.

Communication of food safety incidents with an associated public health impact is also critical under the IHR (2005). The National IHR Focal Point is required to notify the WHO within 24 hours of receipt of evidence of a public health risk that may cause international disease spread through contaminated food which may be imported or exported. Notifying via INFOSAN meets this obligation for food related issues.

## 5.4.2 How to notify the INFOSAN Secretariat?

### Urgent communication

To report a food related incident to the INFOSAN Secretariat, the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point or INFOSAN Focal Points should directly contact the INFOSAN Secretariat by e-mail, telephone or via the INFOSAN Community Website:

Email: [emergencyinfosan@who.int](mailto:emergencyinfosan@who.int)

Phone: + 41 79 832 38 35 (24/7)

Website: <https://extranet.who.int/infosan/>

### Non-urgent communication

For non-urgent enquiries, the INFOSAN Secretariat can be contacted by INFOSAN members using the following email address: [infosan@who.int](mailto:infosan@who.int). This should be used for updating contact information, seeking technical advice, or any other inquiries. Information about non-urgent international food recalls (e.g. for a compliance-related issue) can also be sent to the Secretariat for dissemination of information to the Emergency Contact Point in relevant importing countries for their information.

If a country would like to communicate general (non-urgent) information, or pose questions to a broader audience, i.e. to all members of the Network, they are encouraged to use the 'Discussion Forum' function on the INFOSAN Community Website.

10. Full details of the type of information required for sharing with the Network is given on the INFOSAN Community Website under 'Report Food Safety Incident to the INFOSAN Secretariat'.



Real life example #5 : The New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries includes international distribution information in their public recall notifications

## Woolworths brand Crunchy Natural Almonds

8 August 2019: Woolworths New Zealand Ltd is recalling a specific batch of its Woolworths brand Crunchy Natural Almonds as testing has identified toxins above acceptable levels.



Woolworths brand Crunchy Natural Almonds (225g)

Link to recall:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-recalls/recalled-food-products/woolworths-brand-crunchy-natural-almonds/>

Product identification	
Product type	Raw almonds
Name of product (size)	Woolworths brand Crunchy Natural Almonds (225g)
Date marking	Best before 02 JAN 20
Package size and description	The product is sold in 225g plastic containers.
Distribution	The product is imported from Australia. ←
	The product is sold in Countdown supermarkets nationwide. ←
	The product has not been exported. ←
Notes	This recall does not affect any other Woolworths brand products.

### Consumer advice

The recall is about specific toxins called aflatoxins. Aflatoxins are naturally occurring in many food products and are produced by a group of moulds that grow on foods produced in hot and tropical climates. Levels of aflatoxin in the New Zealand diet are usually very low and don't represent a health risk, however, consumption of food products with increased levels of aflatoxin over a continuous period of time can be harmful.

Affected product should not be consumed. If you have consumed any of this product and have any concerns about your health, seek medical advice.

Customers should return the product to their retailer for a full refund.

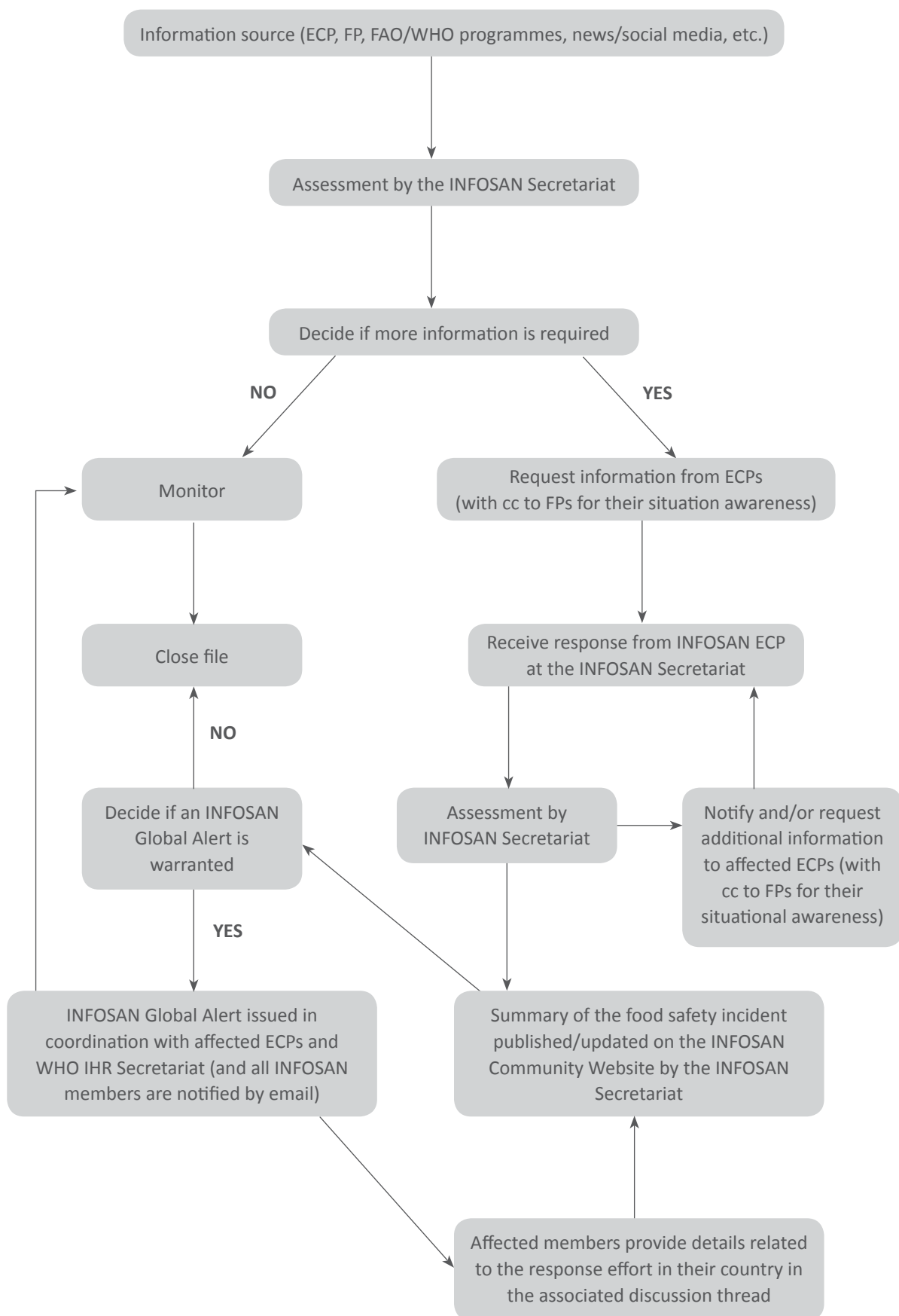
### Who to contact

If you have questions, contact Woolworths New Zealand Ltd:

- Phone: 0800 40 40 40
- Address: 80 Favona Rd, Mangere, Auckland.



Figure 3: Workflow for INFOSAN event assessment, analysis and response



## Appendix 1: Official Letter of Designation of INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point

<<Government Agency>>

<<Name>>

<<Mailing Address>>

<<Email>>

<<Phone Number>>

INFOSAN Secretariat  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva  
Switzerland

### Official Designation of INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point

<<Date>>

Dear INFOSAN Secretariat

On behalf of <<Government Agency>> I hereby officially designate << Name of Contact>> as the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point for <<Name of Country>>.

The contact details are as follows:

<<Name>>

<<Position>>

<<Agency>>

<<Telephone>>

<<Mobile>>

<<Email>>

<<Mailing Address>>

The designate agrees to register on the INFOSAN Community Website and to adhere to the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the INFOSAN Members' Guide, included below for ease of reference:

- Reports urgent food safety events of potential international significance to the INFOSAN Secretariat
- Responds to 'Information Requests' from the INFOSAN Secretariat including the verification and assessment of events by providing all necessary information, and reviews INFOSAN Alert messages pertaining to an event in their country
- Requests international assistance through the INFOSAN Secretariat to respond to a food safety event or emergency, as necessary
- Takes action on information provided by the INFOSAN Secretariat including INFOSAN Alerts, Notices and food recall information and disseminates this accordingly to competent authorities
- Collaborates with their National IHR Focal Point on food safety events that fall under the IHR
- Engages in sharing information with the INFOSAN Secretariat and other members on food safety issues that may be relevant at the international level and beneficial to all members, such as, but not limited to: risk assessments on emerging hazards, lessons learnt, identified good practices, etc.
- Disseminates INFOSAN Information Notes, FAO/WHO guidelines, and other important food safety information from INFOSAN within their agency, as appropriate
- Provides comments to INFOSAN on information products disseminated to the Network
- Ensures the confidentiality of information shared within the network

Signed,

<< signing government official>>

## Appendix 2: Official Letter of Designation of INFOSAN Focal Point

<<Government Agency>>

<<Name>>

<<Mailing Address>>

<<Email>>

<<Phone Number>>

INFOSAN Secretariat  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva  
Switzerland

### Official Designation of INFOSAN Focal Point

<<Date>>

Dear INFOSAN Secretariat

On behalf of <<Government Agency>> I hereby officially designate << Name of Contact>>  
as an INFOSAN Focal Point for <<Name of Country>>.

The contact details are as follows:

<<Name>>

<<Position>>

<<Agency>>

<<Telephone>>

<<Mobile>>

<<Email>>

<<Mailing Address>>

The designate agrees to register on the INFOSAN Community Website and to undertake the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the INFOSAN Members' Guide, included below for ease of reference:

- Collaborates with and provide technical support to the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point on food safety events and emergencies involving their respective agency
- Engages in sharing information with the INFOSAN Secretariat and other members on food safety issues that may be relevant at the international level and beneficial to all members, such as, but not limited to: risk assessments on emerging hazards, lessons learnt, identified good practices, etc.
- Disseminates INFOSAN Information Notes, FAO/WHO guidelines, and other important food safety information from INFOSAN within their agency, as appropriate
- Provides comments to INFOSAN on information products disseminated to the Network
- Collaborates with their National IHR Focal Point on food safety events that fall under the IHR

Signed,

<< signing government official>>



