

## Case study

Polar Ice is a leading dry ice manufacturing company based in Portarlinton, Co. Laois, with depots in Dublin, Cork, and Armagh. The company has specialised in dry ice for over 24 years and offers a range of temperature-control solutions for Ireland's leading Pharma, Medical, Food Processing, Agricultural, and Aviation sectors – all of which value an accredited supplier who can offer food-grade manufacturing.



### **Polar Ice** (Certified by SAI Global Assurance Services Ltd in 2020).

Achieves Highest Rating for BRCGS Food Safety Certification.

**Denise Ryan – Operations & Transport Manager at Polar Ice Ltd talks through the company's journey to Certification:**

#### **Why did you decide to become certified, and why did you choose BRCGS?**

We wanted to operate to the highest standards, to do it right as we branched into a new market segment to supply food processors. We're manufacturing a product that is going into the food chain, there's no room for error and it's essential to ensure that we're compliant every step of the way.

We are regularly audited by customers and by achieving certification with BRCGS we know that we meet each and every requirement for Quality Assurance, and we are proud to bring customers onsite to tour our production facility.

#### **How did you implement the Standard?**

We hired a Technical Consultant to help us implement the standard. We are a small team of people with some of us already multi-tasking across departments, so we are busy wearing many hats. Rather than getting a team member trained up in the standard, we wanted to be guided by an expert as we were starting from scratch. We were also making a substantial financial investment in the upgrading of our production facility and we wanted to ensure we got it right from the start. We found a wonderful consultant who worked with us from the start and she has been an integral part of our team. In fact, our Quality Consultant has been a vital part of our female-led team which includes our CEO, Operations & Transport Manager, and Brand Manager.

#### **What benefits has your company experienced in being compliant and gaining certification?**

Certification has been extremely valuable to our company; it sets us apart from our competitors and

**THE COMPANY HAS SPECIALISED IN DRY ICE FOR OVER 24 YEARS**

# depots in Dublin, Cork, and Armagh

established in  
**1996**



provides assurance to our customers that we operate to the highest standards. It has opened up new markets for us and we now supply the food processing industry, confident that we have all the correct systems in place, ensuring a legal and safe product.

## **Do you have any tips for sites who are thinking about implementing the Standard?**

We would recommend having a person who specializes in the standard to help with the implementation of putting the systems in place. We found an absolute gem of a consultant who has extensive experience in the standard. They have seen what works well in the industry and are best placed to guide a new team on how to get it right.

## **What were the most significant changes and challenges you faced to meet the requirements?**

We invested over €500k in our state-of-the-art production facility as part of the changes we needed to make to meet the BRCGS standards. We also invested in a specialist consultant to help us implement the changes we needed to make to meet those standards. It took some time, but we achieved AA grade and have maintained that standard with every audit since we began this journey with the BRCGS.

## **What problems or issues has BRCGS certification helped you address?**

We went on this journey as some of our food customers who use dry ice in their process asked us would we consider becoming BRCGS certified.

There is no other company in Ireland or the UK that is BRCGS certified in our industry, so it sets us apart from our competitors with an amazing standard in place that keeps us all focused in every department.

## **How do you demonstrate food safety culture?**

The Culture in Polar Ice has always been a positive one, staying above the line, we work as a team, and foster a 'we can do this' approach. We look out for each other and promote the message that it's about doing the right thing all the time, even when no one is watching. The BRCGS culture requires monitoring, documenting, and reporting. The right culture is an integral building block of our business for legality, quality, and our people.

## **How was your experience with SAI Global and the remote audit process?**

The toughest part of the remote audit was the two solid days in front of the screen, it was quite intense. However, it was our third virtual audit following the FTA and ISO, so we had some experience with it this year. We were thrilled to receive a positive result following the audit and delighted we could proceed with it remotely rather than have to postpone due to the risks associated with the Covid-19 in Q4 2020.

