

PCI Plant Certification is granted upon meeting the requirements of the program (PCI Policy 20) and the applicable quality standard(s). Certification is maintained by successfully completing two unannounced audits throughout the year and the associated annual certification renewal requirements. PCI's continuing certification cycle includes PCI's verification that the plant continues to take appropriate actions to address or resolve any nonconformances observed by PCI's Plant Quality Auditor. Clients must make all necessary arrangements for the audits to be carried out, including notice to PCI of any plant closures.

PCI safeguards the confidentiality of the information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities at all levels of its structure, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf. Personnel, including any committee members, contractors, personnel of external bodies, or individuals acting on PCI's behalf, shall keep confidential all information obtained or created during the performance of the Plant Certification Program activities. Individual grades and the contents of audit reports shall be kept in strict confidence among the following individuals:

- the Client
- the PCI Director of Quality Programs
- the Plant Certification Committee Chairperson
- members of the Certification Appeal Board, if required

The Client shall not release its grades or the audit report. If requested to do so, the Client shall direct the inquiry and their approval for the request to the PCI Director of Quality Programs. If the release of audit report information is unavoidable, and is agreed upon by PCI and the Client, the PCI Director of Quality Programs will include a description of the auditing process, the nature of the audit report, and a caution about evaluating the report observations out of context. In addition, a written confidentiality agreement shall be obtained from the party requesting the information.

PCI maintains a publicly-accessible directory of certified plants, their location, and scope of certification. PCI will inform the Client in advance of any other information PCI intends to place in the public domain. All other information, except for information made publicly available by the Client, shall be considered confidential. PCI will not disclose information about a particular plant or individual to a third party without the written consent of the Client or individual concerned. Where PCI is required by law to release confidential information to a third party, the Client or individual concerned shall be notified in advance of the information to be provided, unless regulated otherwise by law.

Upon request, PCI discloses nonconfidential information about the conclusions of specific audits to specific interested parties (i.e. audits in response to complaints). Information provided by PCI to any client or to the marketplace, including advertising, shall be accurate and not misleading. PCI makes information about granted, suspended, and withdrawn certifications publicly available, and upon request, will confirm the validity of a given certification.

Information is readily available to all PCI clients regarding the rights and responsibilities, according to PCI's requirements, of Certified Clients when making reference to their certifications in communications of any kind, and regarding the procedures for handling complaints and appeals.