

What is HACCP?

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HACCP (pronounced "Hassip") is a difficult name for a simplified and effective way to ensure food safety.

HACCP stands for **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point** system. It allows you to predict potential risks to food safety and to prevent them before they happen. By using HACCP, food facilities will no longer rely (as is often the case) on external inspections for identification of food safety hazards and their subsequent correction.

How Will HACCP Help You?

Food safety is a key to good business. Selling unsafe food can cause illness, lost sales, and lost customers.

Keeping foods **safe** not only means jobs and happy customers, but also gives a competitive edge to firms that have taken food safety one step further.

Identification of potential problems allows for their correction before they happen. The records produced in implementing HACCP increases workers awareness of food safety. This in turn will lead to a more consistent handling of food, improved food quality, and improved pride in their work.

Is HACCP New?

HACCP was developed in the 1960s and has since been used by many food companies. HACCP has been universally acknowledged by regulatory agencies as the one food safety program that works. The day when HACCP is made mandatory for all levels of food processing is fast approaching.

HACCP Requires Seven Steps

Step 1

Identify Potential Food Safety Hazards

A hazard is any biological, chemical or physical food property that may cause a health risk to your customers. To complete a hazard analysis, you determine the potential food safety risks at each stage of the process. Identified hazards will vary according to the type of food preparation and from plant-to-plant even though they may be involved in the same process.

Step 2

Determine the *Critical Control Points* (CCP)

A CCP is a stage or step of the process where identified hazards can and must be controlled (later stages won't correct these safety problems if they are not controlled here). Examples of CCP's might include:

- cooking, reheating and hot-holding stages
- cooling of hot foods, chilled storage and display
- receiving, thawing, mixing ingredients

Step 3

Set Limits To Control Potential Problems

Once a CCP is identified, **critical limits** or predetermined operating conditions that will reduce or eliminate potential hazards must be decided upon.

Examples of critical limits might include:

- purchasing specifications
- minimum cooking times and temperatures, reheating and hot-holding temperatures
- chilling and chilled storage times, temperatures and handling practices

Step 4

Set Up Methods To Monitor Limits

Now that limits are set, it's important to set up methods to insure they are followed. This may include:

- visual and sensory observations
- chemical measurements (pH, salt content or water activity)
- physical measurements (time and temperature)

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Step 5

Set Up Corrective Actions To Handle Control Problems

Problems occur when critical limits are not met. Procedures or **corrective actions** must be in place to deal immediately with such failures. Examples of corrective actions might include:

- rejecting products
- extending cooling time or reheating to the proper temperature
- adjusting a cooler's thermostat

Step 6

Keep Records and Make Routine Reviews To Insure Controls Work

Records should be available to indicate to management and government inspectors that foods and ingredients were properly evaluated, handled and processed.

Step 7

Conduct Periodic Checks To Make Sure The HACCP System Works

Management should conduct an in-depth audit at least once a year and when new products, new recipes, or new processes are introduced.

*For further information
please contact your Fish
Safety Officer 604.707.2458
or your local Health Authority*