

Keep Food Safe! Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)

Hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) is a preventive management system used to address food safety throughout the supply chain.

HACCP applies to all steps within the supply chain, including everything from production to distribution. It's outlined by the FDA for all food production and manufacturing.



Foodborne illness is a common and costly – yet preventable – public health problem. The U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates roughly 1 in 6 Americans will get sick, and 3,000 will die due to foodborne diseases. The Food and Drug Association (FDA) estimates around 3% of all food poisoning cases lead to secondary long-term illnesses such as arthritis, kidney failure, and meningitis.

There are seven basic HACCP principles:

Principle 1. Conduct a Hazard Analysis

Investigate your process to identify where significant hazards to food safety are likely to occur.

Principle 2. Identify Critical Control Points

Critical control points are steps in your process at which control measures can be implemented and hazards can be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to acceptable levels.

Critical control points are established when a hazard cannot be prevented at a later stage. There's no requirement for a set number of control points. Multiple hazards may be controlled with one control point or a single hazard controlled with several.

Principle 3. Establish Critical Limits

Control limits represent a minimum or maximum level of acceptance for items such as temperature, pH levels, and visual appearance. Scientific and regulatory standards offer guidance for these.

Principle 4. Monitor Critical Control Points

Monitoring is essential to the effectiveness of your HACCP plan. It can consist of manual or automatic measurements and observations to confirm critical limits are being met. It must cover limits for each critical control point. Ideally, you should use some kind of alarm system for when a critical limit is close to failing.

Principle 5. Establish Corrective Actions

When a deviation at a critical control point occurs, corrective actions must be taken. A predetermined response plan should be established to prevent, eliminate, or reduce any hazard to an acceptable level if a control point fails. It's imperative to act swiftly to ensure potentially hazardous food isn't released.

continued...

Keep Food Safe! Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)

Principle 6. Establish Verification Procedures

Annually, or when there are changes in production, you need to review and verify if all established steps in your process are operating according to the plan. This may include a review of your records, machine maintenance, or checking that measures have their intended effect. Consider third-party inspections to audit your processes. Commonly-used companies include NFS International, AIB International, Siliker, and SQF. Your HACCP actions must be effective to keep your food and customers safe.

Principle 7. Establish Record Keeping and Documentation Procedures

Lastly, it's important to maintain and be able to provide comprehensive documentation of your safety plan. These records may help you troubleshoot your process in the future and safeguard you from any regulatory compliance issues as they may arise.

Additional Food Safety Controls to Consider:

- USDA/FDA inspector on site regularly
- Quality control of raw materials
- Packaging
- Labeling/relabeling
- Product turnover rate
- Date stamped/expiration dates
- Recall program in place and practiced annually
- Product traceable
- Records retained and for how long
- Sanitation procedures
- Refrigeration controls
- Employee hygiene
- Pest control
- Allergen controls

If you have questions or need help implementing a HACCP preventive management system, please contact a local West Bend Mutual Insurance loss control consultant.