7 HACCP STEPS TO SAFER FOOD PRACTICES

THAT ALSO SAVE MONEY!

YOUR FOOD SAFETY GUIDE

A Health Inspector's job is to review how foodservice operators store, prepare and handle the food they serve to protect the health of the general public. The review of these processes aims to reduce the risks that commercial kitchens could serve contaminated food which would make us all sick. If you've ever had food poisoning, you'll appreciate the role of the Health Inspector.

Yet a visit from the Health Inspector can strike a sense of fear for some foodservice operators. No business wants to bear fines for non-compliance or the cost of potentially risking the health of the general public. In many cases it's unlikely a business will survive such an incident.

To reduce these risks, foodservice businesses and commercial kitchen operators need to follow the 7 principles of a HACCP (pronounced 'hass-up') food safety program and be able to demonstrate this to the Health Inspector to be compliant and keep them on-side.

So, what's up with HACCP? HACCP stands for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points', a globally recognised system that outlines the proper food safety practices by identifying risks or hazards during food production that may cause food contamination leading to food-borne illnesses for diners.

The Three Major Risks in Food Handling are:

1) Time + Temperature Abuse

2) Cross Contamination

3) Poor Personal Hygiene

HACCP SYSTEM

Put simply the HACCP system supports safer food production by:

- **Identifying risks and hazards where things can go wrong**
- **Putting plans in place to prevent or control these**
- **Having records and documentation to validate HACCP compliance**

If a foodservice business adheres to HACCP practices there's no need to worry. HACCP compliance demonstrates a commitment to safer food handling practices by actively managing the risks and hazards to prevent the likelihood of serving contaminated food which will ensure a green tick from the Health Inspector!

The 7 steps of a HACCP management plan provide a cost-effective system for the control of food safety through receipt, preparation, storage and distribution of ingredients through to service to the customer. Each of the 7 steps and how they support HACCP is explained in detail here.

The benefits of having a HACCP system in place is that it helps foodservice operators reduce food budgets by not only reducing food waste but prevents the risks of serving contaminated food to customers.

To prepare and serve food safely to every customer, proper food safety practices must be in place and followed at every critical control point in the kitchen, from receiving to cleaning.

STORAGE

Storing food safely reduces spoilage and saves on food costs

The greatest challenge is serving food that is both great tasting and safe. When it's reported that food can be up to 35% of a restaurants costs, food waste caused by spoilage or contamination impacts a restaurants profitability. Up to 10% of the food purchased by restaurants never makes it to the table due to poor storage.

- Food needs to be stored at the correct temperatures and the right locations.
- Store products 150mm off the floor.
- Freezers should be min - 18°C, Coolrooms 5°C
- Regularly check thermostat of all refrigerated or freezer storage areas or equipment.
- Unpack food immediately and store separately in food-grade containers to minimise any cross-contamination.
- Utilise blast chilling if rapid cooling is required to maximise shelf life.
- Avoid storing foods that can react in metal containers.
- Avoid using poor quality products like old takeaway or ice-cream containers than can crack or stain.
- Specific food containers like the range from Cambro are ideal as the product and quality is always visible, won't stain or react to the contents.
- Ensure stored food is covered with secure lids to reduce risk of spillage or bacterial contamination.
- Use food-safety labelling to identify produce and use-by dates.
- Use colander inserts to help with moisture drainage when storing sliced tomatoes, raw fish or meats.
- Store bulk products in delivery bins or on dunnage racks to keep dry and off the ground away from pests.

Once food is cooked, there's further safety management considerations to help prevent spoilage. This includes managing the temperatures of how the food is held and recording these for HACCP compliance. This validates that food has not been kept outside safe temperature zones and is safe for consumption.

• If using cook chill techniques, ensure chilling is done rapidly with a blast chiller – like those from Tecnomac – that will cool food safely to safe temperatures in the required time.

• For bringing food back to temperature, the Rational SelfCookingCenter® can reheat and hold the food at safe temperatures.

• For longer holding of temperature controlled food, cook and hold ovens or holding units like those from Alto Shaam also offer precise temperature control.

• When it comes to transporting food, insulated food carriers with hot or cold thermal inserts will help maintain safe temperatures.

• Using these types of carriers also eliminates spoilage caused by contact from ice or possible bacterial contamination.

• Covering pans with secure lids – instead of foil or cling wrap – protects contents to reduce spoilage and extends the shelf life of products.

By using these practices, it is much more likely that cooked food will end up on the diner's table instead of the bin and wasting money. Managing food holding this way also ensures the Critical Control Points of HACCP are being monitored and temperature data recorded to validate the HACCP program.

STORE FOOD SAFELY TO AVOID CROSS CONTAMINATION

Inferior storage equipment and poor cool room layouts are a major risk to cross contamination of food by biological, chemical or physical contaminants which can all lead to non-compliance.

The HACCP system is focused on identifying these type of hazards and risks so by implementing measures to control them, the risks of cross contamination can be prevented.

• All food should be covered with secure lids to prevent physical contamination.

• Raw and cooked food should always be stored separately to prevent biological contamination.

• Review cool room layouts so that food requiring lowest temperatures is furthest away from the door (back) and those with greater tolerance at the front to help extend shelf life.

• Separate odour generating produce like onions and pears away from leafy greens which can absorb these odours.

• Separate produce that can generate ethylene gas (this helps food ripen) like avocadoes and apples away from broccoli and bananas which can be chemically contaminated by ethylene gas at low temperatures.

• Keep all bulk food off the floor on dunnage racks away from pests and chemical contaminants in cleaning products.

• Use rust free shelving that eliminates physical contamination from rust or pieces of broken metal shelving.

• Use shelf plates that are easy to clean, even in the dishwasher, to reduce risk of bacterial contamination.

• Clean, sanitise and store serving cutlery, crockery and glassware in covered racks to avoid bacterial or chemical contaminants causing cross contamination during serving. No one wants a side of dust, dirt or E. coli with their tasty meal!

As a world leading provider of safe foodservice solutions, check out Cambro's range of storage containers and shelving solutions that will help eliminate the risks from these hazards.

Cambro's range are also designed to help extend the shelf life of food which delivers even further savings on food costs.

MINIMISE FOOD HANDLING REDUCES RISKS OF CONTAMINATION

Reducing the amount of food handling is a hazard control that helps reduce risks of contamination. Taking steps to minimise the physical handling of food during production and serving further supports compliance with HACCP.

• Ensure staff are trained on safe food handling techniques.

• Select multipurpose containers like bulk production pans and lids that can go from the cool room, to the oven, to a holding cabinet and then to the servery.

• Store bulk goods in tubs and bins with a scoop for serving.

• Use containers with sliding lids or flip lids to ensure quick access to food and risk of contamination.

• Use food grade labels and clear storage containers so produce is always visible without having to be handled.

• Prep food in bulk qualities and store in containers that will prolong shelf life either with secure lids to eliminate oxygen or colander inserts to drain liquid.

THE COST SAVING BENEFITS OF HACCP

HACCP is a sensible, safe and systematic approach to store, prepare and serve quality food by taking a preventative approach to reducing risks during food production. A HACCP plan delivers cost saving benefits to foodservice operators by:

• Reducing the spend required on food by minimising spoilage and food waste.
• Helping to keep the Health Inspector on side and eliminate the risk of fines for non-compliance.
• Preventing the risk of making customers sick which can lead to hefty legal bills.

When developing HACCP safety management plans, it would be worth considering what new foodservice equipment and products are available to help streamline and simplify HACCP compliance. At the same time, you might be surprised how such equipment could improve the productivity, yield and profitability for a foodservice business.

Comcater has a full range of products and solutions that will help meeting your HACCP obligations easier. We'd love to discuss your specific needs and some ideal products solutions.

THE 7 STEPS OF HACCP

All foodservice operations need to follow the 7 steps of HACCP to ensure safer food production. HACCP is pronounced "hass-up" and is an abbreviation for 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points'. HACCP is a food safety management system that identifies and control hazards in food production. It encourages and regulates safe food practices to mitigate and control the risks of contamination from microbiological, chemical and physical contaminants in food.

The complexity of HACCP management plans will vary across operations. However, these 7 steps are the common approach that need to be applied. A HACCP management plan that can be validated to demonstrate a business's HACCP compliance is an invaluable tool that may also provide some protection in worst case scenarios involving legal action.

1. HAZARD ANALYSIS - KNOW WHAT CAN GO WRONG

Identify the potential hazards that could occur in the food production process.

- Bacterial growth (eg. Salmonella) in cooked meat due to cross contamination with raw meat - (biological hazard)
- Contamination of uncovered food by cleaning chemicals (chemical hazard)
- Foreign matter (piece of plastic) falling into uncovered food (physical hazard).

2. IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS (CCPS)

Assess the critical points in the process where these hazards could occur and what can be done to prevent or control them

- Avoid cross-contamination of raw and cooked goods in cool rooms by smarter cool room layouts using food grade containers with secured lids.
- Install rust-proof shelving in cool rooms to limit bacterial growth, clean shelving regularly.
- Minimise food handling and risk of contamination by keeping food in clear containers with secured lids.

3. SET CRITICAL LIMITS FOR CCPS: KNOW WHEN IT CAN GO WRONG

Establish the critical limit for each CCP in accordance with food safety regulations that would require corrective action.

• Immediately store and chill delivered food in secure containers to maintain safe temperatures ranges.
• Ensure there is a set period of time for cooking and to what temperature to kill any bacteria.
• Regularly clean and sanitise shelving and storage containers.

4. MONITORING CCP AND CRITICAL LIMITS: CHECK TO SEE AND KNOW IF IT HAS GONE WRONG

The way each CCP is monitored so that it remains within its limit using materials or devices that can provide measurable data.

• Invest in foodservice equipment that can maintain accurate temperatures and/or record temperature data both for storage, preparation and holding.
• Use a blast chiller to rapidly cool food to safe temperatures.

5. ESTABLISH CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: WHAT YOU DO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Corrective actions must be in place to ensure no public health hazard occurs if monitoring identifies a CCP is not within its limit.

• Discard any food that has potentially been contaminated
• Discard any food stored outside safe temperature range
• If in doubt, throw it out!

6. ENSURE RECORDKEEPING PROCEDURES: RECORDING WHAT'S BEEN DONE

Keep records of the HACCP system is in place by documenting CCP monitoring process, verification activities and deviation records of corrective actions

• Download data from smart equipment that records temperature.
• Manage food inventory by affixing food-grade labels that list product and use by dates.
• Microbiological sample of cooked food samples.

7. HACCP VERIFICATION PROCEDURES: ESTABLISHING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PLAN OF THESE PROCESSES

The creation of the food safety management plan will demonstrate the HACCP system is in place and validate it's working properly.

• Information like cooking temperatures and methods for different items, delivery schedules, inventory management or cleaning records are recorded and documented for regular review.

• Document regular hazard analysis, reviews of CCP and their limits as well as recording corrective actions.

We hope you found the HACCP guide valuable in explaining how safer food practices can actually save businesses on food budgets by reducing food waste.

If food waste is hurting the bottom line, maybe it's worth considering improving food storage options?

CONTACT A CAMBRO SPECIALIST NOW

COMCATER
- foodservice equipment