

## **HACCP: Questions and Answers**

### **What is HACCP?**

HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. It is a system that can help keep food safe in your facility from receiving to serving.

### **Why is HACCP important?**

HACCP is important because it helps prevent problems before they happen. If problems do occur, HACCP allows for immediate action to correct the problem.

A HACCP plan is a written document that tells employees exactly how to manage potentially hazardous foods and what actions to take if a problem arises.

HACCP requires temperature documentation that serves as proof of correct temperatures if there is an investigation of a foodborne illness at your facility.

### **Does my facility need a HACCP plan?**

County ordinance requires all high-risk food facilities to have a HACCP plan.

A facility is high-risk if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

-Cooling of potentially hazardous foods. (*This not only includes leftovers that will be reheated, but also items such as meat sauces that are made in advance or foods that are hot only during preparation like potato salad.*) Examples of some potentially hazardous foods include: beef, pork, lamb, poultry, fish and seafood, eggs, dairy products, cut melons, garlic and oil mixtures, tofu/soy-protein foods, cooked rice or beans, baked or boiled potatoes, sprouts, etc.

-Preparation and holding hot or cold potentially hazardous foods for more than 12 hours before serving. Examples are cooking and holding roast beef over night to serve the following day or preparing potato salad one day in advance.

-Handling of raw ingredients through multiple processes. For example, purchase of a whole chicken to be cut, breaded, fried, served, cooled, and reheated.

-Reheating of potentially hazardous foods that have been previously cooked and cooled.

-Catering of potentially hazardous meals

-Serving of at-risk individuals such as in nursing homes or hospitals

### **How do I get started on my HACCP plan?**

First you can make a list of standard operating procedures (SOPs) to include with your plan. Many plans include SOPs for general sanitation, personal hygiene, thawing, and receiving and storage of cold food.

## Next you must follow the 7 basic steps of HACCP:

1. **Perform a Hazard Analysis:** Make a list of all potentially hazardous foods in your facility. A good place to start is with your menu, recipes, and/or ingredient lists. Determine where hazards can occur such as during preparation or cooking.
2. **Determine Critical Control Points (CCPs):** Once you have decided which foods are potentially hazardous and where hazards may occur, identify the steps where a hazard can be controlled. The steps where hazards can be controlled are called control points. If it is the last step where you can take action to prevent a hazard, it is called a **critical control point** or **CCP**. \*It is often useful to use numbered steps or flow charts.

\*Examples of common **CCPs** include cooking, cooling, and holding. For example, we know that raw chicken is potentially hazardous. While extra care is needed during preparation to prevent cross-contamination, proper cooking is essential to prevent foodborne illness. Therefore, preparation is a control point, but cooking is a **critical control point**.

3. **Determine Critical Limits:** Once you have determined the CCPs for potentially hazardous foods in your facility, you need to establish **critical limits**. Critical limits are the minimum and maximum limits that the CCP must meet to control or eliminate hazards.

For example, we have determined that cooking is a CCP for chicken. Our critical limit for cooking is a minimum of 165° F for 15 seconds. If the chicken is cooled, this is another CCP. The critical limits are to cool from 140° F to 70° F within 2 hours, and then to 41° F or lower within 4 additional hours.

*\*Critical limits must meet the Food Code Standards. Your plan can exceed those standards. For instance, your plan may state that you will fry chicken to a final cooking temperature of 180° F even though the Code states only a minimum of 165° F is required. You must follow what is stated in your plan.*

4. **Monitor Critical Control Points:** Monitoring lets you know that your critical limits are being met. For example, checking the final cooking temperature of chicken is the only way to tell if the chicken has met the critical limit of 165° F.
5. **Taking Corrective Action:** In your HACCP plan, you must identify what immediate **corrective actions** will be taken when food does not meet a critical limit.

For example, if the chicken does not reach a minimum of 70° F within 2 hours of the start of cool down, it may be reheated one time to 165° F or higher and the cool down process is restarted.

6. **Record Keeping and Documentation:** Consistent and proper documentation serves as proof that your plan is being followed. Examples include: time-temperature logs, calibration records, documentation of corrective actions taken, etc. Initials or signatures of those responsible for monitoring is recommended.
7. **Verify That The System Works:** Your HACCP plan should include a **verification statement** that tells how you will make sure that the system is working. Examples include but are not limited to: weekly reviewing of temperature monitoring charts for inconsistencies/errors, annual training of all employees, weekly thermometer calibration, quarterly cool down verification, self-inspections, HACCP plan revisions.

\*We recommend putting your HACCP plan in a binder with page protectors.

## **Where Can I Get More Information or Help With My HACCP Plan?**

TCHD provides additional written material and handouts on HACCP. Individualized training is also available. **\*Please bring in at least a rough draft of your HACCP plan when you submit your permit application or floor plan.** TCHD will work with you on an individualized basis until your plan is approved.

### **Example of one acceptable format for an item in a HACCP plan:**

#### **Roast Turkey**

##### Ingredients:

1 Whole turkey, 12lb  
Salt to taste  
Pepper to taste

\*Follow SOPs for General Sanitation and Personal Hygiene  
\*Follow SOPs for Receiving and Storage of Cold Foods

##### Preparation:

Preheat roasting oven to 450° F  
Thoroughly wash and rinse turkey  
Season the outside of turkey with salt and pepper  
Place turkey on rack in roasting oven

##### Cooking: CCP

Roast turkey at 425° F for 15 minutes  
Reduce heat to 350° F and continue cooking for 3 hours  
**Critical Limit: Cook to a minimum internal temperature of 165° F  
(CA: Continue cooking until internal temperature of 165° F is reached)**  
Check and document the final cooking temperature

##### Hot Holding: CCP

Slice the turkey  
**Critical Limit: Hold the turkey on the steam table at 140° F or above**  
Check and document the temperature every 2 hours  
**(CA: If the temperature drops below 140° F, rapidly reheat to 165° F or above one time only.  
Discard if product is below 140° F for longer than 2 hours)**

##### Cooling: CCP

Place the turkey in a single layer in a shallow metal pan in cooler or ice bath  
Loosely cover the pan  
Label with the date and time of the onset of cool down  
**Critical Limit: Cool the turkey as described above from 140° F to 70° F in 2 hours and from 70° F to 41° F in 4 additional hours**  
**(CA: If the product is not going to reach 70° F in the first 2 hours, rapidly reheat to 165° F or above once and begin cool down process again. Discard if product is below 140° F for longer than 2 hours.)**

##### Reheating: CCP

**Critical Limit: Rapidly reheat product to 165° F or above**  
**(CA: Discard product if it has not reached 165° F or above within 2 hours)**