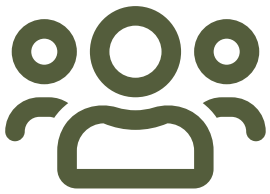
# The HACCP System: Simplified

## Step 1: Create a HACCP Team

- The HACCP team are responsible for carrying out the 12 steps
- It should include members from each level of the business
- Each member should receive HACCP Level 2 training
- It's useful for at least one member to be HACCP Level 3 trained



## Step 2: Describe your products and ingredients (make a list)

- This helps to identify the hazards faced by your consumers
- The list must include the following for each product* you offer:
    - Product name
    - All ingredients used to make it
    - Processing methods used
    - Preservation methods used
    - Packaging and storage requirements
    - Shelf-life
    - Necessary allergen information
    - Legal requirements it complies with
    - Target consumer

**If your organisation produces many food items, products can be grouped into categories – such as "raw meat" – and the categories can be described instead of the individual products.*

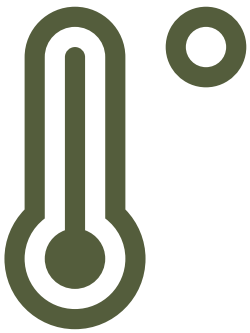
## Step 3: Identify and record who might be at risk (make a list)

- Identify how a product will be used (e.g. potatoes used to make chips, cardboard used for packaging)
- Identify who the products may be consumed by
- Consider if products will be unsafe to consume at any point (e.g. if left out of fridge)
- Consider safeguarding measures for anyone who might be "at risk" (e.g. warning labels for allergens)

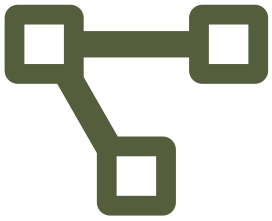
## Step 4: Create a flowchart for the life-cycle of food products

It's up to the HACCP team to decide the level of detail that's needed on the flowchart. However, every flowchart should at least include:

- How raw ingredients are received
- Where/how they're stored
- The temperature controls used at any point
- How the food is handled, every time it's handled
- Any points during its life cycle where temperature-controlled food might be left at the wrong temperature (e.g. frozen food being unloaded from a delivery vehicle)



## Step 5: Confirm your flowchart is correct

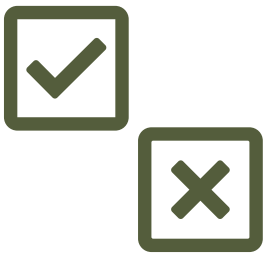


- Physically follow the steps written in the flowchart
- Check that everything happens as it should, in-situ
- Talk with people - different workers on different shifts
- If the flowchart is wrong/something has been overlooked, make changes

## Step 6: Analyse potential hazards (make a list)

- Using the flowchart, make a list of every reasonably predictable hazard at each stage
- When you have a finished list, group the hazards together according to the type of hazard they are (e.g. physical hazard, chemical hazard...)
- Decide which hazards pose the most significant risks and need to be controlled
- Work out what you need to do to control them and write it down

## Step 7: Determine where Critical Control Points (CCPs) are needed



- It's recommended to use a Decision Tree (a type of flowchart that asks a series of yes or no questions, to determine if a particular hazard is or isn't a CCP)
- Be careful. CCPs are important, but too many can complicate the production process and make mistakes much more likely

## Step 8: Set Critical Limits

- A Critical Limit needs a firm minimum or maximum limit. Once reached, corrective action is necessary to prevent food from becoming unsafe
- The limit needs to relate to a specific control measure (e.g. reducing temperature)
- They must be measurable in some way (e.g. temperature, time, pH level, salt level)
- Results must be available immediately so action can be taken straight away

## Step 9: Monitor CCPs and Critical Limits

An effective monitoring system:

- Helps to avoid losing control of food safety at any point
- Should have detailed written results (including date and time of readings)
- Can accurately detect when target levels are missed
- Shows how well controls are working/highlights issues
- Suggests when CCPs or control methods need to be reviewed
- Provides real-time results so action can be taken immediately to correct safety issues

The system needs to be continuous, accurate, replicable, relevant to your Critical Limits, and carried out by trained staff using calibrated equipment.

## Step 10: Establish corrective actions (write them down)

- Everyone needs to know what to do when a Critical Limit has been reached. This is essential for producing safe food
- All corrective action procedures must be fully documented so that it's absolutely clear. Each procedure should include:

- The specific action required to regain control
- If processes need to be stopped and who has the authority to restart them
- A list of people who need to be told
- What needs to be done with all affected food
- How to investigate the causes
- How/where records are made
- A clear definition of the responsibilities of everyone involved

## Step 11: Do an audit of the HACCP system

The person responsible for the audit:

- Must verify that the HACCP system works and is up-to-date
- Have a solid understanding of HACCP and its requirements
- Should be a different person from the one who implements corrective procedures
- Should do it least once a year, and whenever there are changes to processes, equipment, and ingredients/if new hazards have been identified/if there's an incident

Any changes made as a result of the audit need to be passed on to the HACCP team and fully documented.

## Step 12: Keep records

Make sure there are records for every part of your HACCP plan, including:

- A detailed hazard analysis
- A list of Critical Control Points
- Any relevant training taken by the HACCP team and all other food handlers
- Lists of corrective actions (and who's responsible for them)
- Details of Critical Limits (and monitoring procedures)
- Cleaning schedules
- Pest control reports
- Supplier lists
- Details of all prerequisite procedures

**Remember:** at every step of HACCP, accurate records must be made. These will support the overall plan, verify that controls are in place and are working effectively, and can even act as essential evidence of due diligence should it ever be needed.