

APPLICATION OF HACCP PRINCIPLES FOR THE MEAT INDUSTRY

GUIDANCE SHEET NO: 9

SELECT THE HACCP TEAM PRELIMINARIES FOR HACCP



SELECTING THE HACCP TEAM

The preparation of a HACCP plan involves a thorough review of the activities undertaken or proposed by the business and then the collection and evaluation of scientific and technical data relating to the production and handling of relevant products.

Not every member of the HACCP team needs to have a detailed knowledge of all these aspects, but they should collectively have sufficient knowledge of all the food activities being considered by the study as well as a thorough technical knowledge of relevant food safety matters.

It normally requires a team effort to produce a successful HACCP plan even in small businesses which only employ a few staff.

KEY CRITERIA FOR THE HACCP TEAM

Members of the team should be drawn from all relevant areas of the business and from all relevant staff levels. There should be, where possible, a healthy mix of management and operators from different parts of the business.

The team should possess adequate technical knowledge to identify relevant hazards and appropriate controls. The team should also include members with sufficient practical knowledge of the process to advise on the practicalities of implementing such controls.

Members of the team should be provided with sufficient training and management support to allow them to participate freely in the HACCP team.

CHOOSING MEMBERS OF THE HACCP TEAM

The members of the HACCP team are normally selected by the “HACCP lead” (this role is described later in this session). The lead may find reference to the process flow diagram (see guidance sheet 8) useful to select members of the team who at each process step can provide:

- The necessary technical expertise;
- Knowledge of what actually happens in practice during the manufacture of the food;
- Knowledge of the practicalities of any controls suggested by the HACCP team.

Some members of the team will be required throughout the study, for example those possessing technical knowledge and an understanding of the processes in overview.

Others, who may have more specific knowledge at certain process steps, may be brought onto the team at relevant points during the study.

Each member of the HACCP team must be clear of their role, have been provided with adequate training and have been given express authority by management to participate effectively in the HACCP study.

To satisfy these requirements, you may find it helpful to create a HACCP team matrix, summarising the selection, roles, responsibilities and authorities of HACCP team members for each step. An example of a team matrix for a single process step is given below. In real-life the HACCP team matrix would cover all process steps within the scope of the HACCP study.

HACCP Team Matrix for Process Step 1: - Goods In

Process Step	Team Member	Team Role	Job Title	Training Provided	Reason for inclusion in HACCP team
Step 1 Goods in	Insert name	Technical	Technical Manager	Yes	Technical Assistance
	Insert name	Operational	Forklift-Truck Driver	Yes	Practicality of controls in goods in & despatch areas
	Insert name	Other	Transport Supervisor	Yes	Description of goods in/out

ROLES OF HACCP TEAM MEMBERS

Whilst there are several different roles to be fulfilled within a HACCP team, it is a matter for each business to decide whether these roles are allocated to individual team members or whether some team members can undertake several roles. In small businesses, one person may assume several or all of these roles.

It can be helpful to separate roles into the following groups:

Administrative – Members of the administrative group will be responsible for ensuring that the HACCP process is completed in a logical way and adequately documented. They will typically need a detailed understanding of the HACCP process.

Technical – Members of this group will have a detailed understanding of food science, technology and hygiene as well as a good knowledge of HACCP.

Operational – Members of this group should have a detailed knowledge of how the business operates in practice.

Other – Additional staff included where necessary.

Examples of each of the role groups are given in the table below.

Group	Role	Job Title	Main Functions	Skills Required
Administrative	HACCP Lead	Technical Manager	Select HACCP team, chair HACCP meetings, manage HACCP process.	Management and communication skills, detailed knowledge of HACCP process.
Technical	Product Specialist	Technical Manager	Advise the team on the product description, its intended use and required shelf-life.	Detailed knowledge of the product recipes, processes and design.
Operational	Equipment Specialist	Engineer/fitter	Advise the team on the normal capabilities of equipment and on maintenance issues.	Good working knowledge of all existing plant and equipment.

RECORDING DETAILS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HACCP TEAM

The following information must be recorded as part of the HACCP study.

1. Name of HACCP lead for the business

The HACCP lead should have a sound understanding of HACCP and a good knowledge of both the food activities that form part of the study and the technical information that underpins it. The person named in the study will be responsible for managing the HACCP study and so should possess good management and communication skills. The full name of the HACCP lead should be given.

The competence of the person nominated as the HACCP lead can be demonstrated by recording any relevant training that they have completed, their qualifications gained and their relevant experience.

Qualifications: Any relevant qualifications, such as those gained in food science, technology or microbiology should be recorded.

Relevant experience: Such experience may have been gained in the preparation and/or implementation of HACCP systems in other food businesses or in the auditing of HACCP systems.

2. HACCP team members

For each HACCP team member, the following information must be recorded:

The full name of the team member should be given.

Is this person Internal or External to the company?

HACCP plans are best developed by those who know the business and will be required to implement controls identified by the HACCP team. As such, where possible, members of the HACCP team should

be drawn from employees working within the business. Such employees are referred to as “internal” for the purposes of the study.

However, the HACCP lead may identify areas where there is insufficient knowledge or experience within the business to properly consider the control of all relevant food hazards. As such it may be appropriate to appoint external consultants, advisers or temporary employees to perform some roles within the HACCP team.

What is the role of this individual in the HACCP team?

For a HACCP plan to be successful it must be appropriately designed to control specified food hazards. This will require certain members of the HACCP team to have adequate technical knowledge and as such their role will be focused on the identification of such hazards and suggestion of appropriate methods for their control. However, a control measure will only be effective if it is reliably implemented. If a control measure is not achievable in practice, then it will be of little value in the production of safe food. It is therefore recommended that relevant staff with practical knowledge of the food production and handling processes are adopted onto the HACCP team.

Typical roles within the HACCP team might include:

Technical Manager: Member of administrative and technical groups. Provide technical expertise in the identification and control of hazards.

Consultant: Member of technical group. Advise on the application of HACCP principles.

Production Supervisor: Member of operational group. Advise on process steps and practicality of implementation of control measures.

Quality assurance technician: Member of administrative group. Writing of HACCP plan, note taking at HACCP meetings.

Relevant training

Those responsible for the development and maintenance of HACCP procedures need to have received adequate training in the application of the HACCP principles.

Qualifications

Any relevant qualifications should be recorded although it is not a requirement that all members of the HACCP team possess academic qualifications. Relevant vocational qualifications should be included for example “Basic fork lift truck training” or “Certificate in logistics”.

Relevant experience

Details should be recorded of any experience that the team member has gained which is relevant to their role on the HACCP team. For example: “Six years’ experience operating poly-bottle filling machines as well as two years as an operator in the process control room.”

DOES THE HACCP TEAM HAVE SUFFICIENT SKILLS TO ENSURE THE HACCP STUDY WILL BE EFFECTIVE?

The HACCP lead should undertake an honest appraisal of the competence of the HACCP team to produce an effective HACCP plan based collectively on their qualifications, experience and relevant training.

One way to achieve this in practice is to systematically work through the process flow diagram (Guidance sheet 8) and to consider at each process step whether the team includes someone who can advise on:

- The technical aspects of food safety at this step;
- The practical elements of the food business and implications of suggested controls;

Where gaps in knowledge are identified, these should be recorded and steps taken to bring additional members into the HACCP team to cover the gaps.