WHAT ARE THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES BEHIND HACCP?

The seven principles are steps in a process which will help you to: (1) recognize hazards and safety measures; and (2) control the food production system for safety. If followed, these principles can prevent foodborne illness.

• **Hazard Analysis:** The first step is to determine the menu items most likely to cause illness and what could go wrong with them.

• **Determine Critical Control Points**: Focus on how and where to make the foods safe. Cooking, cooling, reheating and storing may be critical control points.

• **Set Critical Limits**: Standardize your final cooking temperatures, cooling times, reheating temperatures and times, storage practices, and other safety concerns.

• **Develop Monitoring Procedures**: Decide how often to take temperature readings, test sanitizer strength, and set up forms to record the data collected.

• **Take Corrective Action**: Describe what to do if cooking, cooling, reheating, sanitizing or storing is out of safe limits.

• **Set Up Record Keeping System**: Determine the records to keep, where to keep them, who has access and how long to keep them.

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• **Verify The System Is Working:** By occasionally monitoring and reviewing records you ensure the system is operating effectively.

WHAT IS A HACCP PLAN?

HACCP is a systematic approach to controlling foodborne illness. A **HACCP** plan is created by placing all procedures used in **HACCP**, all forms to be used, and the information about the people responsible for carrying out the plan into a document called the **HACCP** plan. Managers and employees will then have an up-to-date document that describes procedures to follow to insure safe food. Managers must have this document to record all safety measures in use, and to describe any changes they have made. Any corrective actions taken must be kept on file, in the plan, as well. This document then becomes the basis on which to determine if the principles of **HACCP** are being used properly.

This **HACCP** plan can also be used by regulatory agencies to verify that the facility has properly identified potential hazards and has set up the proper procedures to prevent them.

The **HACCP** plan should be available to regulatory staff. Agencies have the responsibility to protect industry trade secrets as some of the information in the recipe section of your plans may contain

private information. Individuals reviewing your **HACCP** plan will be sensitive to this.

The **HACCP** plan will need to be reviewed and updated any time menu items, ingredients or procedures change. It is a working document - not a manual that is read once and shelved.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED WITH HACCP?

Training is fundamental to **HACCP**; however, before any training can be done you must decide who will be responsible for carrying out the **HACCP** plan. A **HACCP** team must be put together and it must have the complete support of upper management.

The team should consist of production managers as well as those responsible for suppliers, maintenance and training. Ideally, **HACCP** should be integrated into the overall quality assurance program.

Start by training the **HACCP** team and upper management. The **Hospitality Education Program** conducts **HACCP** workshops throughout Florida to familiarize licensees with the process. Once you are trained, train your workers. A good place to start is to read the HACCP section in the *1997 FDA Model Food Code*. The Food Code can be ordered from the US Public Health Service by calling **800-552-NTIS**. It can also be accessed on the Internet at: **www.foodsafety.org/fchome.htm**

HACCP start-up costs are minimal. Updating thermometers and ensuring ice is available for cooling food are the types of costs involved. **HACCP** changes the methods you use to protect foods and the way you train your workers; the equipment needed or design features are less important.

HOW WILL HACCP BE USED BY THE DIVISION OF HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS?

The concept of **HACCP** can be used by regulatory agencies to help direct efforts to the most important aspects of an operation, namely food, and the food production methods. Field staff with the Division are being familiarized with **HACCP**, and will begin using a **HACCP** approach during routine facility inspections in the near future. Inspectors have been trained to conduct a full scale **HACCP** inspection which will be very different from a facility inspection.

A **HACCP** inspection will concentrate on food and food production and will take 3 - 4 hours. The **HACCP** principles will be used, and you will get a firsthand understanding of how they are applied. Of course, traditional facility type inspections will still occur at other times to help pinpoint defects in facilities; assess employee hygiene; determine if sanitizers are being used properly; and insure contamination from physical, chemical and biological sources is under control.

HACCP, a more scientific approach to food protection, is clearly the wave of the future. Learning about **HACCP** and using its principles will help your program address critical violations and insure an extra measure of safety for your foods.

Free HACCP workshops are available to qualified Division of Hotels and Restaurants licensees. For registration information, call the Hospitality Education Program (HEP).

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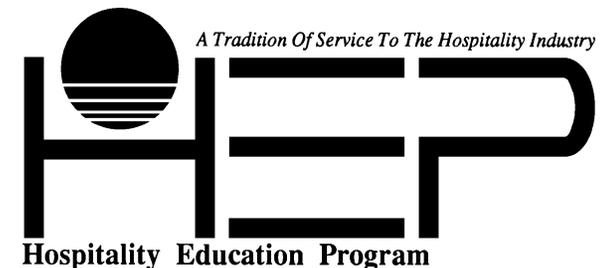
HAZARD ANALYSIS CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS: BASIC HACCP

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