

Food Safety Management Systems (HACCP)

It became a legal requirement for all food businesses in the UK to have a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) in 2006. Under article 5 of Regulation (EC) 853/2004, a food business must put in place, implement and maintain a food safety management system based on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles to ensure the food produced in their premises is safe to eat.

The regulation is also known as the HACCP Law or HACCP regulation and it requires every food business to:

- Register with the relevant authorities
- Meet all relevant quality standards
- Put in place, and maintain a permanent procedure based on HACCP principles
- Ensure that food is prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner
- Document their food safety management system
- Design and construct premises in a way that permits good hygiene practices
- Have suitable pest control measures
- Label and store food correctly and have a system of stock rotation
- Introduce and maintain control measures for all food safety hazards.

DEFINITIONS

Hazard: Something with the potential to cause harm. Hazards in catering are Microbiological, Physical, Chemical and Allergenic.

Control Measures: Actions or activities required to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level.

Critical Control Point: A step in the process where control can be applied and is essential to ensure food is safe to eat.

Contamination: The presence or introduction of something harmful or objectionable in food. (Food Safety Hazard)

Cross-Contamination: The transfer of bacteria from a source, such as raw meat, to a ready to eat food. This could be by hands or chopping board (indirect) or by blood from raw meat dripping onto uncovered salad items in the fridge (direct)

Defence of Due Diligence: In the event of a food safety prosecution, a business is able to produce its own documented Food Safety Management System. This will help to provide evidence that there are food safety control measures in place and the business has a

SAFER FOOD BETTER BUSINESS (SFBB)

- **SFBB** is a food safety management system developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) especially for small businesses.
- It is divided into 4 sections – Cooking, Chilling, Cleaning and Cross Contamination. These are known as the Safe Methods.
- It requires the business to complete the safe methods to personalise the system.
- Each business should state in writing how it carries out each control measure safely and how they are monitored.
- There is also a section on management which provides guidance on opening and closing checks, proving methods are safe, a safe method completion record, training record, stock control, a supplier list and a cleaning schedule.
- **SFBB** is a good framework to start with but is completely meaningless unless it is completed correctly and updated regularly.
- **SFBB** is available for different types of businesses e.g. Caterers, Takeaways, Care Homes, but should not be used for larger and more complex catering businesses such as hospitals, chain restaurants, outside caterers etc. These require a more detailed FSMS.

Can I write my own FSMS? Yes. It is quite straightforward as long as it reflects what actually happens in your business. You will need to make sure that the good hygiene practices which are essential for food safety such as suitable premises, hot and cold potable water, staff training, cleaning & disinfection procedures, effective maintenance and approved suppliers, are in place before HACCP is implemented. These are known as pre-requisite programmes.

<https://foodallergyaware.co.uk/resources/factsheets/>