

How can HACCP principles be used in retail and food service operations?

Within the retail and food service industries, the implementation of HACCP principles varies as much as the products produced. The resources available to help you identify and control risk factors common to your operation may also be limited. Due to this diversity, implementation of “textbook” HACCP is impractical in most retail and food service establishments.

Like many other quality assurance programs, the principles of HACCP provide a common-sense approach to identifying and controlling risk factors. Consequently, many food safety management systems at the retail level incorporate some, if not all, of the principles of HACCP. While a complete HACCP system is ideal, many different types of food safety management systems may be implemented to control risk factors. It is also important to recognize that HACCP has no single correct application. Variations in the procedures presented in this Manual are appropriate as long as they are based on sound public health judgment. In addition to the material presented in the text of this Manual, several references have been provided in Annex 1 to assist you in developing a food safety management system specific to your operation.

SUMMARY

FDA endorses the voluntary implementation of food safety management systems in retail and food service establishments. Combined with good basic sanitation, a solid employee training program, and other prerequisite programs, HACCP can provide you and your employees a complete food safety management system.

The goal in applying HACCP principles in retail and food service is to have you, the operator, take purposeful actions to ensure safe food. You and your regulatory authority have a common objective in mind – providing safe, quality food to consumers. Your health inspector can help you achieve this common objective, but remember that the ultimate responsibility for food safety at the retail level lies with you and your ability. Managing food safety should be as fully integrated into your operation as those actions that you might take to open in the morning, ensure a profit, or manage cash flow. By putting in place an active, ongoing system, made up of actions intended to create the desired outcome, you can achieve your goal of improving food safety. The application of the HACCP principles provides one system that can help you accomplish that goal.

