

RetailSafe

Food Safety Assurance System

For Retailers Handling Unwrapped High Risk Food

1. INTRODUCTION

Contains guidance on this manual and on HACCP terms



Everyone involved in the sale of food is aware of the importance of good food hygiene practices and of the need to handle food in a safe, clean environment. Retail**Safe** is designed to assist retail business dealing with **unwrapped high risk food** to build upon their safe working practices. Retail**Safe** helps a retailer examine the business operation and identify the controls necessary depending on the risk posed by the products sold.

By reading this manual and following the instructions, you will be able to develop 'HACCP based procedures' in line with the legislative requirements, which will fit your needs.

What is HACCP?

The letters HACCP stand for "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point." HACCP is a widely accepted food safety management system, which can easily be adapted to suit all sizes and types of food businesses.

The main aim of HACCP is to focus attention on critical points in the operation and to take measures to ensure that problems do not occur. This manual provides guidance and offers suggestions to help you build your own system to do this.

What are unwrapped high risk foods?

These are foods, usually high in protein, that require refrigeration and must be kept separate from raw foods. Examples include cooked meats, cooked meat products such as pies and patés, unwrapped sandwiches, egg and dairy products.

How this manual can help you

Retail**Safe** is split into 4 sections as follows:

1. **Introduction Section** – contains guidance on this manual and on HACCP terms
2. **Business Selector** – helps you select the House Rules appropriate to your type of business
3. **House Rules Section** – contains guidance and templates to help you write your own House Rules building on your day-to-day safe working practices
4. **Records Section** – contains guidance and templates for you to use to link in with all the other Sections

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Each section of Retail**Safe** offers you guidance and an example to follow. Work through the manual in the way it is laid out and you will be able to customise this HACCP based system to meet your needs. The information in your copy should accurately reflect all of the operations carried out within your business. In particular, your House Rules should be readily understood by all of your staff.

Remember to record your progress on the Action Plan.

Scope of this manual

Retail**Safe** has been designed for use in retail businesses handling unwrapped high risk foods and is available from Local Authorities and from the Food Standards Agency website.

The purpose of Retail**Safe** is to assist those businesses which handle unwrapped high risk foods within their premises. This means that a retail business which buys, stores, handles, prepares or sells high risk food which is unwrapped *at any time*, will find that Retail**Safe** is suitable for their use.

The manual is **not** intended for use in shops where no high risk food is handled in an unwrapped state. A retailer whose business simply involves the sale of pre-wrapped high risk food should **not** use Retail**Safe**.

If you are not sure if this manual is suitable for your business, contact the Environmental Health Service at your nearest Local Authority for advice.

This manual has been based on the latest information available at the time. Revisions and updates may be issued periodically.

Legal Responsibilities

Retail**Safe** contains general advice only and this guidance is based on the Food Standards Agency's present understanding of the applicable law but it will be for the courts to provide a definitive interpretation of that law.

This guidance is not a substitute for the text of relevant legislation, which will continue to apply. It will remain the duty of food business proprietors to comply with that legislation.

In the event of any apparent conflict between the guidance contained in this manual and the relevant legislation, you should seek your own legal advice on the application of this guidance manual in relation to your own circumstances.

HACCP TERMS

This manual uses a number of terms which may not be familiar to you. These terms fall into 5 main categories, which are explained as follows:

1. HAZARDS
2. CONTROLS
3. MONITORING
4. RECORDING
5. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

1. HAZARDS (What can go wrong)

In a HACCP based approach, you need to consider the hazards present in your business. A “Hazard” is anything that may cause harm to your customers through eating the food you sell.

There are three main types of hazard:

- **Microbiological hazards** – include food poisoning bacteria such as *Salmonella* or *E.coli* O157. Food poisoning can be very serious with symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach cramps. The elderly, the very young, in some cases pregnant women and those who are already unwell are particularly vulnerable. In severe cases death may occur due to food poisoning.

Microbiological hazards are dangerous because they can: -

- **Survive** inadequate cooking, if already present in food
- **Multiply** to harmful levels, given the right conditions (for example poor temperature control during storage, handling or hot holding)
- **Spread** from raw foods such as meat, poultry and unwashed vegetables to cooked/ready-to-eat foods either directly or via staff handling food, work surfaces and equipment – this is known as ‘cross contamination’

Other microbiological hazards such as certain bacteria, yeasts and moulds may lead to food spoilage.

To avoid the hazard of food poisoning, you must ensure that food is safe in the first place and also avoid the conditions which allow any bacteria, which are present, to grow in number.

- **Chemical hazards** - may already be present on certain foods in the form of pesticides or insecticides. Chemical hazards may also arise from incorrect storage and the misuse of chemicals such as cleaning chemicals and rodent baits.
- **Physical hazards** - include contamination by materials such as glass, plastic, wood, metal, hair and contamination caused by pests.

2. CONTROLS (How you can prevent the hazard)

By working through the '**Business Selector**' Section you will select the House Rules appropriate to your type of business. You then need to look at controls, which are ways to prevent things going wrong. This can be done by working through the House Rules you have selected.

Deciding on the controls appropriate to your business can be done in three stages.

1. Identifying hazards likely to occur in your business and ways of preventing or **controlling** them.
2. Focussing your attention on the stages of your process where the hazards, which are **critical** to food safety, must be controlled for the food to be safe to eat. These are called Critical Control Points (CCPs).
3. Identifying Critical Limits, which are specified safety limits and a method of monitoring them. You decide on the safety limits, for example, in your Temperature Control House Rules, if you decide that the temperature of your refrigerator should be no higher than 5°C, then 5°C is your Critical Limit for your refrigerator.

Retail**Safe** gives examples of typical hazards and controls suitable for the majority of retail businesses selling **unwrapped high risk food**. You need to consider the examples and adapt them to suit what you do in your business.

3. MONITORING (Checking your Control Measures)

A HACCP based approach to food safety requires that all controls that are critical to food safety be monitored. Monitoring methods may vary according to the nature of your Controls.

Monitoring which only involves supervision may simply require a supervisor or manager's signature to confirm that the monitoring actions have been carried out.

4. RECORDING (Keeping a Record of your Monitoring)

A HACCP based food safety management system requires that the outcome of Monitoring be recorded at a frequency which reflects the nature and size of your business. This is usually done by writing down the information on a form or in a diary.

You may wish to use the Recording Forms, which can be found in the '**Records**' Section of this manual. Alternatively, you may wish to design your own forms.

Your HACCP Records must be retained for an appropriate period of time to enable you to demonstrate that your system is working effectively. Your Enforcement Officer can give guidance on this timeframe.

Verification of Retail**Safe** involves taking an overview of the system to make sure it is working effectively and is being applied in practice.

5. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS (What to do if things go wrong)

Corrective Actions follow on from the Monitoring process and must be recorded. A Corrective Action must follow when Monitoring shows that a Control is not taking place correctly.

Corrective Actions have two functions:

- to deal with the food in question – either by making it safe or by stopping its use
- to prevent the problem happening again – by considering the cause of the failure of the Control and taking appropriate action

The recording forms in Retail**Safe** have examples of Corrective Actions and areas for you to note down your Corrective Actions.

A HACCP based system is a food safety management system which, if used correctly, can help to ensure food is safe.

It is essential that your business is committed to operating the system in full otherwise the benefits will be reduced and food safety compromised.

ONCE YOU HAVE READ THIS SECTION REMEMBER TO SIGN AND DATE THE INTRODUCTION SECTION OF THE ACTION PLAN.

Glossary of other terms

The HACCP terms have already been described in this section. This page provides a glossary of other terms used in 'RetailSafe'.

ACTION PLAN	The documented record of actions to be completed by the person using RetailSafe in order to develop a HACCP based food safety management system designed for their business.
ALLERGY	An overly aggressive response by the body's immune system to foods that non-sufferers would find harmless.
AMBIENT TEMPERATURE	The temperature of the surrounding environment - commonly used to mean room temperature.
BACTERIA	Groups of single cell living organisms, which are very small and generally can only be seen under a microscope. Some are known to cause food poisoning or food spoilage.
BACTERICIDAL DETERGENT	A detergent containing a chemical which is designed to destroy bacteria during the cleaning process.
'BEST BEFORE' DATE	The date marked on the label of a food up to and including the date that the food can reasonably be expected to remain in optimum condition if properly stored.
CORE TEMPERATURE	The temperature at the centre or thickest part of a piece of food.
CONTAMINATION	The introduction to, or occurrence in, foods of any harmful substance which may compromise the safety or wholesomeness of those foods.
DISINFECTION	A part of the overall cleaning process aimed at reducing the level of harmful micro organisms to a level that will not lead to either harmful contamination or spoilage of food.
HARMFUL BACTERIA	Bacteria capable of causing illness through contamination of food.
MICRO ORGANISMS	Micro organisms include bacteria, viruses, yeasts and moulds. They are very small and generally can only be seen under a microscope but they are present almost everywhere. Not all micro organisms are harmful.
UNWRAPPED HIGH RISK FOOD	Usually considered as food that supports the multiplication of harmful bacteria and is intended for consumption without any further treatment, such as cooking, which would destroy such organisms. Unwrapped high risk food is usually high in protein, requires refrigeration and must be kept separate from raw foods.
PROCESS STEPS	A sequence of steps typical to a business selling food. The first process step is usually incoming stock and the final step is usually display and sale.
READY-TO-EAT FOOD	Foods, which may not require to receive, further cooking or reheating prior to consumption.
TOXINS	Toxins are poisons produced by bacteria capable of causing food poisoning.
'USE BY' DATE	A date mark required on microbiologically perishable pre-packed food after which its consumption could present a risk of food poisoning.