

Chapter 7

DEVELOPING A PERSONNEL TRAINING PROGRAM

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Training facility staff is very important in making food and food production processes safe. This chapter explains why such a program is important for food safety and the elements of a basic personnel training program.



For more information on documenting the program, see Chapter 3: Documentation and Record Keeping.

1.0 FOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES

1.1 Developing a Facility Hygiene Policy

Personnel health and hygiene policies are important for any successful food safety system. A hygiene policy or statement outlines the company's food safety responsibilities and covers:

- Hand washing and sanitizing;
- Protective clothing (smocks, footwear, gloves etc.);
- Personal cleanliness;
- Personal behaviour; and
- Illness and injuries.

Post the complete corporate personnel health and hygiene policy in an obvious, visible place (e.g. staff notice board). It must also be endorsed by management and backed by a training program.



For examples on how to oversee putting a policy in place, see Form 2: Employee Hygiene Policy, and Form 1: Daily Hygiene Record.

Hand washing and sanitizing

Hand washing is one of the best ways to increase food safety. Hand washing reduces germs and decreases the chances of contaminating food or food-contact surfaces. Make sure that all food handlers know the importance of washing their hands thoroughly and frequently.

Hand washing is always important, even if using gloves while working.

A food handler is anyone who takes part in any activity involving food or food-contact surfaces.

Follow these simple steps to wash hands properly:

- Remove rings and other jewellery (watches, bracelets, etc.);
- Wet hands thoroughly with warm water;
- Lather well using liquid soap or foam soap;
- Scrub hands with soap for a minimum of 20 seconds (long enough to sing the alphabet). Include wrists, forearms, nails, between fingers and around and under any jewellery that cannot be removed;
- Rinse thoroughly;
- Turn off tap with a paper towel; and
- Dry hands with a disposable paper towel.



Everyone has a responsibility to make hand washing a regular activity in a facility. Have staff wash their hands:

Before:

- Preparing food;
- Eating; and
- Starting or returning to work.

Between:

- Handling raw foods (meat, fish, poultry and eggs) and touching any other food or kitchen utensils;
- Changing work areas (e.g. moving from unfinished to finished product); and
- Handling different allergens.

After:

- Preparing food, especially raw foods;
- Being away from the work station;
- Taking medicines;
- Touching body parts (including hair, nose, arms and eyes);
- Using the toilet;
- Changing clothing or gloves;
- Emptying garbage/waste bins; and
- Coughing or sneezing.

Any time:

- Hands may have been contaminated.

Use footbaths and hand-dips to sanitize hands, gloves and footwear. Follow the directions that come with the sanitizing chemicals precisely. If necessary, get help and information about the sanitizing chemicals from the supplier.

Protective Clothing

Food handlers must wear clean, protective clothing that is designed for the operation. Train employees on the importance of wearing protective clothing while working with food.

Smocks and Employee Uniforms

Smocks are common in the food industry. They are removed easily when the employee is not on the production floor. Smocks usually cover and contain all street clothing.

Be sure to consider whether uniforms may cause health or safety risks for employees. For example, some smocks may be unsafe in facilities using conveyor belts.

Change uniforms regularly if they are soiled during a work shift. Uniforms should also be changed before going to different in work areas (e.g. from unfinished product to finished product).

Colour coding is often used to tell the difference between raw and cooked product areas.

Make sure that staff wear the correct uniform appropriate for each production area. Do not let employees wear in-plant uniforms in the following situations:

- Off site or outside the facility;
- While smoking or eating; or
- Inside washrooms, restrooms or in lunchrooms.

Do not let employees take production uniforms home for cleaning.

Remember these points when selecting or using in-plant uniforms:

- Store employee uniforms separately from street clothing;
- Choose uniforms with light colours that show soil easily;
- Colour code uniforms according to the different areas where employees will be working;
- Change uniforms if they are soiled during a shift or if an employee is changing work areas (e.g. moving from unfinished product to finished product areas); and
- Have enough uniforms on site, as dirty uniforms can be a source of contamination.

Shoes

Do not allow street shoes or boots in production areas. Employees should have clean, special purpose footwear for the facility and change footwear when leaving the facility or when entering areas of the facility where contamination may be tracked back into production areas (e.g. animal holding areas, waste disposal areas).

When having visitors to a facility, supply them with special purpose boots or boot covers.

Hair Coverings

Provide hairnets and beard-nets to all staff and visitors entering the production areas. Follow the 'tug test' to decide if beard nets or hairnets should be used. If someone can grasp enough hair on the head or face to pull, it must be covered.

A single hair can host up to 50,000 germs, and one person can lose 100 hairs each day.

Personal Cleanliness and Behaviour

The personal cleanliness of food industry employees directly affects the safety of food production. This means employees must learn to follow rules for personal hygiene or cleanliness.

Everyone working in direct contact with food, food-contact surfaces and food packaging materials must follow hygienic behaviour.

Employee hygiene polices should include the following points:

- No eating within facilities except in permitted staff areas;
- No smoking;
- Keep personal items stored in an area away from food storage or preparation areas;
- Tie hair back or cover it;
- Keep nails short and clean;
- Do not use nail polish or false nails;
- Completely cover cuts or wounds with a waterproof bandage and gloves (in case the bandage comes off) to prevent contamination;
- Where possible, prevent people with cuts or wounds from handling food (open cuts and sores may contain germs);
- No horseplay in areas where food is stored or prepared;
- Avoid wearing jewellery in areas where food is stored or prepared;
- No food in employee lockers;
- No gum and candies; and
- Control employee traffic to prevent allergen and pathogen transfer.

Be sure all members of staff understand that anything, or anyone, passing through a facility can be a source of contamination. Such movement must be managed by in-house hygiene policies.

In food processing areas there should be NO:

- *Smoking*
- *Spitting*
- *Gum chewing*
- *Drinking*
- *Eating*

Have a policy clearly stating what jewellery is permitted.

- Do not allow wearing of jewellery, including watches, where food is stored, prepared or packaged.
- If jewellery cannot be removed, adapt the policies to ensure hygienic conditions.

Some facilities allow wearing of wedding bands, medical alert badges and other items if covered by a waterproof cover (e.g. a glove) that stays intact, clean and sanitary.

Illness and Injury Control

An in-house hygiene policy and the related training should prevent the transfer of diseases from known sources of contamination.

Prevent employees who are ill from contaminating food and food production areas. Encourage and train employees to report to their supervisors when they have a cold, open sores, sore throat, fever or diarrhea. Help employees recognize and report signs of illness.

A food hygiene policy should include training employees on what to do when they are ill. They must tell their doctor that they work in a facility that handles food. The doctor may then choose to notify public health if the illness poses any possible risks.

If public health workers believe there is a risk, they will contact the food processing facility. The employee may then be given a leave of absence until they are no longer a possible source of infection. As an alternative, infectious employees may work in an area where they're unlikely to infect co-workers or contaminate food.

The following is a sample illness control policy in a food hygiene program.

Illness Control in a Food Hygiene Policy

Food handlers must complete a Health Declaration Form:

- a) Before employment (during pre-work screening); and
- b) After returning from holidays outside the country.

Except at pre-employment, once the Health Declaration Form is completed, the employee's manager/supervisor will do the initial assessment. Where necessary, the employee's manager/supervisor may refer the employee to the occupational health physician.

Conditions requiring referral to a occupational health physician are stated in the guidance notes for managers/supervisors on the Food Hygiene Health Declaration Form.

To make sure of food safety – and the health, safety and welfare of all staff and visitors – food handlers are responsible for reporting to their supervisor any incidence of ill health at work or at home.

In accordance with the Sickness Absence Policy, report all absence for periods of one to seven days due to sickness, using the Self-Certification Form. A medical certificate is required for absences of eight or more days. At the discretion of their manager/supervisors or the occupational health physician, a food handler may:

- Be asked to remain on absence due to sickness;
- Stop working until they are cleared for return to work by their own doctor or occupational health physician; and
- Be asked to complete a declaration stating they are fully recovered from his/her illness.

Superficial or surface injuries (e.g. cuts, scratches, boils, sores and skin infections) can be a source of contamination.

Create a policy that includes the use of bright, coloured bandages as well as waterproof coverings (e.g. gloves) over superficial injuries. Specialty suppliers can provide bandages for food facility use.



See Form D.4: Injury Incident Report.

There is always the possibility that employees may be injured while working. For this reason, have in-house policies and training to deal with possible contamination from human blood. Such a policy should involve:

- Developing an exposure plan;
- Preventing a repeat event; and
- Providing personnel training.

Developing a Blood Contamination Policy Based on the “Workplace Safety Toolkit”

1) Develop an Exposure Plan:

- The purpose of the plan is to limit employee and food product exposure to blood. Review and update the plan annually.
- Require employees report all blood-related incidents right away to permit immediate follow-up.
- Determine how the organization will proceed to isolate product that has been exposed to blood.
- Name a person who will be responsible for writing up an exposure incident and reporting it to the appropriate authorities if required.
- Determine if product is affected – if so, determine how to deal with adulterated product.

2) Prevent the Possibility of Occurrence:

- Identify safety hazards that the entity's employees face that may lead to possible injuries.
- Consider what can be done to remove, eliminate or isolate these hazards.
- Purchase appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) that does not permit blood to pass through to or reach the employee's work clothes, food-contact surfaces, or other food production materials.
- Require that staff members wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and hot water immediately after contact blood spills.
- Provide antiseptic cleaner and paper towels where sinks and soap are not available.

3) Provide Appropriate Training:

- Include all employees whose job responsibilities expose them to injuries that may involve blood.
- Include information about ways staff might be injured, what PPE to wear, how to dispose of the PPE and any bandages, and what to do immediately if they have an injury involving blood.
- Make certain employees receive training before they are placed in a situation where there's any chance they will be exposed to possible sources of blood injuries as part of their job responsibilities.
- Track who was trained and when.

Based on "Workplace Safety Toolkit" Protect Staff From Bloodborne Pathogen Contamination <http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/ws-ps/topics/blp/protect-ps.htm>.

A visitor hygiene policy helps prevent potential contamination at the facility.

1.2 Visitor Information and Hygiene Policy

Visitors may be potential sources of contamination in a facility. Address this risk through hygiene policies relating to contractors, shippers, auditors, customers and other regular or occasional visitors to the facility. Have ways to inform visitors about the importance of food safety while on site.

The visitor hygiene policy should be very similar to the employee hygiene policy and should include how to control visitor entry to the facility so that they don't contaminate food. The following is a sample visitor hygiene policy.

Example of Visitor Hygiene Policy

A 'visitor' means any person entering the facility other than staff.

Requirements

All visitors must put on the protective clothing provided (e.g. full length white coat and hairnet) before entering food processing areas. This clothing must be worn throughout the visit.

All visits, with the exception of those by environmental health officers (EHOs) and inspection staff, must be authorized by management. Visitors must be accompanied by supervisory staff.

Visits by technical services or outside firms installing, repairing or servicing equipment in the production areas can be authorized by the on-duty supervisor. Before beginning work, visitors must report to the supervisor on duty and wear protective clothing while on site.

Unauthorized persons, including friends and family, are not allowed in production areas.

Some companies require contractors and non-staff maintenance personnel to sign a contract that explains the in-plant hygiene policies. These contracts can also be part of the prerequisite programs.

A visitor contract makes visitors aware, before they enter the facility, what is expected of them. This contract can include information on visitor safety, such as how to leave in an emergency, and may help visitors accept the visitor policy.



See Form D.7: Visitor Hygiene Contract.

Most producers will not require visitors to sign a contract but will make sure all visitors are told about the company's hygiene policies. Identify visitors with a visitor badge so that they are easily identified as non-staff.



See Form D.8: Visitor Log Book.

2.0 TRAINING PERSONNEL

When examining a facility's training needs, consider everyone whose work involves food or food-contact surfaces. Have all food handlers meet training requirements set by the regional health authority. Make sure everyone involved in food production has the knowledge and skills needed to produce safe food.

Training programs should include staff involved in:

- Supervising and managing
- Line and manufacturing activities
- Packaging
- Shipping and receiving
- Maintenance
- New product development
- Sanitation
- Purchasing

The AHA! Standard requires that those working in food processing facilities have skills, knowledge, and related training in the following areas:

1. **Food-Hygiene Practices** – including personal hygiene practices, food handling skills, and hygienic routines. These ensure that the food, premises, and equipment are clean and well maintained.
2. **Technical Knowledge** – including the skills and knowledge needed for more specific food handling practices. These include receiving ingredients and supplies, monitoring critical control points (CCPs), sanitation of equipment, formulations (measuring of controlled ingredients, development of new products), packaging, machine operation and monitoring procedures.

There are many ways to train employees on the technical and food-hygiene knowledge they need. Employees can gain further knowledge and skills through on-the-job training and through courses. A company may decide that formal training is the best route, especially if employees need specialized or complex knowledge.

2.1 Knowledge vs. Skills

Effective training combines both knowledge and skill. Knowledge alone does not ensure that appropriate steps are taken. But skill without knowledge is equally meaningless – it can result in crucial steps being ignored.

Comparing Skills and Knowledge

Example:

A food handler in a manufacturing facility prepares, stuffs, and cooks beef potpies. The staff member who does this work must have both appropriate food safety and food-hygiene knowledge and skills. These ensure that the end product is produced safely.

The food safety and food-hygiene knowledge needed for this job includes:

- Knowing that raw meat is likely to be contaminated with dangerous bacteria and that eating undercooked product could result in food poisoning;
- Knowing the appropriate cooking time and temperature needed to make sure that the products are cooked thoroughly;
- Knowing the correct storage temperatures for both the raw materials and finished products;
- Knowing that hands, gloves, or the equipment used to handle raw materials can contaminate finished products; and
- Knowing about other possible sources of cross-contamination that might affect the finished product, such as dirty clothes or equipment.

The food safety and food hygiene skills needed for this job include:

- The skill needed to check the product to make sure that it is cooked thoroughly;
- The skills needed to make sure that equipment is set at the right temperatures;
- The skill to wash hands and equipment to reduce the chances of cross-contamination;
- The skills needed to keep the work area clean; and
- The skills needed to take the right corrective actions when necessary.

Based on *Food Safety Standards: Food Handling Skills and Knowledge*.
Australia New Zealand Food Authority © May 2001
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/srcfiles/39997-TF1a.pdf>.

2.2 Motivating Adult Learners

When designing training, keep in mind that people learn in different ways. How they learn best may change as they get older. However, no matter what their age, make sure that all learners are treated with respect and flexibility. When training staff, these tips can help:

- Call the learners by name;
- Clarify goals and expectations before starting;
- Prepare materials (e.g. have photocopy handouts ready, test audiovisual aids and know the material beforehand);
- Learn about adult education techniques;
- Use various learning strategies and adjust them to different situations;
- Give trainees frequent feedback;
- Ask for feedback during training; and
- Respond to requests and feedback from learners.

Always respect an adult student's knowledge and experience. Draw on that experience while training.

Be flexible when giving assignments and let trainees modify projects to fit their learning styles and needs. Adult learners usually prefer training that provides useful knowledge and skills. Adults prefer individualized learning experiences that support their independence.

Also consider the following when developing a training program for employees:

- Adults often like a course or training dealing with a particular issue, topic or subject;
- Do not overload employees with too much information during training sessions;
- Adults need to relate what they are learning to what they already know;

- Training that is too fast, complicated or uses methods that are alien to the adult's experience often reduces what they get from the experience; and
- Make training programs flexible so they can be adjusted for different age levels and for people with different levels of experience.

Many adults prefer self-directed learning but remember that self-direction does not mean learning all alone. Design instruction so that trainees learn not just from experts, but also from each other.

2.3 Employees with Limited Understanding of English

Following food safety and hygiene rules is challenging for everyone, whether English is their language of origin or not. For a new employee, there is a lot to learn and remember about standards, company policies and specific tasks.

Training food processing employees whose English is limited takes time and will likely require the use of non-verbal materials such as posters, drawings, photographs and videos. Colour coding of different products, allergens, or production areas can be useful.

Translating text into other languages may be necessary. Translation of key documents such as manuals and posters is worth the investment. This is especially true if it prevents waste or recall, and protects the reputation of the facility.

Consider partnering with other facilities, or working through an association, to purchase translation services and other materials.

When training non-English speaking employees, an instructor must know what previous training each employee has had. Find out about the employees' education and past experiences. Use the knowledge they already have as a starting point for more training. Failing to assess prior knowledge is a serious mistake in training. It insults the trainee and can stop the learning process.

The following websites provide information on training non-English speaking and ESL employees:

Links for Sites on Food Safety Materials in Various Languages:

- <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/language.htm> => "In Your Language" – over 10 languages with a variety of different resources, from fact sheets to posters
- <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/foodsafetyfactsheets/translatedfoodsafetyfactsheets/index.cfm> => Translated fact sheets (Australia) in over 10 different languages
- <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/internat.html> => U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) multilingual resource site. Some resources have more languages, but most come in English, French and Spanish
- http://www.kdheks.gov/fofs/other_edu_materials.html => Food safety signs and posters in various languages; from the State of Kansas
- <http://tulsa-health.org/food-safety/food-service-industry/posters/> => Food safety signs in English, Chinese and Spanish
- <http://peaches.nal.usda.gov/FSTEA/resources/tooltime/signs.asp> => Food safety sign and poster resources in several languages
- <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/consumer/5keys/en/> => "Five Keys to Safe Food" by the World Health Organization

2.4 Developing a Training Program

Curriculum design or training development is a professional activity that the facility may choose to hire out. However, many training methods and courses are available and new resources are accessible through the Internet. If a facility is having difficulty, training organizations and industry associations can often suggest new training resources.

Training methods can include:

- In-house training by other staff, with support from management or owners (supports the management-down approach to the food safety policy and shows management commitment to food safety);
- Giving staff food safety and food hygiene information to read;
- Presentations on the responsibilities of production staff and supervisors;
- Sending staff to external food safety courses;
- Hiring a consultant to run an in-house course for staff; and
- Recruiting staff with formal industry-based training.

Regardless of the training option chosen, be sure that staff gain the skills and knowledge needed to do their work.

In developing the training program, ask these questions:

- What are the food handling and safety risks associated with the facility?
- What food handling tasks do the employees perform?
- Have staff been told or shown how to handle food safely within the facility?
- Is someone responsible for making sure set procedures or policies are followed on each shift?
- Do staff have the equipment and space to meet the food safety and hygiene policies?

Remember, training should suit the complexity of the manufacturing process and assigned tasks. Make sure the employee's skill set or background allows them to succeed in training.

Only train staff in the methods that are relevant to their job. Follow up training with regular supervision to check that safe methods are used (see also 2.5 Training Follow-up).

Do not assume that employees have understood the training. Consider everyone's needs. If someone has shortcomings that need to be corrected, provide learning supports that won't threaten or insult that employee.

Creating a Basic Training Program:

What to Do	How?
<p>Identify the appropriate food safety skills necessary in the facility. Develop in-house program to train staff. Ensure that each member of the staff knows the safe methods for all tasks.</p>	<p>Show the member of staff what to do, question them carefully on their knowledge, and then ask them to show you how to do it.</p>
<p>Record training that each member of the staff has received, from management to sanitation staff.</p>	<p>Make a note in the staff training record every time you train a member of the staff.</p>
<p>Evaluate the effectiveness of training.</p>	<p>Observe employees to ensure correct methods are being used.</p> <p>Ask learners to provide feedback on training they receive, even informal casual training. Make sure that their learning preferences are respected and that they find the training enjoyable.</p> <p>Make comments and observations to help staff members improve the way they work.</p> <p>Reward good performance by giving positive feedback each time a member of staff has followed safe food production methods.</p> <p>If a safe method is not being followed appropriately, take the staff member aside and tell them what they are doing incorrectly. Tell them why it is important to follow the safe method.</p> <p>Note corrective actions or observations on the training record for future reference.</p>

Based on *Safer food, better business*. Food Standards Agency, EU © January 2006 <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sfbbfullpack.pdf>.

2.5 Training Follow-up

Initial training must be supported periodically by follow-up training sessions and evaluations.

Evaluate how well training has worked by observing whether food safety procedures are being used. Also give occasional quizzes at the beginning or end of a shift.

Follow-up sessions do not have to take a lot of time, as a five minute refresher demonstration is often enough. Make training fun by using creative formats and offering prizes for excellence.

2.6 Documenting Training

Besides providing employees with food hygiene and technical training, employers must also keep track of all other kinds of training. Record not only formal sessions but also refresher demonstrations, quizzes and corrective training.

Create a record for each employee so that new managers are aware of individualized training needs. Keep employee evaluations of training techniques. This will help instruction designers to avoid techniques that haven't been successful in the past.



As noted in Chapter 3: Documentation and Record Keeping, the facility is not under control unless it's documenting its operations.

Documents provide records that show training has happened. It provides evidence that training was thorough enough to protect food safety. Training records will show that staff:

- Can locate and follow workplace information for their own food handling operations;
- Can find, correct or report situations or procedures that do not meet workplace practices;
- Know their health and hygiene responsibilities; and
- Know how to complete the daily performance of their tasks.

Keep a list of the training required for each position. Use these lists to make sure that all employees, including new hires, have the training they need.

Training records must be auditable and show the following:

- Who is giving and receiving the training;
- What knowledge and skills are covered and how the training is done (e.g. video, buddy system, hands-on, etc.);
- How often training is conducted; and
- Whether the training is at the appropriate level for the staff. Provide proof through written or verbal examinations, visual supervision or job assessments.

A staff training record is the simplest way of monitoring employee training and a good future reference. This record is an individual summary of the training, testing and evaluation that has been done with each staff member while at a facility. A staff training record normally includes:

- Name of the employee;
- Date of employment;
- Description of training;
- Date of training;
- Comments about unusual situations; and
- Instructor name.



See Form D.3: Employee Training Record, Form D.6: Training Attendance Record and Form D.5: Procedures Training Record.

3.0 FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE TRAINING

3.1 Requirements of the Alberta HACCP Advantage Standard

Under the Alberta HACCP Advantage (AHA!) Standard, training must meet the regulatory requirements of the license. Management must ensure that all employees who come into contact with food are trained in safe food handling. They must make sure that training is delivered according to staff needs.

It is very important that food safety and hygiene training delivers clear and consistent information. Remember that employees may be asked by public health inspectors, customer auditors or suppliers about the training employees have received. They may also be asked about their knowledge of what facility policies and expectations are.

What works for one facility may not suit another. The supervision and training needed to produce safe food will depend on the number of employees and the kind of work they do. It will also depend on staff's current training and ability levels. Excellent training programs are especially important if staff turnover is high.

3.2 Food Safety and Food Hygiene Training Resources

As noted in Section 2.4 (Developing a Training Program), there are many possible training resources available. Resources can include outside courses, videos, handouts and professionally developed employee handbooks (see also the websites listed below).

For a complete list of available Food Safety Training Resources visit the Department of Education, Human Resources Development Canada.

Sources of Approved Alberta Health and Wellness Food Safety Training:

- 1) Attend training at a local Regional Health Authority (RHA), through the First Nations Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) or through an accredited educational institution (NAIT, SAIT, Red Deer College, and Lethbridge College).
 - These groups teach a food safety course of their choosing.
 - Students write a provincial exam, maintained by Alberta Health and Wellness.
 - Students that achieve 70% or higher are issued a provincial certificate in food sanitation and hygiene and are then entered into Alberta's provincial database of certified workers.

2) Complete an approved independent course.

Four courses have been approved in Alberta as being equivalent to the provincial food safety education program:

- Canadian Food Safety Certification Course - ADVANCED.fst - offered TrainCan (<http://www.traincan.com/index-advanced.html>).
- Foodwise - offered through the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors. This course is designed more for food production managers/employees, vs. food service managers/employees (<http://www.ccgd.ca/>).
- ServSafe - offered through the United States National Restaurant Association (<http://www.nraef.org/servsafe/>).
- National Food Safety Training Program – offers Foodhandler and Trainer Certification developed by the Canadian Restaurant & Foodservices Association (<http://www.nfstp.ca/>).

Certificates obtained from one of these organizations are considered equivalent to the provincial certificate.

3) Complete a course offered by an approved independent trainer.

- Approved trainers have professional qualifications and appropriate educational background.
- Trainers teach a food safety course of their choosing.
- Students write the provincial exam used by RHAs in Option 1 (above).

If you have any questions or would like more information about any of these options, contact Alberta Agriculture and Food or your local public health inspector.

4.0 TECHNICAL TRAINING

4.1 Requirements of the Alberta HACCP Advantage Standard

There is no standard that will outline all the requirements for technical training in the food industry. Each facility, product and position is unique and will require specific technical knowledge from staff.

Some positions require more formal training than others. Technical training is not always restricted to 'how to do the job.' In most situations, it is important to combine this training with food safety and other training (e.g. WHMIS).

In a HACCP environment, it is very important that all employees understand food safety principles and what they can do to affect overall product safety. They must also understand the corrective actions to take.

When an employee has met the requirements relating to a technical skill, there should be sign-off or confirmation by management. This will show that the employee has reached a certain competence level.

Each facility should develop a way to test staff's technical training. This would be similar to what is used in food safety and hygiene training (e.g. multiple choice exams, visual supervision during work, buddy review of policies to check on understanding).

4.2 Technical Training and Food Safety

There are various methods for technical training of employees including:

- Using job specific written SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures);
- Videos; and
- Job shadowing (with an experienced individual).

Cross-training Staff

Most facilities ensure that some employees are cross-trained so they are available to fill in on short notice.

Keep these in mind when monitoring critical control points (CCPs):

- *Why the CCP exists*
- *CCP critical limits*
- *Procedures for monitoring the CCP*
- *Abnormal or unusual situations*
- *Correct documentation*

Critical Control Point (CCP) Training

Employees responsible for monitoring critical control points (CCPs) must be trained to understand the importance of the CCP and the critical limits. They must also understand procedures for monitoring the CCP, deviation procedures, and document control procedures.

Staff members responsible for key positions often need training not only for their job, but also in other duties. These include:

- Maintaining documentation;
- Understanding reasons for certain corrective actions; and
- Understanding the importance of the CCP in the plant's HACCP plan.

Calibration/Maintenance Training

Maintenance staff members are often overlooked when it comes to food safety. Most companies hire maintenance personnel with the certification for their specific trade (e.g. plumber's certificate, electrician's certificate, etc.). However, they often overlook the importance of training these employees on how their work will affect food safety.

Employees hired to calibrate or adjust equipment must also understand how their tasks affect food safety.

Maintenance staff must have the skills and knowledge to make sure that equipment is cleaned and sanitized. This must be done before equipment is allowed back into operations.

Create procedures to notify Sanitation/Production/QA Staff when maintenance is complete. Also develop procedures to let maintenance staff and services know when there are changes in process safety or control.

Procedures and training must also stress the importance of controlling and tracking maintenance parts and tools – these can affect food safety.

Sanitation Training

To reduce the chances of accidental food contamination, make sure staff have a basic knowledge of chemical use and sanitation.

Staff members must understand general sanitation training. They must also understand all written sanitation procedures. Pest control and sanitation in a HACCP facility also require a lot of documentation. Train sanitation employees to create and maintain the records they are responsible for.

Often sanitation employees are responsible for both the clean-up and pre-op programs and they must understand how sanitation and pre-op affect each other. Also teach them how to take corrective actions when necessary.

The most important training for sanitation staff is how to correctly handle chemicals. Train sanitation crews in the correct dress and personal protective equipment required for both food safety and personal safety.

Teach sanitation staff how to store and separate chemicals. Make sure they know to store all cleaning, sanitizing and pest control chemicals in areas separate from food processing.

Supervisor Training

Supervisory employees are generally responsible for making sure all food employees on their shift follow company procedures and policies.

Most supervisory staff must be competent and trained to standards in the following areas:

- Relationship between the prevention of foodborne illness and the personal hygiene of an employee;
- The policies and responsibilities of a supervisor for preventing the transmission of foodborne disease from an employee to food or food products;
- The required food temperatures and safe cooking, cooling and storage of any potentially hazardous foods in the facility;
- The relationship between food safety and the management and control of:

- Cross-contamination;
- Hand contact with ready-to-eat foods;
- Hand washing;
- Maintaining a manufacturing environment in clean condition and good repair;
- The correct procedures for cleaning and sanitizing utensils;
- Poisonous or toxic material identification;
- Knowledge of all important processing points in the operation (from purchasing through to packaging); and
- The principles and details of the facility's HACCP plan.

Supervisors must be trained to monitor and correct behaviours and actions respectfully with staff. Supervisors will need to:

- Understand how to reinforce correct actions with praise or rewards;
- Be able to treat all employees with respect (in keeping with other cultural concepts of respect where appropriate);
- Understand the short version of words (acronyms) and the slang used for parts of the facility and its processes;
- Support staff when they ask questions to make sure that all employees understand the information; and
- Encourage line staff to take a personal interest in the facility's food safety.

Specialized Training

Some industries require that production employees take specialized training or courses to do their work (e.g. pasteurization training in the dairy industry). If the facility decides to use off-site training, keep a record on file. Many trainers will provide certificates of completion, attendance or certification. Keep copies of these documents with the in-house staff records to track all training employees receive.

5.0 PERSONNEL FORM TEMPLATES

- D.1 Daily Hygiene Record
- D.2 Employee Hygiene Policy
- D.3 Employee Training Record
- D.4 Injury Incident Report
- D.5 Procedures Training Record
- D.6 Training Attendance Record
- D.7 Visitor Hygiene Contract
- D.8 Visitor Log Book

6.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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