The HACCP Steps

The following document provides a brief overview of the HACCP principles. For more information please contact the Commercial Environmental Health Team.

1.   Identify the hazards

The first step is to find any potential hazards which could occur during the production. A hazard is something that might be harmful and may involve either microbiological, chemical or physical contamination.

2.   Introduce controls

Once you have identified possible hazards you must then determine what controls you can put in place to eliminate the hazards or reduce them to a safe, acceptable level.

The controls must be practical and relevant to your business. If you cannot find a suitable control for your process, it may be possible to find an alternative process which can be more easily controlled.

Examples:

- Temperature Controls
- Using date coding to control shelf Life
- Hand washing controls to prevent cross contamination
- Separate equipment for preparing raw meat

3.   Decide on the critical control points

Decide which of these controls are critical to ensuring safety. A control is critical if the hazard will not be removed before the food is sold at any other stage of production.

4.   Monitor critical controls

Once controls have been put in place they should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure they work effectively. It is not necessary to check controls on every occasion a particular process is carried out provided that you are sure the frequency of checks will enable any problems to be identified before there is a risk to food safety.

Examples:

- Checking refrigeration and cooking temperatures
- Checking Date Codes
- Checking Cleaning Schedules

5.   Corrective action

Staff must be sure of what action they should take when monitoring shows that there may be a problem.

6.   Review your system

Once established, the system must be reviewed on a regular basis, when any operations of the business change or when problems are identified.