

Basic Facts about SSOP's and HACCP Plans for Meat Processors

All meat and poultry processors under Federal or State inspection are required by law to have Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP's) and a Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan or plans in place. These measures help ensure that meat and poultry processors are producing safe products. These ideas can be confusing and difficult to understand so it is important to learn the basics before starting your meat or poultry processing business.

What is an SSOP?

SSOP stands for **S**anitation **S**tandard **O**perating **P**rocedures. These are written procedures that describe the processor's cleaning program and the records they use to monitor it. The program needs to describe sanitary personnel practices and operations that are used to keep the environment and plant facilities in a clean condition.

What specific things does a SSOP need to contain?

SSOPs must describe the activities the processor performs before they start to process food each day. It also describes steps taken during operations that the processor uses to prevent direct product contamination. These written procedures need to be specific and must contain many details of a processor's sanitation program.

What is HACCP?

HACCP is a technical term that stands for **H**azard **A**nalysis & **C**ritical **C**ontrol **P**oints. This is a system that processors use to put a business's food safety practices into action. The system focuses on preventing food safety problems and ensures the production of safe food products. HACCP applies scientific-based and technical information to practical situations in the meat and poultry production process.

What types of food safety hazards does HACCP prevent?

HACCP covers all types of potential food safety problems including biological, chemical, and physical hazards that may naturally occur in the food or may occur in the production process. A HACCP program works to control hazards that affect the safety of the product. The main goal is to produce safe products for consumers.

How do I develop a HACCP plan?

There are seven principles used to create a HACCP plan. They include:

1. Identify which hazards are likely to occur in the process by examining each step in the production process for potential food safety problems
2. Identify which points in the process are critical for controlling specific hazards: Critical Control Points (CCPs)
3. Identify a measurable target value that can be used to determine that each CCP has been met: the critical limits. Develop procedures for monitoring the CCP's
4. Develop procedures for correcting a problem if a CCP is not met
5. Develop procedures for verifying that the monitoring of the CCPs is being conducted
6. Develop record-keeping and documentation procedures

Who needs a HACCP plan and SSOP's?

Any meat or poultry processor under inspection through the USDA or State Inspection Program must have both a HACCP plan and SSOP's in place. The requirements for these plans are found in the Code of Federal Regulations: [9 CFR 416](#) and [417](#). It is important to understand these requirements before developing these plans and procedures for your business.

For additional information on how to develop SSOP's and a HACCP plan, visit:

The **Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Dairy & Meat Inspection Division** at 651-201-6300 or visit the [MDA website](#)
Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) Small Plant Help Desk at 1-877-FSIS-HELP or visit the [FSIS website](#)

Updated: 8-28-2017

For Additional Information: 651-201-6300 or MDA.MeatPoultryEgg@state.mn.us • 625 Robert Street North, Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538