

# Taking Action to Build Food-Safe Schools

## Action Sheet

## A School Food Safety Program Based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Principles

Serving safe food is a critical responsibility for you and your school nutrition team and is also a recommendation of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Through a school food safety program, you can control the risks associated with storing, preparing, and serving food. The program should include a written plan based on HACCP principles and documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). HACCP is a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and controlling food safety risks. USDA offers the process approach to HACCP principles as a foundation for your school food safety program.

SOPs are very important to an effective food safety program. They serve as a basic food safety platform, and they control for nonspecific risks that may not be addressed in the HACCP-based plan. For example, surfaces of equipment and utensils that are soiled and have not been sanitized should not come into contact with raw or cooked (ready-to-eat) food. Procedures to prevent this should be covered by an SOP.

Active managerial control (AMC) is another important concept that is critical to the success of a food safety program based on HACCP principles. AMC means that you and your school nutrition managers take a preventive, rather than reactive, approach to food safety by understanding and consistently applying the school food safety plan to prevent, eliminate, or reduce the occurrence of risks that may result in foodborne illness.

### Food-Safe Schools Action Steps and Resources

1. Develop and implement a written food safety plan based on the process approach to HACCP for every location where food is stored, prepared, or served.
  - The USDA FNS *Guidance for School Food Authorities: Developing a School Food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP* identifies the need to develop food safety SOPs and the minimum elements you must include in using HACCP principles and a process approach to HACCP.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food\\_Safety\\_HACCPGuidance.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf)
  - The NFSMI developed a *Template for Developing a School Food Safety Program*, which also reflects the required elements and provides a practical planning approach.  
[www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080207024226.pdf](http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080207024226.pdf)
2. Develop SOPs for each school within your district.
  - The NFSMI also offers a variety of HACCP-based SOP templates that can be used directly or modified to meet the circumstances of any school nutrition operation.  
<http://sop.nfsmi.org/HACCPBasedSOPs.php>
  - Additional guidance and tools on HACCP-based SOPs are available through the NFSMI  
[www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080207024226.pdf](http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080207024226.pdf)  
One tool allows you to build customized SOPs,  
<http://sop.nfsmi.org/login4.php#register>

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- The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) has developed simple, wordless food safety icons to reinforce key food safety tasks. The icons are available free of charge for educational and non-commercial uses.  
[www.foodprotection.org/resources/food-safety-icons/icons.php](http://www.foodprotection.org/resources/food-safety-icons/icons.php)

### 3. Use HACCP-based recipes in your school nutrition operations.

- USDA Recipes for Schools. These updated recipes from the 1988 *Quantity Recipes for School Food Service* and the 1995 *Tool Kit for Healthy School Meals* reflect the changes made in the newest edition of the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. Revised recipes have been standardized, edited for consistency, and updated with Critical Control Point (CCP) information from the 2003 *Food Code* supplement.

<http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?q=cEIEPTEwMiZpc01ncj10cnVl>

- The recipes are also available on CD-ROM by request from USDA, FNS.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition) ■



HACCP began in the 1960s when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration asked Pillsbury to design and manufacture the first foods for space flights, which of course had to be free of foodborne hazards.

The process approach to HACCP separates food preparation into three broad categories based on how many times each menu item moves through the temperature danger zone.

The temperature danger zone is between 41°F and 135°F. Food that is held in the temperature danger zone is at risk for growing bacteria that can make people sick when they eat the food.