
Seafood Safety Manual

Guidance and reference material

to help seafood businesses comply
with the Food Production (Seafood
Safety Scheme) Regulation 2001



In the preparation of the material and references contained in this Seafood Safety Manual, SafeFood Production NSW has made every endeavour to ensure that it is both factual, accurate and current at the time of issue. It makes no claim to being comprehensive and all users are advised where necessary to access reference material and or seek advice from SafeFood or independently as required. The Manual is designed for practical guidance and reference by those operating in what constitutes the NSW Seafood industry and licencees will be periodically advised, if and as required, of any future updates or amendments.

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Your Seafood Safety Manual

What do I need to do?

You **don't** have to read it all now but always have it handy for reference.

- Take some time to become familiar with the contents of the manual.
- Focus on understanding what a food safety program is.
- Carefully work your way through the food safety plan information and follow the steps one at a time – it might help to do this with a colleague or partner.

REMEMBER if you carry on more than one distinct activity (eg. you farm oysters and you also open them for sale) then you need a food safety plan for each activity. Don't panic, some model plans are included to guide you.

What is it?

In 1998 the government passed the Food Production (Safety) Act which established Safe Food Production NSW ('SafeFood'). The Act allows for the establishment, by regulation, of risk based Food Safety Schemes for primary industry and the seafood industry. Food Safety Scheme regulations were introduced in 1999 for the Dairy industry, 2000 for the Meat industry and in 2001 for the Seafood industry. This manual has been prepared to help the seafood sector, particularly small businesses, understand and meet some of the things it must do to comply with this legislation.

The manual is basically a collection of guidance and advisory material put together by SafeFood in consultation with representatives of the seafood industry.

What is it for?

It is a practical guide designed to help seafood businesses from the ocean to the back door of retail sale ensure that they have in place the procedures and practices to ensure the continued production and sale of safe seafood. The manual includes information on;

- Prerequisite or Supporting Programs – also known as Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHP's)
- Food Safety Programs and Plans to meet regulatory requirements
- Information and fact sheets on seafood safety hazards and other issues.

How does it affect me?

The Food Production (Seafood Safety Scheme) Regulation 2001 established under the Food Production (Safety) Act 1998 requires all seafood businesses as defined in the Regulation to:

- Obtain a ONCE ONLY licence from SafeFood;
- Prepare a food safety program in respect of their activities and
- Prepare a HACCP-based food safety plan as part of that program.

What if I already have a food safety program?

If you already have a food safety program you will not need another program. You should:

- Check to see if your program includes the information included in this Manual; and
- If it doesn't include everything in this Manual, you should add the additional information to their food safety program.

Need help?

We have tried to make the process as easy as possible for you but if you need help you can;

- Phone us in the Seafood branch of SafeFood on (02) 9295 5803
- Call SafeFood switchboard on (02) 9295 5777
- Send us a fax on (02) 9261 5614
- Refer to the list of references material in this manual

Whatever you do –remember!!

USE A GOOD SOURCE – the food you handle will be no better than where you got it from.

Then, so it is fit to eat;

KEEP IT CLEAN – means good standards of construction and maintenance of the facilities and attention to cleanliness and hygiene in the workplace and amongst the staff.

KEEP IT COOL – get your product cool as soon as you can and ensure it stays that way until it is sold or eaten.

KEEP IT SEPARATE – keep raw and cooked or processed seafoods away from each other and other foods.

KEEP GOOD RECORDS – means what it says! What it is, where it is from, what you did with it and when. Record as you go along not later!

What is a Food Safety Program?

A Food Safety Program is a set of practices and procedures that your business will need to manage food safely while it is in your care.

What does it consist of?

For most businesses, the Food Safety Program will consist of a number of prerequisite or supporting programs along with a HACCP-based food safety plan, as shown in Figure 1.

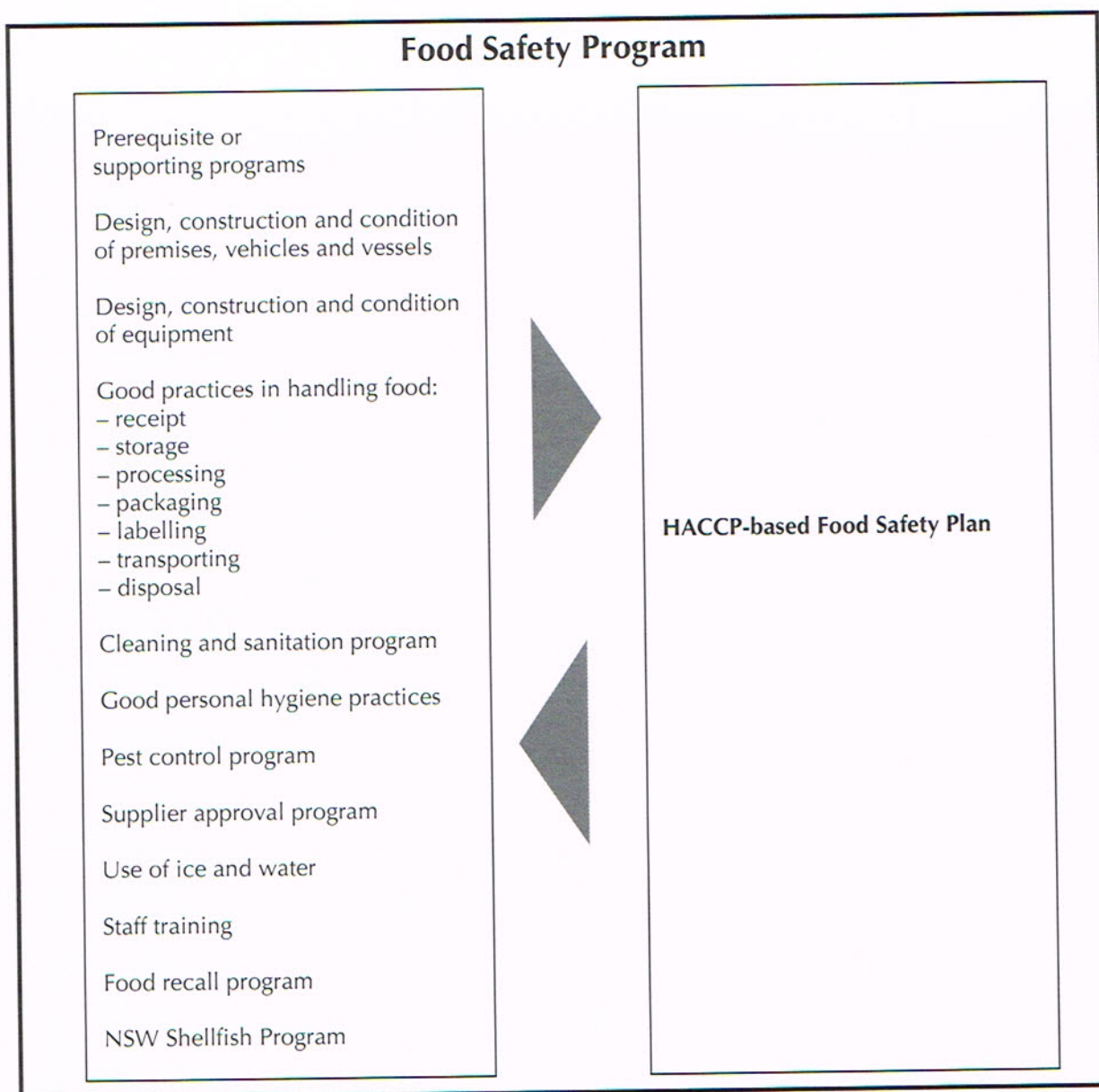


Figure 1: Components of a Food Safety Program

Prerequisite or supporting programs

The prerequisite or supporting programs are also called GMPs and GHPs.

These are the basic requirements for all food businesses no matter what type of food a business produces.

Without them, you will find it difficult to manage the basic food safety requirements.

These supporting programs may not help to control the food safety hazards that are specific to your business and therefore you will also need a HACCP-based food safety plan.

HACCP-based food safety plan¹

A HACCP-based food safety plan is used to target the main food safety hazards associated with your business which may not be controlled by the supporting programs.

It is important to remember that before developing your HACCP-based food safety plan, the supporting programs should be in place.

If not, then you will find that the plan becomes too big as many basic food safety hazards will be included.

Basically, the HACCP-based food safety plan targets your main hazards by:

- Getting you to identify what your main hazards are;
- Putting in place steps that help control these hazards; and
- Documenting where, when and how you control these hazards.

The next two Sections of this manual provide you with the steps to develop both the supporting programs and a HACCP-based food safety plan.

¹ HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. Further information on HACCP is provided in the *Information and fact sheets* Sections of this Manual.