

Preparatory Stage F: Identify intended use of the product

This page is currently being updated. Apologies for any inconveniences caused.

Statement

The HACCP team need to have a thorough understanding of the intended use of the product(s) included in the HACCP study so that they may undertake an accurate hazard evaluation as part of the Hazard Analysis.

How is this stage achieved?

There are two key factors which are relevant here:

1. The nature of the intended customer.
2. The extent of any further processing of the food prior to consumption.

1. The nature of the intended customer

You should consider whether the product is intended for supply to other food businesses or direct to the final consumer. You should also consider whether target consumers fall into one of the following vulnerable groups. Ask yourself “Do the consumers of my product have a particular food safety requirement?” It is your responsibility to understand your target group and increase your knowledge and awareness of hazards (physical, chemical, biological and allergens) that are of a particular concern to the vulnerable group/s.

Vulnerable group	Considerations
Allergy sufferers	Is the product intended to be consumed by sensitive groups who may be allergic to specific food ingredients. Are claims such as “free from” made on the product label and if so are such claims substantiated? Disclaimers such as “May Contain” should only be made where a thorough risk assessment identifies a residual risk of contamination by a food allergen after all reasonable control measures have been applied. [1]
Young	Infants and young children are regarded as a vulnerable group when it comes to food safety. You need to think about what additional hazards may be specific to this target group (e.g. type of food ^[1] , size of food, choking hazards, mineral levels).
Elderly	If elderly people are going to consume the product think about hazards that are specific to this group. Older adults are more susceptible to foodborne illness. The immune system often weakens as you get older and stomach acid also decreases, stomach acid plays an important role in reducing the number of bacteria in our intestinal tracts and the risk of illness.

[\[1\]](#) See [FSA Guidance on food allergen management](#) ^[2]

Vulnerable group	Considerations
Pregnant	There are some foods that pregnant women are advised to avoid ^[3] consuming because they can make the woman ill or harm the unborn child.
Immunocompromised/ immunosuppressed/ immune deficient	Is the product to be consumed by people that have an impaired immune response ^[4] (for instance those undergoing chemotherapy or have AIDS, premature infants or transplant recipients that take drugs to prevent their body from rejecting the new organ). Consideration should be given to that fact that the immune system may be prevented from attacking harmful microorganisms in food.

Note this list is not exhaustive

Again, the HACCP team should consider the likely abuse/unintended use of the product by the customer or final consumer (See guidance on this under Preparatory Stage E). You should consider if the product you produce could result in it being sold to a market other than that intended.

2. The extent of any further processing of the food prior to consumption.

Different microbiological criteria will apply depending on whether the food product is supplied raw, processed or ready to eat to the final consumer. The HACCP team will need to clearly define which of these categories applies to the food and what, if any, instructions will need to be provided to the customer to assure the safe consumption of the food.

For example, if the product is supplied to the customer as a ready to eat food, this should be clearly stated on the labelling. Most importantly, however, the HACCP team will need to ensure that any decisions made during the hazard analysis element of the HACCP study takes into account the fact that the food will receive no further processing prior to consumption. Critical control points identified by the HACCP team in the production of such foods will need to “prevent or eliminate” hazards arising from the presence of pathogens such as *Salmonella* and *E.coli* o157.

For other types of food, clear information, typically on the food label, should be provided to the consumer where steps are required to be taken prior to the consumption of food to make it safe. For example, a product containing raw poultry should be clearly labelled as such and include clear, validated cooking instructions. It may be that the identified critical control points for a raw or processed food are sufficient to reduce a hazard, such as *Salmonella*, to an “acceptable level” rather than total elimination because the food will be subjected to further processing by the customer.

Source URL: <https://myhaccp.food.gov.uk/help/guidance/preparatory-stage-f-identify-intended-use-product>

Links

[1] <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/solid-foods-weaning.aspx>

[2] <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide>

[3] <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/foods-to-avoid-pregnant.aspx>

[4] <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm354783.htm>