Central Warehouse – Part 5

Inventory

All operations participating in the School Nutrition Program must have a food safety program based on Process HACCP principles. The food safety program must conform to the guidance document issued by the USDA. Central warehouses owned or leased and operated by the SFA to service schools are included in this requirement for a HACCP Plan.

In a central warehouse, process HACCP is handled differently than in a school kitchen. It is based on sorting food items into one of two categories – time/temperature control for safety (TCS) and non-TCS. Each category has a set of food safety standards to follow for keeping foods safe to eat.

## Step 1: List all food items purchased, stored, and distributed by the warehouse.

The first step in implementing a HACCP Plan is to prepare a list of all food items purchased and stored at the warehouse during the school year. The foods should be listed by their common name rather than their brand name. Similar foods can be grouped together. Below is a recommended method for listing food items.

* Fresh meats, poultry, and fish
* Milk and other dairy products
* Eggs
* Fresh fruits and vegetables
* Refrigerated packaged foods
* Frozen packaged foods
* Canned foods
* Dry ingredients, such as salt, sugar, flour
* Baked goods
* Condiments
* Packaged snack foods, including chips, pretzels, nuts

Sometimes items in one category could be TCS foods and some may be non-TCS foods so it will be important to clearly identify the differences. For example, some condiments may be shelf stable and others may require refrigerated storage.

#### Step 2: Determine if the food item is time/temperature control for safety (TCS) or non-TCS

After identifying all food items planned for the inventory, sort them into one of two categories: TCS or non-TCS. TCS foods support the rapid growth of harmful bacteria so they always require time and temperature control to ensure safety. In a central warehouse setting, TCS foods must be kept at 41°F or colder (most warehouses do not handle hot TCS foods!). This can be accomplished by storing in a refrigerator or in a freezer. Non-TCS foods do not require time/temperature control for safety and can be stored in a refrigerator, in a freezer, or at room temperature in a dry storeroom depending on the type of product and recommended quality control procedures.

TCS food typically includes raw or cooked animal foods (meat, fish, poultry, dairy, eggs); cut melon; sliced tomatoes; and raw bean sprouts. Non-TCS foods include most canned foods, most baked goods, and many commercially processed, shelf-stable packaged foods.

If you are not certain about how to store a food item, read the product label as the label will usually indicate if the product needs to be refrigerated or frozen. For example, individual coffee creamers might be labeled “No Refrigeration Needed” or “Refrigerate after opening.” Some might be labeled “Refrigeration required.” It is very important to check the product label to determine how to safely store a product because sometimes it is not obvious.

Refer to HACCP Plan Part 1 for helpful information to use when classifying the food items stored and distributed in your operation.

**Step 3: Record the food items on the appropriate FOOD ITEM/INVENTORY SUMMARY table.**

Complete the **FOOD ITEM/INVENTORY SUMMARY** table found at the end of this section. This table must be reviewed before the beginning of each school year to be certain it is current. After it is complete, file in the HACCP Binder. Multiple copies of the form should be made if necessary.