

HACCP INFORMATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR VIRGINIA'S SHELLFISH INDUSTRY



PURPOSE

This fact sheet will familiarize Virginia's shellfish Industry members either processing or direct marketing molluscan shellfish (such as oysters, clams, mussels and whole scallops) with the HACCP system, training requirements as well as where to find additional resources.

INTRODUCTION

Food safety remains one of the primary concerns for commerce and consumer acceptance of seafood products such as fish and shellfish. Since 1995, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been enforcing a seafood food safety regulation (21 CFR Part 123) - known informally as FDA's Seafood HACCP Regulation. This regulation requires, in part, that a hazard analysis and a HACCP plan development be performed by someone trained in HACCP.

WHAT IS HACCP?

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a food safety system that when implemented, identifies the hazards associated with seafood products and formulate strategies to control them. For example, a shellstock shipper will include information in the HACCP plan about the required temperature that shellstock must be received and shipped for safety of the product. This information is captured in a document called a HACCP plan that delineates the steps that a seafood processor is going to follow and monitor every time product is received, stored and shipped. In addition to a HACCP plan, processors must also have in place Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's) and Sanitation Control Procedures that support the HACCP system that when combined, form part of a **food safety management system**.

WHO NEEDS HACCP TRAINING?

All shellfish dealers holding a certification from the Virginia Department of Health, Shellfish Safety (VDH DSS) are required to have HACCP training and the extent of the training is dependent on the level of certification. There are varying degrees of dealer certification levels from the more basic shellstock shippers (SS) to the more complex Shucker-Packers (SP). For shellstock shippers (SS), a one-day training course is sufficient and the more complex processing operations require the full three-day course.

VIRGINIA SEAFOOD INSPECTION

To ensure the safety of our seafood, processors are inspected by various federal and state agencies for compliance with all food regulations, including Good Manufacturing Practices, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point and Sanitation Control Programs. In Virginia, these responsibilities are carried out by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Virginia Department of Health Division of Shellfish Safety, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and the Seafood Inspection Program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

WHERE TO OBTAIN SEAFOOD HACCP TRAINING

Seafood HACCP Training can be obtained two ways: Attending a 3-day "live" Basic Seafood HACCP course or completing an Online training course composed of Two Segments. Both courses are available through the National Seafood HACCP Alliance for Training and Education. <https://www.afdo.org/training/sha/>

If you need information about HACCP training available in Virginia you can visit the [Virginia Tech Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center website](#), reach out by email mschwarz@vt.edu, or by phone at 757-727-4861. For full details on whether or not you may need HACCP training, please visit the [Virginia Division of Health, Division of Shellfish Safety](#) (VDH, DSS) or [Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumers Services](#) (VDACS).

ADDITIONAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

In addition to HACCP training requirements, the management of an establishment must also ensure that their employees who are engaged in manufacturing, processing, packing, or holding seafood (including temporary and seasonal personnel) attain the necessary education or training, and/or experience to understand handling practices regarding food safety and employee hygiene practices when working with seafood products. No formalize training is required but training must be attained and documented. VDH, Division of Shellfish Safety has a Shellfish Dealer Employee training on food safety and Hygiene practices, available either in English or Spanish.

HACCP AND ITS RELATION TO A FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is a systematic approach to the identification, evaluation, and control of food safety hazards that affect the safety of your seafood products. Food safety hazards can be biological, chemical, and physical in kind that can cause food products to be unsafe to consumers. HACCP is designed to mitigate hazards rather than to depend on inspection of finished products to detect the effects of hazards.

However, HACCP is not a stand-alone safety program. Prerequisite programs such as Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMPs) and Sanitation Control Procedures are needed to work together with HACCP to control issues of cross contamination that can affect the safety and wholesomeness of the product. Together, these programs can provide the foundation of a **food safety management system** for the development and implementation of successful HACCP plans. For specifics of a written HACCP plan seven principles and how they apply to the shellfish industry, please [click here](#).