



Allergen Control System

Introduction

The company has established, implemented a programme of Prerequisites for the site, which is maintained in order to ensure effective operation of the Food Safety Management system.

Scope

The scope of the Prerequisite programmes includes all products manufactured on site and activities conducted on site.

Procedure

The organization ensures that PRPs are established, implemented, maintained, reviewed, improved and updated to assist in:

- Controlling or preventing the introduction of food safety hazards through the work environment.
- To eliminate, prevent or reduce to an acceptable level the biological, chemical and physical contamination of the product(s) including cross contaminations between products.
- To control, minimize and/or prevent food safety hazard levels in the finished product, ingredients and product processing environment.

Allergen Control System

The company recognises the serious repercussions of allergic reactions and therefore takes every precaution to prevent this happening. The company has established an allergen control system which is maintained as part of the Operational Prerequisite programme in order to meet the requirements of the Food Safety Quality Management System and ensure the safe production of products.

This allergen control procedure must be followed by all staff at all times in order to prevent cross-contamination of food causing a potential serious customer illness or allergic reaction.

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Allergen Control System

A food allergy is an immune system response to a food substance that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. The immune system creates antibodies to fight the food substance that it considers harmful and the person becomes hypersensitive to that food.

When the food is eaten again the immune system recognises the food substance and initiates a defence mechanism involving the release of chemicals, particularly histamine. These chemicals trigger the allergic symptoms that can affect the respiratory system, gastrointestinal tract, skin, and/or cardiovascular system. Allergic Reactions can be extremely serious, the most common being peanut allergy, and result in anaphylaxis (A severe allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and causes a severe drop of blood pressure and restriction of breathing that may result in death if not treated).

Symptoms of Food Allergies include:

- flushing of the skin.
- swelling of the throat and mouth.
- difficulty breathing.
- sudden feeling of weakness (fall in blood pressure).
- difficulty in swallowing or speaking.
- abdominal pain
- nausea and /or vomiting.
- collapse and unconsciousness.

Foods That Can Cause Reactions

The following types of foods can cause reactions in susceptible persons:

- Peanuts
- Nuts
- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Soya
- Cereals containing gluten
- Sesame seeds

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- Celery/celeriac
- Mustard
- Lupin
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites

More details are contained in Appendix 1.

Controlling Allergens

All staff receives training on the types of foods that can cause allergies. The induction package includes a briefing on the appendix 1 types of allergens and specifically those handled on site. When allergen control is considered a significant hazard the specific training is given to every member of staff who can affect the handling of that allergen risk. The Development Manager prepares recipes at the design stage and specifically highlights any potential allergen risks so that the Food Safety Team can assess the risk and apply the appropriate controls. It is company policy to use unambiguous information and descriptions of food on the label, delivery notes and specifications.

For example foods containing peanuts will have a warning *****This product contains peanuts***** especially when it is not obvious the product contains peanuts with foods such as Thai curries.

All personnel are instructed to direct enquiries about ingredients and possible allergen contamination to the Technical Manager. If a customer asks if a food contains a certain allergen, the Technical Manager checks all the ingredients and what they contain before confirming if the allergen is present or not.

Checking and Managing Ingredients

The Technical Manager maintains an information/specification folder containing all the ingredient information for every item purchased. Purchases are only made as per the Purchasing procedure from approved suppliers to approved documented specifications. The Technical Manager checks all new ingredients and ingredients periodically to ensure the label and specification match and that all the allergens present in the ingredient have been identified and documented. This information is transferred via the recipe to in-process and end product specifications, descriptions and for product labelling purposes. The Technical Manager is responsible for approving all new product labels prior to

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