



## HACCP Rules

# Step 9 - Vacuum packing raw food

### Summary

Vacuum packing involves removing air from the packaging that surrounds the food and preventing its return by an airtight seal.

In a typical vacuum pack, the packaging material is moulded closely around the food.

### What could happen?

Food is left at ambient temperatures for too long, allowing bacteria to multiply.

The vacuum packing machine is used for both raw and cooked food, meaning issues such as cross contamination between raw and cooked foods.

### Procedure

- Never use machinery for both raw and cooked food. If vacuum packing raw and cooked food, two separate machines should be used.
- Make sure all equipment, including the Vacuum Packing machine, slicing machines, knives and all work surfaces that may come into contact with the food products are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Bags used for vacuum packing must be stored in clean containers with close fitting lids to prevent them becoming contaminated.
- Prior to handling food, team members must wash their hands thoroughly.
- Make sure the vacuum packing machine is working properly and is well maintained.
- Ensure every bag is fully sealed with a tight fit around the food.
- Vacuum packing foods more than once must be avoided at all times as it becomes impossible to assess the shelf life or safety of the product.
- All products that are going to be vacuum packed must be as fresh as possible, and not kept for several days prior to packing.
- Food must be labelled to include food allergen info.

# Step 9 - Vacuum packing raw food - HACCP Summary

## Hazard

- Contamination with pathogens, food allergens or chemicals.
- **Multiplication of pathogens.**

## Controls

- **Only dedicated raw food vacuum pack machine to be used.**
- Only good quality products are to be vacuum packed.
- Sanitised vacuum packing machine to be used.
- Minimise the time of meat, poultry, fish, dairy products at room temperature.
- There should be a shelf life of no more than 3 days or original date code of the products (whichever is earliest).
- Product must only be vacuum packed on one occasion to ensure shelf life control.
- Vacuum packing machine to be cleaned & disinfected or double sanitised (two-stage process) using approved chemicals which meet BS EN 1276:1997 or BS EN 13697:20001 or equivalent.
- Minimise the time of meat, poultry, fish, dairy products at room temperature to 60 minutes.
- Product to be stored at 5°C or below post vacuum packing
- Food is labelled to include food allergen info.

## Critical limits

- To be vacuum packed in a maximum of 24 hours after delivery.
- Maximum of 2 hours above 8°C
- Use within 3 days, or original 'Use by' date if this earlier.

## Corrective action

- Dispose of any vacuum packed food out of date / temperature requirements.
- Reject any food not packaged on correct day or if in date use immediately.
- Review / change packaging if required.
- Repair / replace equipment.
- Re-clean & disinfect or double sanitise equipment.
- Unpack any food which has already been vacuum packed and either use immediately if in date or dispose of.

## Checks and records

- Temperature checks of chilled storage equipment completed three times daily.
- Check cleaning schedules and approved chemicals.
- Observe cleaning practices.