

The MyHACCP web tool - guidance for authorised officers

MyHACCP is a free FSA produced web tool that guides food businesses through the process of identifying food safety hazards and controls and the production of a documented food safety management system based on HACCP principles.

Target food businesses for MyHACCP

MyHACCP was developed to meet an identified HACCP support need for small food manufacturing businesses but HACCP principles are generic and this tool will be useful to other types of food business when they need to undertake more formal and in depth consideration of hazards and controls for inclusion in their HACCP based food safety management system (FSMS).

Small food manufacturers represent a specific banding of businesses falling between those many businesses where a safer food better business (SFBB) type approach is suitable and those larger manufacturing businesses that have in house technical competence on the HACCP based approach. The target businesses are therefore specific but there is an express support need to be met.

Where possible the terminology used in the MyHACCP tool and supporting guidance takes account of the variance in business needs and formality of approach that will be exhibited by the spectrum of micro businesses through to larger business – eg a small business is unlikely to assemble a formal HACCP team but a larger business may.

The driver for production of the MyHACCP web tool

FSA research showed that there is a considerable amount of guidance available on the implementation of HACCP principles, in the form of publications, training courses, technical advice and consultancy - much of which is free of charge. But it appears that only a small amount of this guidance is utilised by small food manufacturing businesses (SFMBs) with a size of less than 50 employees.

The average rating of guidance that is actually used by the interviewees is high, however 58% of businesses surveyed had problems with guidance including that it is hard to find. The majority of small food businesses interviewed used Environmental Health Practitioners as a resource for advice and guidance on the implementation of HACCP principles as required by the Food Hygiene Regulations. Many interviewees commented on the positive nature of this relationship.

It is not surprising that business tend to look to authorised officials (AOs) for guidance on HACCP based controls, but the business need is likely to be more in depth and the issues more complex where food manufacture is involved. Taking account of other demands, AOs may find it difficult to provide the required level of input and in essence the duty to devise and implement a HACCP based FSMS sits with the food business operator (FBO) and not the AO.

Faced with a need for a FSMS that requires a more formal consideration of hazards and controls beyond the scope of FSA support packages such as Safer Food Better Business, businesses may struggle to find the information they need and to marshal it in such a way that allows adequate consideration of the issues and documentation of the outputs. Some businesses may turn to an external consultant to carry out a HACCP study and produce their documented system.

The purpose of the MyHACCP web tool

FBO engagement in the development and ownership of their FSMS is key and MyHACCP seeks to achieve this by reducing the burden through bringing the resources that they need into one place and providing guidance for their use. It should remove a significant barrier and encourage otherwise reluctant higher risk food businesses to develop and implement their own HACCP based FSMS.

The MyHACCP site provides businesses with:

- A web tool that leads them through a HACCP study protocol in a step wise manner. The focus is on their products but also considers the prerequisites applicable to all food businesses.
- Tiered guidance in terms of depth and complexity on:
 - The preparation for a HACCP study
 - Working through each of the HACCP principles
 - Identification of hazards, their analysis, CCPs and control
- External web links to relevant information
- A pdf output of the finished HACCP study and HACCP based controls.

How the MyHACCP web tool works

MyHACCP will assist businesses on their journey to producing effective HACCP based food safety controls by providing a structured approach and supporting guidance and information; it will not state what the business has to do. Instead the tool will lead users through the process, encouraging them to think about their own process(es) and make informed decisions based on what they know or find out.

MyHACCP will capture the responses that users provide and in the background will incorporate the responses into a documented record of the HACCP study and HACCP based controls. Users may download the finished document but it will be

stored for their future use if they need to add further products or amend the information that they input in any way. Any amendments will be reflected in the new pdf document download.

The tool may be used to produce multiple studies for different product lines or a generic study covering the processing of similar products.

Flexible use of the MyHACCP site and web tool

After some consideration we decided that we would not require users to work through the whole of the MyHACCP tool before they were allowed to download output. The thinking here is that:

- Any engagement with HACCP based controls thinking is better than no engagement. Users will be prompted to work through all sections of the MyHACCP tool systematically, and some sections do depend on inputs to previous sections. The aim is for users to produce and download a completed HACCP plan but they may download and view their outputs and the developing document as they go along. If they fail to complete all sections they will at least be able to provide a documented record of their progress against a standard format. This should provide a valuable insight to where they had difficulty and is preferable to making no progress or simply handing ownership of the process over to a third party. Where users have not completed all parts of the MYHACCP tool this will be flagged up to them in the tool and also on the final downloaded pdf document.
- Some FBO's may just want to view and use the guidance or download support documents and then proceed under their own initiative – but we hope their exposure to the wider site will encourage them to use all available resource.
- We do not want to discourage engagement with FBOs who have a good general knowledge but are struggling with a specific aspect of their HACCP based controls. For example, they may be looking for more specific help in carrying out their risk analysis and CCP determination. If they complete these sections of the tool and no others they may still download their output.

Required FBO commitment

Ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of a HACCP based FSMS rests with the food business itself. Food hygiene regulations place the duty on the FBO and it is food business operators and their staff who know the processes and products the best.

Preparing an effective FSMS based on HACCP principles takes some time and this commitment increases as the complexity of products and processes increases - but it is a worthwhile investment in food safety and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Working through MyHACCP is not intended to be a quick exercise or a substitute for businesses examining their hazards thoroughly and producing controls themselves, but it should reduce the time burden and difficulty in sourcing all necessary information. During the development phase industry representatives asked us not to lose the rigour of the HACCP based approach by “dumbing down” the MyHACCP web tool.

It is estimated that working through MyHACCP and the associated offline tasks will take a number of days, the total depending on the complexity of products and food operations, but FBOs can log on and off as they wish, saving the progress they have made. The MyHACCP tool will guide businesses through the process in a step-wise manner but users will need to do work offline such as constructing a flow chart of manufacturing processes and considering hazards and controls.

Authorised enforcement officers can experience the user journey

To aid enforcement officer familiarity with the site, its support materials and to provide an opportunity to gain user experience in the MyHACCP tool - authorised officers may log in themselves as a user for test purposes.

You will need to visit www.food.gov.uk/myhaccp create an account – using your local authority email address preferably. Submit “dummy” information in the fields normally required of businesses by selecting any of the options presented in response to the registration questions. **With one exception – when you are asked to enter “business type” please ensure that you select the “Enforcement officer” category** from the drop down menu. This ensures that your test sessions will be excluded from our analysis of business use of MyHACCP.

Once registered, you can log in and have a look around the site and the supporting resources, if you wish to view the full user experience, create your own “dummy” HACCP study. If you keep your input simple you should be able to work through the whole process in less than 1 hour as a test.

Guidance on navigating the tool

Guidance on navigation is contained within the web tool and it has been reproduced at Annex 1 to this document for ease of viewing.

Background analysis of user interaction with the MyHACCP web tool

We do not want to put potential site users off by requiring masses of information before they enter the site. User input remains anonymous; we do not require a business address and a business name is optional. The information we require is limited to:

- Email address – this is needed to send new passwords when requested
- Username – created by the user to make their input secure and accessible only to them
- Country, first two post code characters, business size, business type – this allows us to analyse use of the site by these criteria

In the background we will be capturing details of user interaction with the site – including the areas of help, downloads and external sites that are accessed most frequently. This will provide very useful information on the areas of HACCP based control where users are less confident by business size or sector. This information we will allow us to enhance MyHACCP guidance for these areas or produce stand alone guidance external to the MyHACCP site where there the analysis demonstrates a specific need.

Frequently Asked Questions

We have included a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on the web site, for now it contains the questions that we anticipate may be asked by users and will expand further as we receive user feedback.

General User Guide for the MyHACCP Web Tool

1. Overview

The MyHACCP web tool is designed to be easy and intuitive to use. Through user testing we have tried to ensure that at any point it is clear how to complete the forms and how to access additional help should you need it. This document may state some obvious points, but should help to prepare or consolidate your understanding of the forms.

2. Starting a new study

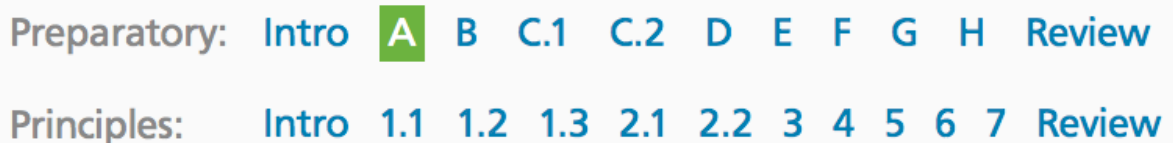
To start a new study, go to the MyHACCP web tool page and click the “Start New Study” button.

From this page you can start as many studies as you need, resume old studies and delete unwanted studies.

3. Navigating within a study

Whilst in a MyHACCP study you can navigate in two main ways.

- Using the MyHACCP study form navigation at the top of each study page.



The screenshot shows a navigation menu with two rows of links. The first row is labeled 'Preparatory:' and contains links for 'Intro', 'A', 'B', 'C.1', 'C.2', 'D', 'E', 'F', 'G', 'H', and 'Review'. The 'A' link is highlighted with a green square. The second row is labeled 'Principles:' and contains links for 'Intro', '1.1', '1.2', '1.3', '2.1', '2.2', '3', '4', '5', '6', '7', and 'Review'.

- Using the "previous" and "save and continue" buttons.



A dark green rectangular button with the word 'Previous' in white text.



A dark green rectangular button with the text 'Save and continue' in white text.

4. Saving your responses

Clicking on any of the form navigation links will save the form.

This means that you will save the form responses on the current page when you:

- click on "Save this page";

Save this page

- click on "Save and continue";

Save and continue

- click on "Previous";

Previous


- click on any item in the MyHACCP study form navigation.

Preparatory: [Intro](#) [A](#) [B](#) [C.1](#) [C.2](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [Review](#)

Principles: [Intro](#) [1.1](#) [1.2](#) [1.3](#) [2.1](#) [2.2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Review](#)

5. Getting help on a question or section

For modern browsers with javascript enabled:

Within the Web Tool you can roll over the green  question mark icons to see additional help for a given question. This will present a rollover popup with a few lines of additional help text. Most of these contextual help rollovers will include a link to 'more information'.

Clicking on 'more information' will generate an overlay containing more detailed help or information.

Food Standards Agency MyHACCP My account Log out Search

Preparatory Stage E: Describe the product

Statement

This requires a full description of the product or the intermediate product. This will help understanding of the presented hazards with the product/process and on what the product relies for safety.

How is this stage achieved?

This stage is essential for successful hazard identification and analysis (Principle 1.1).

Define the product in terms of:-

Parameter	Examples
1. Li	

Help topics

- Preparatory
- Preparatory Stage A: Prerequisite food hygiene requirements
- Preparatory Stage B: Obtain Management Commitment
- Preparatory Stage C: Define scope of the study
- Preparatory Stage D: Select the HACCP team
- Preparatory Stage E: Describe the product**
- Preparatory Stage F: Identify intended use of the product
- Preparatory Stage G: Construct a flow diagram

This help comes directly from the help section and can also be accessed directly there.

Navigating within the help overlay.

Within the help overlay, you can use the menu on the right hand side to navigate to other pages within the help section.

6. Form validation error messages

Some questions within the web tool require a response or specific answers.

If you save the form without answering required fields, you will see error messages at the top of the page - as follows:

Preparatory Stage E: Describe the product

The following items have errors you will need to correct:

2. State the physical properties of the product (a_w , pH, emulsion).

7. Review pages to help find form validation error messages

Both the preparatory stages section and the principle stages section have a review page. On the review pages you can see the status of each stage within the sections. This will reveal if the section has any form errors. This is useful to quickly review any form sections you may need to review.

8. Completing or finishing a study

When all stages are marked as OK and pass form validation, you can click to "Finish the study".

On the "Finish Study" page you can perform two actions:

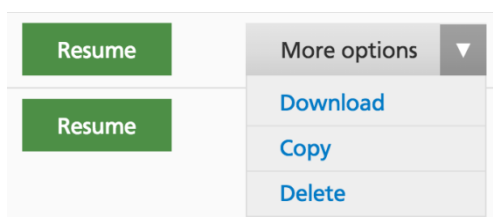
- mark your study as complete
 - This simply flags that indicates that this study is complete. This is useful if you have a number of studies, and need to keep track of which you have completed.
 - Marking a study as complete does not prevent you from further editing.
- download your PDF
 - Clicking on the "Download" link will generate a PDF version of your HACCP study.

9. Resuming a study

You can resume a study at any time. This means you can start a study, save it, log off or close your browser and return later to continue. When you want to resume a previously started study, simply log in and navigate to the MyHACCP web tool page where you can click on the "Resume" button next to the study in question.

10. PDF Download

Your HACCP study can be downloaded as a PDF at any point throughout the process, by clicking on the "Download" link under "More options" on the MyHACCP Web Tool page.



It is worth noting that the PDF will only include complete representation of the data you entered if all stages are free of error messages.

11. Copying an existing study

You can also copy an existing study to form the basis for a new study. This may be useful if you need to produce studies for two products that are produced with similar processes.

You can do this from the MyHACCP Web Tool page. If you have one or more existing studies, you will see the "Copy an existing study" button.



If you click the "Copy and existing study" button you will be taken to another page.

Please choose an existing study to copy.

Select the study you wish to copy from the drop down selection box and click submit.

This will copy the study to a new study and take you to the "Preparatory Introduction" page where you can name your new study.

At this point, all other fields in your study will be identical to the study from which you copied the new study. You will now need to review all preparatory stages and principles and amend sections to ensure the information is accurate and relevant for your new study.

You can also copy an existing study by using the "More options" box on the list of studies, to the right of the study in question. If you click the arrow and select "Copy" this will copy the study and take you to the "Preparatory Introduction" page where you can name your new study.

