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## FCS AND HACCP

### FCS Hygiene Surveys

Food Consulting Services Hygiene Surveys are extremely comprehensive and are designed to not only give you an independent, professional and scientific view as to the Food Safety operations, but also to give the management a "handbook" on how to improve and maintain the highest levels of food safety and quality.

Usually the surveys are unannounced, will be performed throughout the day, and usually range between three and six hours on site to complete, depending on the operations and size of the premises. Usually one, but occasionally two, technical consultants (TC) will perform the hygiene surveys (HS). Every TC is a competent qualified microbiologist or food technologist with a B.Sc degree or B.Tech or higher from a recognised University in South Africa. All hygiene auditors are recognisable from the labelled white laboratory coats worn.

A microbiological evaluation of surface swabs, hand swabs, food samples and water samples forms part of the HS, and provides scientific evidence as to the food safety, hygiene and sanitation standards in the kitchen. The FCS Hygiene Survey ensures that a statistically-representative number of microbiological samples are evaluated to be able to provide meaningful microbiological scores for the assessment of surface swabs, hand swabs and food samples (and water/ ice where necessary); and a Composite (overall) Microbiological Index.

Uniquely, the FCS Hygiene Survey provides a completely separate Facilities Report, which evaluates the actual kitchen design, condition, facilities and maintenance concerns; and the impact thereof on the food safety risk.

FCS has, in conjunction with an IT partner, developed a Hygiene Survey Application, which is driven from a web-based back-end. The entire survey is conducted on a tablet, and as such, the audit report (excluding the microbiological results), is available immediately after the audit.

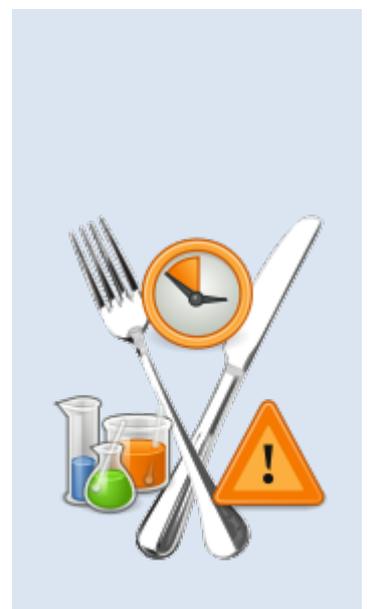
All non-conformances detected during the audit are ranked according to their impact on food safety – either Critical, Major or Minor. Each is colour-coded on a non-conformance summary and provided in a separate Corrective Action Report in Excel, which can be typed in, printed out, hand-annotated and generally used as an action plan for corrective action.

The HS can also include photographs that are taken and embedded in the report. Photographs of non-conformances are used to add value and visual evidence to the report.

A post-audit meeting (debrief) takes place after the audit with available and relevant management of the unit to highlight the main findings in the audit, and to discuss other concerns and suggestions.

# HACCP

HAZARD ANALYSIS CRITICAL CONTROL POINT



## Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP)

The HACCP concept is a popular word in the industry today. HACCP is a comprehensive food safety programme that was originally developed by NASA in the USA to help improve safety levels.

HACCP has two prerequisite programmes (PRP's), namely (1.) Sanitation programmes, and (2.) Good (food) Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Our hygiene surveys fully satisfy the sanitation programme requirements, whilst our Walkthrough Visual Scoresheet takes care of most of the elements of GMP. (HACCP procedures and records-keeping obviously have to be tackled by the actual food premises themselves).

Because HACCP is a system of control over the critical control points, to reduce hazards. The control involves much paperwork and standard operating procedures (SOP's), much like keeping financial control over a company: records need to be kept of each transaction, and budgets prepared to indicate any abnormalities.

Thus our audits are a complement to and pre-requisite for HACCP. The actual Hygiene Survey standards are based on R962 (legal) and SANS 10049 (GMP) standards, as well as FCS' more than 30 years of experience conducting hygiene surveys. The FCS Hygiene Survey is a *risk-based audit*, and is designed to evaluate the risks of the kitchen in the following areas:

- **Visual Cleanliness**
- **Cleaning Procedures**
- **Food Safety Practices**
- **Documentation Related to Food Safety and Hygiene**
- **Facilities and Maintenance**

Once the HS are consistently scoring above 90%, HACCP can then be considered. We can help with regards to attaining HACCP accreditation, but the SABS or another accrediting organization will have to be contacted to audit the facility for HACCP compliance.

This audit is essentially a system audit and looks mostly at the paperwork; the basics are assumed to be taken care of.

In summary, a food facility needs first to ensure top hygiene and sanitation, then that GMP is fully implemented and only then take the final step to HACCP.

*Please remember that unless the hygiene audits are being performed and scoring consistently at 90% or above it is pointless even considering HACCP. Also note that there is no internationally-recognised auditable standard for the pre-requisite steps we are discussing; only the final HACCP level itself.*



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**facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/foodconsultingservices/>

## LATEST IN FOOD SAFETY: CYCLOSPORASIS

### What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by an intracellular intestinal protozoan **parasite** called *Cyclospora cayentanensis*. It has a short recorded history, with the first documented human cases only diagnosed in 1977. It is found in many countries, but is most common in tropical and sub-tropical regions and is often linked to imported fresh produce such as raspberries, basil, lettuce and peas. Much is still unknown about the lifecycle of this parasite.

### How is *Cyclospora* spread?

Anyone can become infected by consuming food or water that has been contaminated with faeces containing the parasite. Many cases have been attributed to un-treated or ineffectively treated water. The parasite cannot be spread directly from one person to another.

### What are the symptoms of cyclosporiasis?

Symptoms usually begin to occur about 1 week following exposure, and if untreated, symptoms can last for months. Symptoms may include:

- Frequent bouts of watery diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite and weight
- Cramping, bloating, and increase of gas
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Fever

### Who is at risk for *Cyclospora* infection?

Anyone can contract cyclosporiasis. Most food borne outbreaks are linked to imported fresh produce or in people who have travelled to parts of the world where the parasite is found.

### How is it treated?

The parasite can usually be treated with an antibiotic called trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole. Cyclosporiasis can only be diagnosed through examining stool samples and requires special lab tests that are not routinely done.

### How do we prevent *Cyclospora* infection?

- Practice good hygiene and good food and water habits as chlorine and iodine based chemicals are unlikely to kill the parasite.
- Avoid any food or water that may be contaminated with faeces.



### Information:

- *Cyclosporiasis is an emerging public health concern in Africa*
- *The study of cyclosporiasis is rife with difficulties due largely to the lack of public awareness and underreporting in Africa*
- *Although there have been no documented cases in South Africa, 3 Cases have been found in Tanzania, Nigeria and Egypt*

