HACCP Rules

Step 13 - Batch preparation & freezing (high risk and vegetarian products)

Summary

Batch preparation and rapid chilling to below 0°C and subsequent freezing to a minimum of -18°C of products such as fishcakes, chicken Kiev's, vegetarian wellingtons, patties and pulled beef etc. can help to reduce waste. Freezing does not destroy pathogens, however rapid chilling to below 0°C will reduce the risk of both pathogenic and spoilage bacteria multiplying and ensure a better quality product as it ensures smaller ice crystals are formed.

What could happen?

If there is a significant delay between preparation and freezing food may become contaminated and/or multiply to high levels Should food not be frozen effectively to suitable temperatures in a short time, it may lead to spoilage and more potential for microbiological multiplication.

If documentation is not maintained, this will mean that there will be a lack of evidence to show the correct preparation and freezing processes are being undertaken.

Procedure

- Products being prepared for blast freezing must be in good condition and within date. Time at ambient temperatures must be kept to a minimum and recipes must be followed.
- Immediately after preparation and where applicable, cooking, food must be placed into the blast chiller to achieve a hard chill (below **0°C** within 2 hours)
- Hard chill temperature and times in and out of the blast chiller must be recorded in the food safety record book for each batch.
- Chefs must indicate that product is to be hard chilled for freezing in the action column of the food cooling temperature record
- Once a hard chill has been achieved, product must be packed, labelled with date shelf life (maximum 3 months), and labelled with allergen information.
- It must then be placed into suitable frozen storage (-18°C or below) without delay.
- Food must be labelled to include food allergen info.

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Hazard

- Survival or multiplication of pathogens and/or germination of spores.
- May contain pathogens
- Contamination of food allergens.

Controls

- Preparation according to recipe, minimum time at ambient temperature.
- Rapid hard chilling, using the blast chiller, immediately after preparation.
- Ensure uniformity of product depth to allow for consistent hard chill to be achieved.
- Remove product from blast chiller, pack, label and place into freezer immediately after hard chilling ensuring the food is date labelled and also includes relevant allergen info.
- Food is labelled to include food allergen info and is covered and protected.

Critical limits

- Cool from 63°C to below 0°C within 2 hours and then immediately packed, labelled and placed into frozen storage -18°C or below.
- Maximum depth of 65mm of gastronomes when placed into blast chiller.

Checks and records

- Check core temperature of food following hard chill.
- Hard chill temperature and times in and out of the blast chiller must be recorded in the food safety record book for each batch. Chefs to indicate product was for hard chill in the action column to provide evidence that food cooling has taken place as safely as possible.

Corrective action

- Discard contaminated food.
- Report to Head Chef.
- Discard food if not hard chilled and refrigerated within the specified time range.