


SELF-PACED COURSE · STUDY HANDBOOK

# Good Hygiene Practices (GHP)

Clean hands, safe food, trusted brand.

Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene CXC 1-1969 (revised 2020, amended 2022), Chapter 1 — the same sections our auditors inspect against. GHPs are the foundation for HACCP.

**5 h** study time **6** modules Level: **Foundation** Pass mark: **70%**

AuditCert International

ABOUT THIS COURSE

# How to use this handbook

**Who it is for:** Food handlers, kitchen and production staff, supervisors, hygiene and QA officers in food factories, restaurants, catering and food retail.

### You will be able to

- Explain food hazards and how GHPs form the foundation of food safety and HACCP
- Judge whether premises, water, drainage, waste and hand-wash facilities are hygienic
- Run cleaning, disinfection and pest control programmes and verify that they work
- Apply personal hygiene, illness reporting and visitor rules every day
- Control operations: time and temperature, cross-contamination, allergens, water and recall
- Keep product information, transport and records ready for a GHP inspection

### How you pass

- Study each module and pass its knowledge check (3 of 4 correct).
- Complete the GHP audit self-check on your own workplace.
- Score 70% or more on the 20-question final exam.
- Submit the practical assignment (graded by your trainer, pass 60/100).

## Contents


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| Module 1: Food hazards and food safety culture | 40 min |
| Module 2: Primary production and establishment design | 45 min |
| Module 3: Cleaning, disinfection, maintenance and pest control | 50 min |
| Module 4: Personal hygiene and training | 45 min |
| Module 5: Control of operation | 60 min |
| Module 6: Product information, transport and inspection readiness | 40 min |
| Audit self-check checklist | |
| Practical assignment | |
| Glossary and answer key | |

MODULE 1 OF 6 · 40 MIN

# Food hazards and food safety culture

What can make food unsafe, what GHPs are, and why management commitment and culture come first.

Auditor checks: `Ch 1, 1`

## Why food hygiene matters

Unsafe food causes illness in hundreds of millions of people worldwide every year, and children under five carry a large share of that burden. Most cases come from simple failures: dirty hands, undercooked food, food left warm too long, or raw and cooked food touching.

## The three types of hazard

| Hazard | Examples | Typical control |
|---|---|---|
| **Biological** | Salmonella, E. coli, Listeria, viruses, parasites | Cooking, chilling, hand washing, cleaning |
| **Chemical** | Cleaning chemicals, pesticides, **allergens**, excess additives | Storage apart from food, labelling, supplier control |
| **Physical** | Glass, metal, stones, hair, plastic, jewellery | Glass policy, metal detection, hairnets, maintenance |

## What are GHPs?

**Good Hygiene Practices (GHPs)** are the basic conditions and activities needed to keep food safe and suitable at every stage — from farm to fork. In the Codex text (CXC 1-1969, revised 2020) they are Chapter 1; Chapter 2 is HACCP. **GHPs come first**: without clean premises, trained staff and pest control, a HACCP plan cannot work. GHPs are sometimes called **prerequisite programmes (PRPs)**.

Codex 2020 also highlights that some GHPs need **greater attention** because they have a bigger impact on safety — for example cleaning a slicer used for ready-to-eat meat.

## Food safety culture

Codex now expects **management commitment** and a **positive food safety culture**:

- Leaders show that food safety matters — and give time, money and people for it.
- Everyone knows their role and **feels safe to report problems** (a broken thermometer, a sick colleague, a pest sighting) without blame.
- Food safety is talked about in daily meetings, not only before an audit.

> **Auditor question (Ch 1, 1):** *Does management show commitment to food safety and a positive food safety culture (communication, resources, training, reporting of problems)?* Auditors will ask a line worker: *"What would you do if you saw a mouse?"*

## Key points

- Three hazard types: biological, chemical (incl. allergens), physical
- GHPs = the foundation; HACCP builds on them
- Some GHPs need greater attention
- Leaders commit resources; people report problems without fear

## Knowledge check

**1. An undeclared peanut ingredient in a biscuit is which type of hazard?**

A. Chemical (allergen)
B. Not a hazard
C. Biological
D. Physical

**2. What is the relationship between GHP and HACCP?**

A. HACCP replaces GHP
B. GHP is only for restaurants
C. GHPs are the foundation on which HACCP is built
D. They are unrelated

**3. Which is a sign of a positive food safety culture?**

A. Hygiene is discussed only before audits
B. Managers never visit the floor
C. Workers hide problems to avoid blame
D. Staff feel safe to report a pest sighting immediately

**4. A piece of glass in a jar of jam is a…**

A. Physical hazard
B. Chemical hazard
C. Allergen
D. Biological hazard

Answers are in the answer key at the back.

MODULE 2 OF 6 · 45 MIN

# Primary production and establishment design

Safe raw materials and hygienic premises: location, layout, water, drainage, waste, toilets, hand washing, lighting and ventilation.

Auditor checks: `Ch 1, 2` `Ch 1, 3`

## Start safe: primary production

Hazards often start on the farm, at the fish landing or in the slaughterhouse. Producers should avoid polluted land and water, control pesticides and veterinary drugs, keep animals healthy and handle produce hygienically. As a buyer, you control this through **approved suppliers**, specifications and checks on arrival.

## Location

Keep away from flood areas, polluted industrial zones, waste dumps and pest-infested areas — or put in place extra protection if you cannot.

## Design and layout

- **Separate raw from ready-to-eat** areas; flow should go from dirty to clean without crossing back.
- **Floors, walls and ceilings:** smooth, waterproof, easy to clean, no peeling paint; coved floor-wall joints help cleaning.
- **Windows and doors:** fly-screens, self-closing doors where needed.
- **Work surfaces:** smooth, non-absorbent, non-toxic (stainless steel is typical); **no wood** in wet areas.

## Facilities that must be there

| Facility | What good looks like |
|---|---|
| **Water** | Safe (potable) water, tested regularly; non-potable water in separate, marked pipes |
| **Drainage** | Designed so waste flows from clean to dirty areas, with traps and grates |
| **Waste** | Lidded, marked bins; removed often; waste area away from food |
| **Toilets and changing** | Enough for staff, not opening directly onto food areas |
| **Hand washing** | At entrances and in work areas: warm and cold water, soap, single-use towels, hands-free taps where possible |
| **Lighting** | Enough to work and clean; shatter-proof covers over food |
| **Ventilation** | Removes heat, steam and smoke; air flows from clean to dirty |
| **Storage** | Separate for raw materials, finished food, chemicals and packaging |

## Equipment

Food-contact equipment is made of safe, durable, cleanable materials, can be **taken apart for cleaning**, and temperature-control equipment (fridges, freezers, ovens) can reach and **monitor** the required temperatures.

> **Auditor question (Ch 1, 3):** *Are establishment location, design, layout, facilities (water, drainage, waste, toilets, hand washing, lighting, ventilation) and equipment suitable and hygienic?* Expect the auditor to ask for the latest **water analysis report**.

### Key points

- Control raw materials through approved suppliers
- Separate raw and ready-to-eat; flow dirty → clean
- Potable water tested; drains flow clean → dirty
- Hand-wash stations with soap and single-use towels
- Equipment cleanable and able to hold temperature

### Knowledge check

**1. Which way should drains flow?**

A. Towards the store room
B. From clean areas to dirty areas
C. It does not matter
D. From dirty areas to clean areas

**2. Which hand-wash station is correct?**

A. Cold water and a shared cloth towel
B. The vegetable sink
C. Only sanitizer gel
D. Soap, warm water and single-use towels

**3. Why are wooden cutting surfaces avoided in wet food areas?**

A. They are expensive
B. They absorb moisture and harbour bacteria
C. They are not allowed anywhere
D. They are too heavy

**4. What evidence shows your water is safe?**

A. It looks clear
B. A recent laboratory water analysis report
C. Nobody has complained
D. The supplier says so

Answers are in the answer key at the back.

MODULE 3 OF 6 · 50 MIN

# Cleaning, disinfection, maintenance and pest control

Cleaning programmes that work, proven by verification, plus maintenance and integrated pest management.

Auditor checks: `Ch 1, 5`

## Cleaning is not the same as disinfection

- **Cleaning** removes dirt, food residues and grease.
- **Disinfection** reduces microorganisms to a safe level. You **cannot disinfect a dirty surface** — dirt protects microbes. Always clean first.

## The six-step cleaning method

1. **Pre-clean** — scrape and remove loose food and debris.
2. **Main clean** — wash with detergent at the right dilution and temperature.
3. **Rinse** — remove detergent and loosened dirt.
4. **Disinfect** — apply disinfectant at the correct concentration for the **contact time** on the label.
5. **Final rinse** — if the disinfectant label requires it.
6. **Dry** — air-dry or use single-use paper; never a dirty cloth.

## A cleaning programme says…

**What** is cleaned, **how** (method and chemicals with dilution), **how often**, **who** is responsible, and **how it is checked**. Records are signed when the cleaning is done.

## Verifying that cleaning works

- **Visual inspection** before start-up (pre-op check).
- **ATP swabs** give a quick reading of organic residue.
- **Microbiological swabs** for indicator organisms (for example Listeria in ready-to-eat areas). If results fail, re-clean, re-test and review the method.

## Chemicals

Store cleaning chemicals **away from food**, in labelled original containers, with safety data sheets. Never put chemicals in food or drink bottles.

## Maintenance

A planned maintenance programme prevents loose bolts, flaking paint and leaking oil. After any repair the area is **cleaned and released** before production restarts; tools and parts are counted to make sure nothing is left behind.

## Pest control — three lines of defence

1. **Keep them out:** sealed gaps, fly-screens, air curtains, closed doors.
2. **Deny food, water and shelter:** clean spills, lidded bins, no clutter.
3. **Monitor and eradicate:** mapped bait stations (outside), traps and insect-light traps (inside, away from open food), regular checks by a trained contractor with reports and trend analysis.

> **Auditor question (Ch 1, 5):** *Are maintenance, cleaning and disinfection programs and pest control effective, verified and recorded?*

## Key points

- Clean first, then disinfect
- Six steps: pre-clean, clean, rinse, disinfect, rinse, dry
- Programme: what, how, how often, who, how checked
- Verify with visual checks, ATP and micro swabs
- Pest control: keep out, deny, monitor

## Knowledge check

**1. Why must you clean before you disinfect?**

A. To save disinfectant
B. It is optional
C. Dirt protects microbes from the disinfectant
D. It smells better

**2. What does an ATP swab test show quickly?**

A. Allergen type
B. Organic residue left on a surface
C. Water hardness
D. Pest activity

**3. Where should poisoned rodent bait stations normally be placed?**

A. Next to open food
B. Outside or around the perimeter, as mapped
C. Inside ingredient bins
D. Anywhere convenient

**4. A technician repaired a mixer. What must happen before production restarts?**

A. Count tools and parts, clean and release the area
B. Spray perfume
C. Only switch it on
D. Nothing

Answers are in the answer key at the back.

MODULE 4 OF 6 · 45 MIN

# Personal hygiene and training

Competent, healthy and hygienic food handlers — and visitors who follow the same rules.

Auditor checks: `Ch 1, 4` `Ch 1, 6`

## Training and competence

Every food handler is **trained in food hygiene appropriate to their job**, before starting and at intervals afterwards. People who monitor critical steps (for example cooking temperatures) get extra training. Training is **recorded** and **reviewed** — supervisors check that people actually work the way they were taught.

## Health status and illness reporting

People must **report** to their supervisor, and be excluded from handling food if necessary, when they have:

- **Diarrhoea or vomiting**
- **Fever** (especially with sore throat)
- **Jaundice**
- **Visibly infected skin lesions** (boils, cuts)
- **Discharges** from the ear, eye or nose

A person who has had diarrhoea or vomiting usually stays away from food handling until **48 hours after symptoms stop**, or as the medical advice says.

## When to wash hands

- At the start of work and on re-entering the food area
- After using the **toilet**
- After handling **raw food**, waste, chemicals or dirty items
- After touching your face, hair, phone or money
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose

**Method:** wet → soap → rub all surfaces (palms, backs, between fingers, thumbs, nails, wrists) for at least **20 seconds** → rinse → dry with a single-use towel. Gloves do **not** replace hand washing — change gloves as often as you would wash your hands.

## Personal cleanliness and behaviour

- Clean protective clothing and **hair covering**; short, clean nails; no nail polish or false nails.
- **No jewellery** (a plain wedding band may be allowed by local policy), no watches.
- **No smoking, spitting, chewing, eating** or sneezing over food.
- Cuts covered with a **waterproof, coloured (usually blue), detectable** dressing.
- Personal belongings kept outside food areas.

## Visitors

Visitors, contractors and maintenance staff **follow the same rules**: health questionnaire, protective clothing, hand washing and a guide.

> **Auditor question (Ch 1, 6):** *Is personal hygiene maintained: health status, illness reporting, cleanliness, behaviour, visitors?* Auditors often watch the hand-wash station for ten minutes at shift start.

## Key points

- Job-appropriate hygiene training, recorded and reviewed
- Report diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, jaundice, infected lesions, discharges
- Wash hands at least 20 seconds; gloves don't replace washing
- No jewellery, smoking or eating; blue detectable plasters
- Visitors follow the same rules

## Knowledge check

**1. After vomiting, a food handler usually returns to food handling…**

A. Immediately with gloves
B. 48 hours after symptoms stop, or as medical advice says
C. The same afternoon
D. After one week, always

**2. For how long should hands be rubbed with soap?**

A. As long as the gloves are on
B. 5 minutes
C. 2 seconds
D. At least 20 seconds

**3. Why are blue plasters used in food areas?**

A. Blue is calming
B. Regulators like blue
C. They are easy to see if they fall into food (and are often metal-detectable)
D. They are cheaper

**4. A maintenance contractor enters the kitchen. What applies?**

A. The same hygiene rules: health check, protective clothing, hand washing
B. Only if they touch food
C. Only shoe covers
D. No rules — they are not staff

Answers are in the answer key at the back.

MODULE 5 OF 6 · 60 MIN

# Control of operation

Day-to-day control: incoming materials, time and temperature, cross-contamination, allergens, water, packaging, records and recall.

Auditor checks: `Ch 1, 7`

## Incoming materials

Buy from approved suppliers against specifications. On arrival, check **temperature** of chilled and frozen goods, packaging integrity, use-by dates and signs of pests. Reject what is unsafe and record it.

## Time and temperature control

Bacteria grow fastest between about **5 °C and 60 °C** — often called the **danger zone**.

| Activity | Common target |
|---|---|
| Chilled storage | **0–5 °C** |
| Frozen storage | **−18 °C or colder** |
| Cooking | Core **75 °C** (or an equivalent validated time-temperature) |
| Hot holding | **63 °C or above** |
| Cooling cooked food | Through the danger zone **quickly** (e.g. to below 5 °C within about 90 minutes using blast chilling or shallow trays) |

Targets vary by country and product — always follow your own validated limits. Use **calibrated probe thermometers**, clean and disinfect the probe between foods, and record readings.

## Preventing cross-contamination

- **Separate raw and ready-to-eat** foods in storage (raw **below** cooked in fridges), preparation and equipment.
- **Colour-coded** boards and knives (for example red raw meat, blue raw fish, green vegetables, yellow cooked).
- Clean and disinfect between tasks; wash hands between raw and cooked.

## Allergen management

Know the major allergens in your products (cereals with gluten, crustaceans, eggs, fish, peanuts, soybeans, milk, tree nuts, sesame and others in local law). Control them through **supplier information, segregated storage, production sequencing (allergen-free first), validated cleaning between products, and correct labelling**.

## Water, ice and steam

Water that touches food, or is used to make ice or steam for food, must be **potable** and tested.

## Packaging

Packaging must be safe for food, stored clean and protected, and not a source of contamination.

## Documentation and recall

Keep records long enough to cover the product's shelf life. A **recall procedure** allows unsafe lots to be traced and removed quickly; test it.

> **Auditor question (Ch 1, 7):** *Are operations controlled: product description, time and temperature control, specific process steps, prevention of cross-contamination and allergens, incoming materials, packaging, water, documentation and recall?*

### Key points

- Check incoming temperatures and integrity
- Danger zone ~5–60 °C; chill ≤5 °C, freeze ≤−18 °C, cook 75 °C core, hot hold ≥63 °C
- Raw below cooked; colour-coded equipment
- Allergens: segregate, sequence, clean, label
- Potable water; records and tested recall

## Knowledge check

**1. Bacteria grow fastest in which range?**

A. Below 0 °C
B. Above 75 °C
C. Only at 100 °C
D. About 5 °C to 60 °C

**2. In a refrigerator, raw meat should be stored…**

A. In the door
B. Above cooked food
C. Next to salads
D. Below ready-to-eat and cooked food

**3. Which is the best way to control allergen cross-contact on a shared line?**

A. Do nothing — label 'may contain' always
B. Run allergen products first
C. Run allergen-free products first, then validated cleaning
D. Use more gloves

**4. A chilled delivery arrives at 12 °C. The specification is ≤5 °C. What do you do?**

A. Accept and chill it quickly
B. Reject or hold it and record the reason
C. Cook it immediately
D. Freeze it

Answers are in the answer key at the back.

MODULE 6 OF 6 · 40 MIN

# Product information, transport and inspection readiness

Labels that keep consumers safe, hygienic transport, and how a GHP inspection works.

Auditor checks: `Ch 1, 8 - 9`

## Product information and labelling

Consumers and the next business in the chain need enough information to **handle, store, prepare and use** the food safely:

- **Lot identification** on every pack so it can be traced and recalled.
- **Ingredients and allergens** clearly declared.
- **Storage instructions** ("keep refrigerated at 0–5 °C") and **use-by / best-before** dates.
- **Preparation instructions** where needed ("cook thoroughly until piping hot").

## Transport

- Vehicles and containers **clean**, in good repair, and used only for food (or cleaned thoroughly between loads).
- **Separate** raw from ready-to-eat and food from non-food.
- Chilled and frozen loads kept at the right temperature, **monitored and recorded**; pre-cool vehicles before loading.
- Bulk food transport in dedicated, marked containers.

## Records you will be asked for

- Training records and health declarations
- Cleaning schedules, pre-op checks and swab results
- Pest control contract, map, visit reports and trends
- Water analysis
- Temperature logs (receiving, storage, cooking, cooling, transport)
- Supplier approval, specifications and receiving checks
- Allergen matrix and labels
- Recall procedure and the last mock recall

## How our GHP inspection works

1. **Opening meeting** — scope and plan.
2. **Site tour** following the food flow, watching people work.
3. **Record review** against the Codex Chapter 1 checklist.
4. Findings graded **Critical**, **Major**, **Minor** or **Observation**.
5. **Closing meeting** and report: *Satisfactory*, *Conditionally satisfactory (corrective actions required)* or *Unsatisfactory*.

**Get ready:** take the **GHP self-check** in this course. It uses the same questions as our inspectors.

## Key points

- Lot code, allergens, storage, dates and preparation on labels
- Clean, dedicated, temperature-controlled transport
- Know your records before the inspector asks
- Findings: Critical, Major, Minor, Observation

## Knowledge check

**1. Why must every pack carry a lot identification?**

A. For marketing
B. To look professional
C. For tax
D. So the product can be traced and recalled

**2. A truck carried chemicals yesterday. Can it carry open food today?**

A. Only at night
B. Yes, always
C. Yes, if it looks clean
D. Only if cleaned thoroughly and checked — ideally use dedicated food vehicles

**3. Which record proves your refrigerated transport stayed cold?**

A. Temperature monitoring records or data-logger printout
B. The invoice
C. Driver's word
D. The delivery note

**4. An inspection result of 'Unsatisfactory' means…**

A. Significant failures — the site does not meet GHP
B. Excellent result
C. Minor improvements only
D. No report issued

Answers are in the answer key at the back.

APPLY IT

# GHP audit self-check

Based on the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene CXC 1-1969 (revised 2020, amended 2022), chapter 1 (GHPs). These are the same questions our inspectors use. Rate each one: **Compliant · Observation · Minor · Major · Critical · N/A**.

**Indicative result:** any Critical → Unsatisfactory; any Major or Minor → Conditionally satisfactory (corrective actions required); otherwise Satisfactory.

| Ref | Question | Rating | Evidence / note |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Management commitment** | | | |
| Ch 1, 1 | Does management show commitment to food safety and a positive food safety culture (communication, resources, training, reporting of problems)?<br>Evidence: Policy, culture indicators, interviews | | |
| **Primary production and establishment** | | | |
| Ch 1, 2 | Is primary production (where relevant) controlled for environmental and other contamination?<br>Evidence: Supplier controls, farm or source records | | |
| Ch 1, 3 | Are establishment location, design, layout, facilities (water, drainage, waste, toilets, hand washing, lighting, ventilation) and equipment suitable and hygienic?<br>Evidence: Site inspection, layout, water analysis | | |
| **Training, maintenance and hygiene** | | | |
| Ch 1, 4 | Are food handlers trained and competent in food hygiene appropriate to their work, with training reviewed?<br>Evidence: Training records | | |
| Ch 1, 5 | Are maintenance, cleaning and disinfection programs and pest control effective, verified and recorded?<br>Evidence: Cleaning schedules, verification swabs, pest control reports | | |
| Ch 1, 6 | Is personal hygiene maintained: health status, illness reporting, cleanliness, | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| | behaviour, visitors?<br>Evidence: Health declarations, hygiene observation |
| **Control of operation** | |
| Ch 1, 7 | Are operations controlled: product description, time and temperature control, specific process steps, prevention of cross-contamination and allergens, incoming materials, packaging, water, documentation and recall?<br>Evidence: Process records, temperature logs, allergen controls, recall procedure |
| Ch 1, 8 - 9 | Is product information and labelling adequate, and is transport hygienic and temperature controlled where needed?<br>Evidence: Labels, transport records |

PRACTISE

# Practical assignment: GHP hygiene walk and corrective action plan

Walk through your kitchen, food production area or store with the GHP self-check. Record the facts, take photos, and plan corrections that remove root causes.

### What to submit

1. Completed GHP self-check (download from the course)
2. Temperature check: 5 readings (storage, cooking or hot holding) compared with your limits
3. Photos: 2 good practices and 3 gaps, with captions
4. Action plan: gap, hazard type, root cause, correction, corrective action, owner, date

| Marking criterion | Marks |
|---|---|
| Correct identification of hazards | 25 |
| Evidence quality (readings, photos) | 20 |
| Root cause and actions | 35 |
| Prioritising by risk | 20 |
| **Total** (pass 60) | **100** |

# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Allergen** | A food component that triggers an immune reaction in sensitive people. |
| **ATP test** | Rapid swab test for organic residue to verify cleaning. |
| **Cross-contamination** | Transfer of hazards from one food, surface or person to another. |
| **Danger zone** | About 5–60 °C, where bacteria grow fastest. |
| **Disinfection** | Reducing microorganisms to a safe level, after cleaning. |
| **GHP** | Good Hygiene Practices — Codex CXC 1-1969, Chapter 1. |
| **Potable water** | Water safe to drink and use in food. |
| **PRP** | Prerequisite programme — basic conditions for food safety (GHPs). |
| **Recall** | Removing unsafe food from the market and from consumers. |

# Answer key: knowledge checks

**Module 1:** 1–A, 2–C, 3–D, 4–A

**Module 2:** 1–B, 2–D, 3–B, 4–B

**Module 3:** 1–C, 2–B, 3–B, 4–A

**Module 4:** 1–B, 2–D, 3–C, 4–A

**Module 5:** 1–D, 2–D, 3–C, 4–B

**Module 6:** 1–D, 2–D, 3–A, 4–A