



FRESHCHECK HVS

GUIDANCE ON CREATING A SAMPLE PLAN



FreshCheck
CONFIRMING HYGIENE



HYGIENE VERIFICATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD TESTING REGIME

It is crucial to ensure that your cleaning procedures are working as intended. Not just for regulatory and due diligence purposes (e.g., the [BRC's Food Safety Issue 9 Guidance](#)) but to ensure that your produce is safe to consume. This creates a positive brand reputation and reduces the risk of product recalls.

What is Hygiene Verification Testing?

Hygiene verification testing is a system to monitor whether a cleaning programme is working, and identify areas of microbiological risk so that hazard mitigation can be improved. In other words, it's a way to check that your facility is clean, and to prevent microbiological contamination that could cause a food poisoning outbreak.

How Do I Implement Hygiene Verification?

Implementing a hygiene verification procedure can seem daunting at first, but this guide aims to help you with the process. If you don't already have a HACCP plan in place, it is worth setting that up using the information available on [food.gov.uk](#). Once you know your critical control points (and important control points) you should be ready to

implement your own hygiene verification sample plan.

Which Control Points Should I Test?

It is important that all of your microbiological control points are tested. It is also beneficial to include some additional areas to test to ensure your cleaning is working across your entire facility. Making sure that you're testing control points often enough is the most important thing.

How Often Should I Test Control Points?

Ideally, critical control points should be tested post clean and immediately prior to manufacture (positive release). If a point fails, reclean and retest to ensure a pass prior to manufacture. Another approach is to test critical control points at least weekly, and additional control points at least monthly. An alternative approach is to set up a hygiene testing results and revise your sampling plan according to the results over time. If an area consistently passes, reduce the frequency of testing and monitor other areas you identify as a potential risk, or increase the frequency of those that fail. This will provide better risk management, and will prevent unnecessary testing and cost!



CREATING THE INITIAL SAMPLE PLAN

HOW OFTEN CONTROL POINTS SHOULD BE TESTED

| Risk Level of Control Point | Starting Testing Frequency | Minimum Testing Frequency |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| High Risk (e.g. critical control points) | Daily | Weekly |
| Moderate Risk | Weekly | Monthly |
| Low Risk | Fortnightly | Quarterly |

These are example thresholds, they vary between industries and you may find that testing frequency has to be increased or decreased. We recommend you talk to your primary authority or trained professional to set these limits. [Please contact us](#) if you would like to speak to our experts.

The First Sample Plan Creation

To create your first sample plan, it is best to implement a high frequency of testing that can be reduced over time.

The high frequency testing at the beginning is important for ensuring that your cleaning procedures are working correctly. It will flag up any areas of high risk that might need a more stringent cleaning of testing protocol. The act of building up this sample plan also shows regulatory bodies that you are not just monitoring hygiene, but taking clear actions to reduce risk when necessary.

Your HACCP plan should list all your control points, Remember not all control; points are Microbiological some may be based on temperature or time Using the table above, it is then possible to create your first sample plan. However, you may feel that more or less monitoring is appropriate based on the nature of your industry (for example, a sushi restaurant may test more frequently than a burger restaurant).

Using the FreshCheck Portal and App, it is possible to upload all of your hygiene control points as *Test Points*. These can then be assigned to appropriate samples plans that are performed regularly. For instance, a

High Risk sample plan may be performed once a day or once per shift and a Medium Risk sample plan may be performed once a week.

How To Refine A Sample Plan

Once you've got testing underway, you can start to look at how you change your sample plan. Your hygiene testing results will usually highlight what action needs to be taken. Example actions include:

- Altering testing frequency.
- Changing cleaning frequency.
- Changing cleaning process.
- Elevating to hygiene validation testing.

The next page shows an example flow chart for how to refine your hygiene monitoring sample plan. Use the steps after you've completed a sample plan. This should help you to ensure you are working to the highest hygiene standards, whilst ensuring your budget is well managed.

