



HACCP and SSOPs for Shellfish Shippers

What are “Shellfish”?

Shellfish are all edible species of oysters, clams, mussels and scallops, either shucked or in the shell, fresh or frozen, whole or in part. Scallops are excluded when the final product is the shucked adductor muscle only

Who are “Shellstock Shippers”?

Shellstock Shippers buy, pack and sell shellstock (shellfish which has not been shucked); or ship shucked shellfish that has been processed by an approved shucker-packer

Shellfish Processing Regulations:

All shellfish processors must comply with Maryland’s Seafood Processing Regulations COMAR 10.15.07 and 10.15.10, and the standards for fresh or frozen shellfish relating to sanitation, harvesting, handling, shucking and transporting contained in the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish (NSSP) and 21 CFR 1240.60 Molluscan Shellfish.

What is HACCP?:

HACCP stands for Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Point. It is a method for identifying and controlling food-safety hazards. Using the HACCP system, you identify the hazards in your operation, establish controls, monitor them, and keep records.

The 7 Principles of HACCP

1. **Conduct hazardous analysis and identify preventive measures**– Identify biological, chemical and physical hazards associated with the product and process. For Shellstock Shippers (SS), hazards are biological micro-organisms & toxins. Preventative measures include controlling the source and product temperatures.
2. **Identify critical control points (CCP)**- List steps in the process. For every significant hazard identified in Step 1, identify a point, step or procedure where you can prevent, eliminate or reduce the food-safety hazard to an acceptable level. A Shellstock Shipper will have CCPs at **Receiving** and at **Storage**.
3. **Establish critical limits**– Each CCP must have boundaries, or critical limits, to ensure a safe product. A shellstock shipper must meet the following critical limits established in the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance:

RECEIVING CCP– Shellstock must be obtained from:

- A licensed harvester who has harvested the shellstock from an approved or conditionally approved area in open status, which is indicated on the tag, and has identified the shellstock with a tag on each container or transaction record on each bulk shipment, or
- A licensed certified dealer who has identified the shellstock with a tag on each container

STORAGE CCP– Temperature of shellstock must be controlled by:

- Icing; or
- Storing in a refrigeration unit or area maintained at 45°F or less

4. **Monitor each CCP**– Determine what observations and measurements are needed to ensure that the critical limits are met. Determine the frequency at which the measurements or observations must be recorded. Identify who is responsible for verifying that the required tags are on containers at receiving, and recording the temperature readings or presence of adequate ice.



A licensed harvester or aquaculturist must become a certified shellfish shipper to sell harvested product to anyone other than a certified dealer on the day of harvest.

For general questions about shellfish or to obtain more information about becoming a certified shellfish shipper

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The 7 principles of HACCP (cont.):

5. **Establish corrective action to be taken when a critical limit deviation occurs**– Initiate the required corrective action when a critical limit is not met. For example, you may need to reject shellstock without the required tags, or you may need to destroy product that didn't meet time/temperature requirements during storage.
6. **Establish a record-keeping system**– Keep daily records of your CCP observations and measurements, as well as your corrective actions and process adjustments. Records must be kept for one year, and made available during inspections of your facility.
7. **Establish verification procedures**– To verify that the HACCP system is working, the shellstock shipper must make on-site observations, review records, and periodically assess the effectiveness of the HACCP plan. Periodic calibration of thermometers is also a verification step.

What are SSOPs?

SSOP stands for Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure. Good sanitation operating procedures are the foundation of the HACCP system. They control the in-plant environmental conditions, and provide a foundation for safe food production. While handling and storing shellfish, you must monitor and keep records regarding the sanitation control practices and conditions that apply to your operation.

1. **Safety of water**– Water that contacts food or food-contact surfaces, or is used to produce ice, must be from an approved source. Proper backflow devices must be in use.
2. **Condition and cleanliness of food-contact surfaces**– Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces, such as equipment, utensils, gloves, and containers, as needed. Surfaces must remain smooth and easily cleanable.
3. **Prevention of cross-contamination**– Protect equipment, utensils, gloves, and containers from contamination during storage. Wash hands before starting work, after interruptions, after using the restroom, and anytime hands may become contaminated.
4. **Maintenance of handwashing and toilet facilities**– Provide conveniently located handwashing and toilet facilities. Remove and properly dispose of sewage and other liquid wastes.
5. **Protection from adulterants**– Protect shellfish from chemical and micro-biological contaminants such as condensate and floor splash.
6. **Labeling, storage and use of chemical compounds**– Keep only necessary substances in the facility. Use in accordance with the label. Properly store pesticides, cleansers, sanitizers, and other chemicals.
7. **Employee health conditions**- Exclude employees that are ill or have an infectious wound that has the potential to contaminate the product.
8. **Exclusions of pests**– Exclude pests that might be a source of contamination, including insects, rodents, birds and personal pets.