ST. MARY'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Meenakshi G. Brewster, MD, MPH - Health Officer

Administration, Records & Health Services: 301 – 475 – 4330
Environmental Health: 301 – 475 – 4321
Email: smchd.env@maryland.gov
Medical Assistance Transportation: 301 – 475 – 4296
Maryland Relay Service: 1 – 800 – 735 – 2258

MEMORANDUM TO: All Food Service License Applicants
FROM: Heather Moritz, Environmental Health Director
SUBJECT: Food Service Annual Operating License/Fee

Enclosed is an application for a Health Department Food Service Annual Operating License. The fee for a food service license is $330 for High Priority, $180 for Medium Priority and $120 for Low Priority facilities. No fee is required for non-profit organizations.

Complete this application packet, including Statement of Workmen's Compensation Insurance and the HACCP Plan. Return with your application fee to:

St. Mary's County Health Department
Environmental Health Services Division
P.O. Box 316
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Checks should be made payable to ST. MARY'S COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Some Important Reminders:
- To ensure your license is renewed on time, please return your application 2 weeks or more before the expiration date.
- Food service regulations require that all cold holding equipment must maintain 41°F or colder. Any non-NSF equipment will be evaluated during routine inspection. If your equipment can not maintain the required temperature it must be replaced with equipment that can.
- All food handlers should be aware that you can no longer touch "Ready-To-Eat Foods" with bare hands. Enforcement of the use of gloves, utensils, and proper hand washing will be closely monitored.
- We will be offering "Safe Food Handling" courses at the Health Department and we encourage all of our facilities to send representatives to learn the proper methods for handling food safely as well as keeping up with current regulations.
- Please remember that for all renovations, including a change of ownership, you must contact Land Use and Growth Management at 301-475-4200, ext. 1560. We **strongly** recommend that new owners submit a Plan Review Packet to the Health Department.

If you have any questions, please contact Environmental Health Services at 301-475-4321.

ST. MARY'S COUNTY
APPLICATION FOR LICENSE TO OPERATE A FOOD SERVICE FACILITY

Application is hereby made to operate a food service facility in accordance with COMAR 10.15.03 Regulations Governing Food Service Facilities.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

FACILITY NAME _____ **PROPERTY TAX ID NO.** _____

OWNER OF BUSINESS _____ **PHONE NUMBER** _____

OWNER'S MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP CODE** _____

FACILITY LOCATION (911) ADDRESS _____

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER _____

FACILITY MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP CODE** _____

FACILITY PHONE NUMBER _____ **FACILITY EMAIL** _____

INVOICING EMAIL (if different than Facility Email) _____

FACILITY INFORMATION (check all applicable blocks)

- ☐ **Full Service Restaurant**
- ☐ **Grocery Market/Deli**
- ☐ **Market/Prepackaged**
- ☐ **Bakery**
- ☐ **Bar/Lounge/Tavern**
- ☐ **Caterer**
- ☐ **Mobile Unit**
- ☐ **Nonprofit kitchen (church, fire co., etc.)**
- ☐ **Carry-Out Only**
- ☐ **Soft-Serve Ice Cream/Yogurt**
- ☐ **Confections (candy, ice cream)**
- ☐ **Other** _____

MONTHS OF OPERATION _____ **DAYS OF OPERATION PER WEEK** _____

SEATING NUMBER INSIDE _____ **SEATING NUMBER OUTSIDE** _____

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE
☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

WATER SUPPLY ☐ **Public** ☐ **Private**
SEWERAGE ☐ **Public** ☐ **Private**

Please complete and sign application. If application is not complete, it will be returned to you. Please allow 10 business days for processing food service operating license.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ **POSITION:** _____

AMOUNT OF FEE ENCLOSED: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

ID Number _____ **Sanitarian** _____ **Priority Assessment** _____

Private Well Tag No. _____ **Private Sewage System File No.** _____

Date Received _____ **Fee Received** _____ **Signed Workman's Comp Statement Attached** _____

Comments _____

Send application to: St. Mary's County Environmental Health, P.O. Box 316, Leonardtown, MD 20650
Location: 21580 Peabody Street, Leonardtown, MD 20650 Phone: 301-475-4321

FOOD SERVICE FACILITY STANDARDS
[PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION FOR YOUR FILES]

As a measure of ensuring total food integrity and reducing the risk of foodborne illness to the public, I would like you to review with your supervisory personnel the following list of food service facility standards:

1. All hand sinks are to be functional with an adequate supply of hot water (100°F min.), soap and paper towels.
2. Instruct personnel of good hand washing practices and proper use of disposable gloves, tongs, spatulas, etc.
3. Any individual with infections and/or open sores are not to handle food unless properly protected.
4. Keep cooked food away from raw, potentially hazardous food and food surfaces contaminated by these foods (ex. seafood, chicken, pork).
5. Hold potentially hazardous food below 41° F or above 135° F.
6. Rapidly reheat potentially hazardous foods to above 165° F for 15 seconds before placing in warmer.
7. Provide thermometers for checking hot food temperatures and monitoring cold units (ex. stem type thermometers, thermometers in freezers and refrigerators).
8. Properly store insecticides, medicines and toxic cleaners away from food and food contact surfaces. Use only approved insecticides. All spray bottles must be labeled as to content.
9. All shell stock and crabmeat MUST be from an approved source and be properly labeled (ex. shell stock tags, picking house number on NEW crabmeat container).
10. Do not use dented or rusted cans.
11. Keep can openers, slicers and knife blades clean and properly sanitized. Do not store knives in unsanitized places (ex. under and between equipment).
12. Outer openings of building to be made insect-proof (ex. air curtains, self-closing doors, screens).
13. Maintain proper dishwater temperatures and sanitizer levels.
14. Do not reuse unpackaged food items (ex. garnishes, breads, tomatoes).
15. All food handlers must wear clean outer garments to protect food from contamination.
16. All food handlers must wear proper hair restraints.
17. No bare hand-contact may be made with ready to eat food. Use gloves, tongs, spatula, deli tissue, and/or automatic dispenser.

July 2009

STATEMENT OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

[RETURN SIGNED STATEMENT TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT]

Maryland Health-General Code Annotated Section 1-202 requires that before any license or permit be issued under the Health-General Article to an employer to engage in an activity in which the employer may employ any individual, the employer must file with the issuing authority a certificate of compliance with the State Workmen's Compensation Laws indicating the employer's Workmen's Compensation insurance policy or binder number. *Waiver or certificate of compliance can be obtained by calling the Workmen's Compensation Commission at (800) 492-0479.*

CIRCLE the number of the option below which applies to you, provide the requested information, sign and date the form, and return it with the attached application. ***(NOTE: License cannot be issued without completion of this form.)***

1. I have Workmen's Compensation insurance.

   *Insurance Company*_____ *Policy/Binder No.* _____

2. A waiver has been received from the Workmen's Compensation Commission. (A COPY OF THE WAIVER MUST BE ATTACHED BEFORE LICENSURE WILL BE GRANTED.)

3. As provided by Maryland Annotated Code Article 101, I am exempt from having Workmen's Compensation insurance. (Circle option a or b below.)

   a. *Attached is a copy of the certificate of compliance.*

   b. *I have applied for a certificate of compliance from the Workmen's Compensation Commission on* _____. *Copy of certificate will be forwarded to St. Mary's County, Office of Environmental Health upon receipt.*

4. I am self-insured. Approval of self-insurance has been received from the Workmen's Compensation Commission. (A COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE MUST BE ATTACHED BEFORE LICENSURE WILL BE GRANTED.)

5. I have no employees; therefore I am not required to carry Workmen's Compensation insurance.

_____ _____

SIGNATURE/TITLE DATE

_____ _____

FACILITY NAME TITLE

STATEMENT OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE

[PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION FOR YOUR FILES]

If a proprietor does not have employees he/she may qualify for a waiver or exemption of self-insurance is not required. In order to comply with Maryland Health-General Code Annotated Section 1-202, a copy of the certificate of compliance (with official seal) for a waiver or exemption from the workmen's compensation Board must be submitted to the St. Mary's County Health Department, Office of Environmental Health, P.O. Box 316, Leonardtown, MD 20650.

In order to receive a waiver or exemption of this insurance a notarized letter must be submitted to the board stating your situation. All letters should be addressed to:

DIRECTOR, WORKMENS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION
6 LIBERTY ROAD, 9TH FLOOR
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, 21201
1-800-492-0479

If you have self-insurance, approval must be received from the Workmen's Compensation Commission and a copy of the certificate of compliance shall be submitted to this department.

If you wish to inquire on receiving self-insurance call:

INJURED WORKER'S INSURANCE, TOWSON, MARYLAND
410-864-5100

If you have any further questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Environmental Health Services division, weekdays between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 301-475-4321.

NOTE: Workmen's Compensation Insurance is not required for Excluded Organizations with volunteer workers.

HACCP PLAN

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Guideline for Submitting a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan

Maryland Health - General Code Annotated and the Code of Maryland Regulations require that plans and specifications be submitted to the Department when a person proposes to construct a food establishment, remodel or alter a food establishment, or convert or remodel an existing building for use as a food establishment. The minimum information provided must include the plans and specifications of the building and the food equipment, and must include other information as required to complete the review. In certain cases, the Department may require information relative to the foods proposed for processing or manufacture in order to assess whether the food handling and preparation procedures, as well as training procedures, adequately control identified hazards. A plan submittal with this information is called a HACCP Plan. A HACCP Plan is required for certain facilities that, following a preliminary priority assessment, are classified as a **High or Moderate Priority** facility. This guideline is to assist you in providing the information for the Priority Assessment and the HACCP Plan.

Information Necessary for a Priority Assessment

1. *Menu or Types of Foods* - Provide a copy of the menu or a written description of the foods that will be prepared and served.

2. *Food Service System* - Specify the types of food service systems you will use. Food service systems include: Cook-Serve, Cook-Hot Hold-Serve, Cook-Chill-Reheat-Hot Hold-Serve, etc.

3. *Number of Meals Prepared* - Specify the number of meals prepared on an average day.

4. *Population Served* - Specify whether you serve groups of persons who are particularly susceptible to disease; for example, very young, aged, hospitalized, or otherwise compromised.

For a food establishment that the Department classifies as a **High or Moderate Priority** facility, the following information must be submitted to comply with the Hazard Analysis requirements.

For High or Moderate Facilities:

General Food Preparation Information

1. Describe how you will ensure that all foods received will be from approved sources.
2. Specify whether raw meats, poultry, and seafood will be stored in the same refrigeration units as cooked/ready-to-eat foods. If so, describe how cross-contamination will be prevented.
3. Indicate how each category of frozen potentially hazardous foods will be thawed.
4. Indicate how each category of potentially hazardous foods will be cooled. Methods include: ice baths, shallow pans, reduced volume, rapid chill, etc.
5. List the categories of foods that will be prepared more than 12 hours in advance of service.
6. Specify how ingredients for cold ready-to-eat foods will be pre-chilled before mixing or assembly.
7. Specify whether any prepared foods are distributed off-premises.
8. Specify whether any foods are received in reduced oxygen packaging, or are reduced oxygen packaged on-site.

HACCP Plan Information

1. For the menu items identified by the Department as being frequently involved in food borne illnesses, submit a completed ***HACCP Plan Form*** or equal. Once approved, this form must be readily available in the food preparation area of each store. During the process of completing this form, it is necessary to carefully analyze how the foods are prepared. The most important steps in terms of the safety of the foods, known as critical control points, must be identified on the ***HACCP Plan Form***. At these points, a potential food hazard is controlled by properly completing an activity. The activity often has a measurable component or limit that can be monitored. Critical Control Points (CCPs) generally include thawing, cooking, chilling, reheating, and hot-holding, but other steps may be included depending on the food. The way in which the CCPs are monitored must be described on the ***HACCP Plan Form***. If the activity at the Critical Control Point is not completed properly due to employee error, equipment malfunction, etc., a corrective action is necessary. The corrective action for each CCP must be placed on the ***HACCP Plan Form***. Refer to the attached example ***HACCP Plan Form***.

2. Provide drawings or other information which show that the arrangement of work areas, work flow plan, and food service system are coordinated to minimize possible contamination or mishandling of food.

3. The equipment used to support the proposed food service system and necessary to control the identified hazards at Critical Control Points (CCPs) must be indicated on the ***HACCP Plan Form***, facility layout plan, and the equipment schedule. Depending on the type of food service system and the identified CCPs, needed equipment may include: cooking equipment, equipment designed to chill hot food, cold-holding equipment, hot/cold-holding equipment, and reheating equipment.

4. Submit a written procedure for training a food service facility employee on the information found in the ***HACCP Plan Form***.

HACCP Plan - - Using "COOKING" as a critical control point

CCP: COOKING

CCP and Critical Limits: Foods are cooked to temperature below for specified time:

Shell eggs cooked for immediate service, fish, meat, and all other potentially hazardous food not specified below cooked to **145° F for 15 seconds.**

Shell eggs cooked other than for immediate service, ground fish, ground meats, commercially raised game animals, and injected meats cooked to **155° F for 15 seconds.**

Whole roasts (for rare roast beef) cooked to **130° F and held for at least 112 minutes.**

Poultry; stuffed meat, stuffed pasta or poultry; or stuffing containing fish meat, or poultry cooked to **165° F for 15 seconds.**

Raw animal foods cooked to **165° F and held for 2 minutes,** when using microwave oven for cooking.

Fruits, vegetables, and commercially processed food for hot holding cooked to at least **135° F.**

Undercooked seared beefsteak cooked to **145° F for 15 seconds, must have a "cooked" color change on surface,** and regulatory approval of process used.

Monitoring:
Internal product temperature of food is taken at completion of cooking time using a thermocouple with a metal probe.

Corrective Actions:
If food has not reached temperature for the specified time, continue cooking. Recheck temperature after additional cooking to make sure standard is reached.

Verification:
Review cooking temperature logs. (Note: An alternate method would be for the supervisor to visually observe that temperatures are taken at the proper times and, not satisfactory, food is returned to the cooking equipment until the required time and temperature standards are met.)

Equipment: Oven, Range

Menu items using this CCP:
Fried chicken (***cook,*** hot hold, cool, prepare for salad, cold hold, serve)

Macaroni and Cheese (***cook***, hot hold, cool, reheat, hot hold, serve or discard)

Mashed Potatoes (***cook***, hot hold, cool, reheat, hot hold, serve or discard)

Rice (***cook***, hot hold, cool, reheat, hot hold, serve or discard)

HACCP Plan - - Using "COOLING" as a critical control point

CCP: COOLING

CCP and Critical Limits: Foods are cooled from 135° F to 70° F within 2 hours, and from 70° to 41° F within an additional 4 hours.
Monitoring: Internal product temperature of food is taken at 1.5 and 6 hours with a metal stem thermometer.
Corrective Actions: If food is not ≤ 70° F at 1.5 hours, food will be iced, stirred, or broken into smaller containers. Food that has not reached 41° F within 6 hours will be discarded.
Verification: Review cooling logs. (Note: An alternate method would be for the supervisor to visually observe that temperature are taken at the proper times and, if not taken or not satisfactory, that corrective actions listed above are taken.)
Equipment: Blast Chiller, Walk in cooler
Menu items using this CCP: Fried chicken (cook, hot hold, ***cool***, prepare for salad, cold hold, serve) Macaroni and Cheese (cook, hot hold, ***cool***, reheat, hot hold, serve or discard) Mashed Potatoes (cook, hot hold, ***cool***, reheat, hot hold, serve or discard) Rice (cook, hot hold, ***cool***, reheat, hot hold, serve or discard)

HACCP Plan

Source – 2005 FDA Model Food Code, Annex 4, Section 4(C)

Most food items produced in a retail food service establishment can be categorized into one of three preparation processes based on the number of times the food passes through the temperature danger zone between 41° F and 135° F:

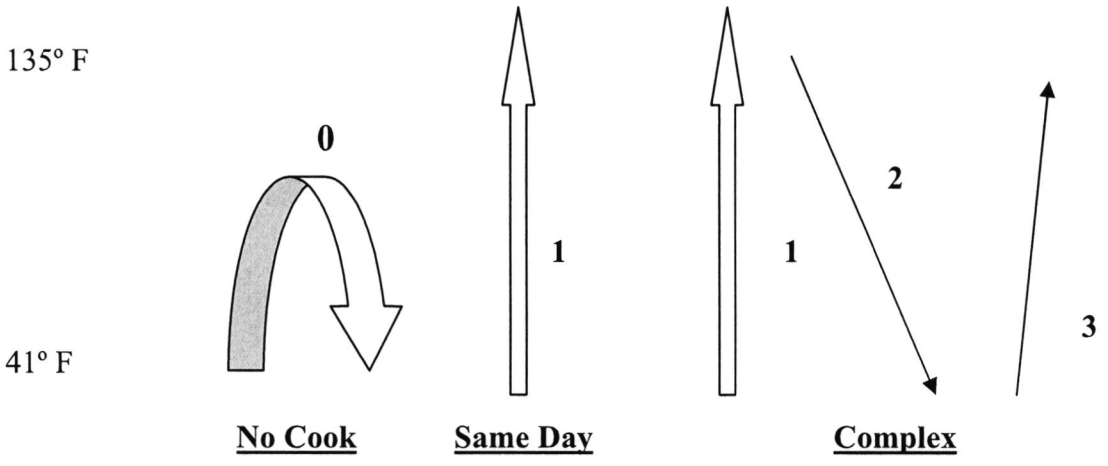
- **Process 1: <u>Food Preparation with No Cook Step,</u>** sample flow: **Receive→ Store→ Prepare→ Hold→ Serve** (other food flows are included in the process, but there is *no cook step* to destroy pathogens)

- **Process 2: <u>Preparation for Same Day Service,</u>** sample flow: **Receive→ Store→ Prepare→ Cook→ Hold→ Serve** (other food flows are included in the process but there is *only one trip* through the temperature danger zone)

- **Process 3: <u>Complex Food Preparation,</u>** sample flow: **Receive→ Store →Prepare→ Cook→ Cool→ Reheat→ Hot Hold→ Serve** (other food flows are included in the process, but there are always *two or more complete trips* through the temperature danger zone)

A summary of the three food preparation processes in terms of number of times through the temperature danger zone can be depicted in a Danger Zone diagram. Although foods produced using Process 1 may *enter* the danger zone, they do not pass all the way through it. Foods that go through the danger zone only once are classified Same Day Service, while foods that go through more than once are classified as Complex food preparation.

Complete Trips Through the Danger Zone



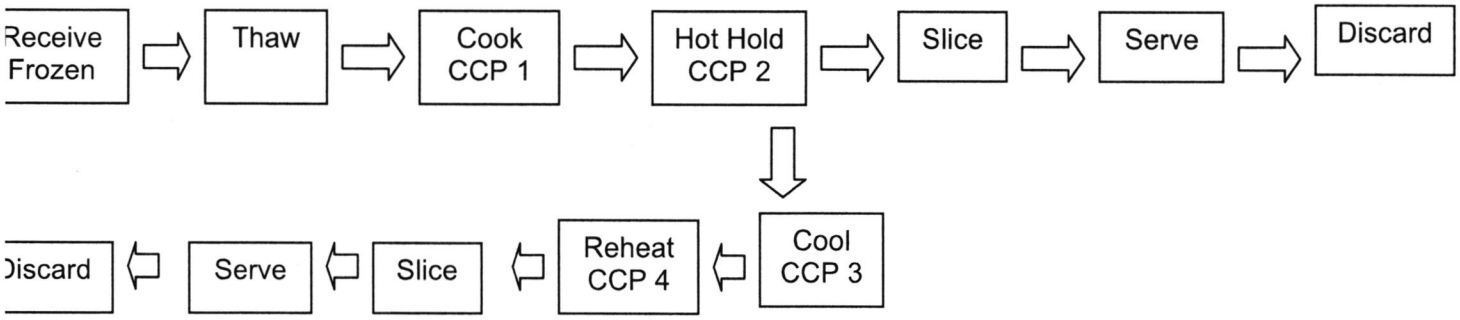
HACCP Plan Form

[EXAMPLE #1]

Facility: ABC Restaurant *Preparer*: CDE Consultants *Date*: 00/00/00

Food item: Beef Roast / Sliced Beef

Flow diagram or descriptive narrative of the food preparation steps for the food item:



HACCP Chart

Critical Control Points (CCPs)	Monitoring Procedures	Corrective Actions
1. Cook to internal temperature of 145° F for a minimum of 3 minutes.	Check the temperature of the product's center with a calibrated stem thermometer.	Continue to cook.
2. Hot Hold at minimum of 135° F. (Maximum of 4 hours)	Check the internal temperature of the product every hour.	If internal temperature is less than 135° F for more than 1 hour - Discard. If internal temperature is less than 135° F for 1 hour or less, rapidly reheat to 165° F for 15 seconds.
3. Cool so that internal temperature is less than 70° F in 2 hours, and less than 41° F in an additional 4 hours	Check the internal temperature of the product at 1 hour intervals.	If 70° F is not reached in 2 hours, additional cooling methods must be started (i.e. cutting product into smaller pieces, using ice bath, etc.) Discard product if not attained.
4. Reheat to internal temperature of 165° F for at least 15 seconds.	Check the internal temperature of the product.	Discard product if it fails to reach 165° F within 2 hours.

Equipment Utilized at each Critical Control Point (include type and quantity of each unit)

CCP 1: Convection Oven (2)

CCP 2: Heat Lamps (4)

CCP 3: Walk-in Cooler (1)

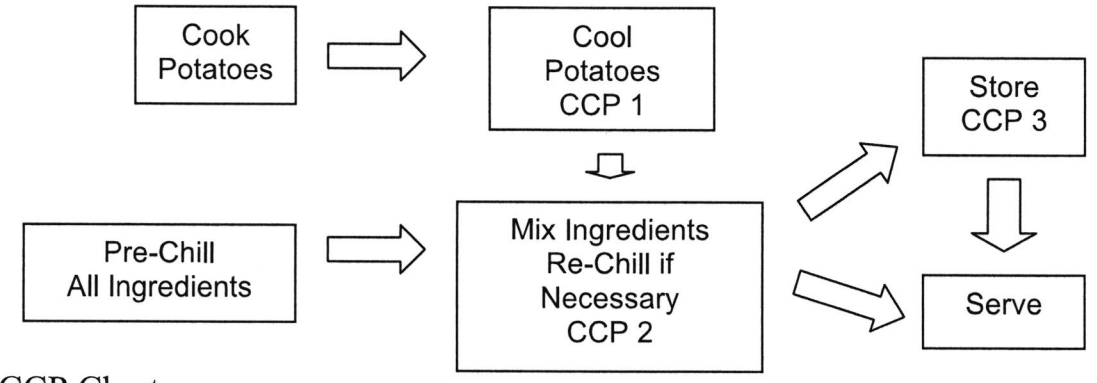
CCP 4: Convection Oven (2)

HACCP Plan Form
[EXAMPLE #2]

Facility: ABC Restaurant *Preparer*: CDE Consultants *Date*: 00/00/00

Food item: Potato Salad

Flow diagram or descriptive narrative of the food preparation steps for the food item:



HACCP Chart

Critical Control Points (CCPs)	Monitoring Procedures	Corrective Actions
1. Cool potatoes so that internal temperature is less than 70 ° F in 2 hours and less than 41 ° F in an additional 4 hours.	Take the temperature every hour.	If 70° F is not reached in 2 hours, additional cooling methods must be started (i.e. cutting product into smaller pieces, using ice bath, etc.) Discard product if not attained.
2. Mix using prechilled ingredients. Use good hygienic practices, and sanitize all prep. utensils. Rapidly re-chill food after preparation if greater than 41° F.	Evaluate procedures and check the temperature of the food every 30 minutes.	Re-chill if the food temperature exceeds 41° F, and discard the food if contaminated or if the temperature exceeds 41° F for more than 4 hours.
3. Store the food to maintain the temperature at 41° F or less.	Check food temperature every hour while on display. Check indicating thermometer on the refrigerator every 6 hours.	Discard the food if its internal temperature exceeds 41° F for a cumulative time of 4 hours.

Equipment Utilized at each Critical Control Point (include type and quantity of each unit)

CCP 1: Walk-in Refrigerator (1)

CCP 2: Reach-in Refrigerator (2)

CCP 3: Salad Bar, Walk-in Refrigerator

HACCP Plan Form

[EXAMPLE #3]

Facility: ABC Restaurant
Preparer: CDE Consultants
Date: 00/00/00

[MENU ITEM 1] Pork BBQ – > [SOURCE] from the retailer, refrigerated

- Cold hold in refrigerator at 41° F or below
- Check temperature every few hours
- Boil to 155° F or above (internal temperature)
- Add seasonings
- Chill to 41° F within 6 hours in refrigerator
- Reheat to 165° F or above
- Hot hold at 135° F or above, check temperature every hour
- Refrigerate leftovers

[MENU ITEM 2] Beef BBQ - > [SOURCE] from the retailer, refrigerated

- Cold hold in refrigerator at 41° F or below
- Check temperature every few hours
- Cook on grill to 155° F or above
- Slice and chill to 41° F within 6 hours in the refrigerator
- Reheat to 165° F or above
- Hot hold at 135° F or above, check temp. every hour
- Refrigerate leftovers

[MENU ITEM 3] Spare Ribs - > [SOURCE] from retailer, frozen

- Thaw overnight in refrigerator at 41° F or below
- Check temperature every few hours
- Cook on grill to 165° F or above (internal temperature)
- Hot hold at 135° F or above, check temperature every hour
- Refrigerate leftovers

[MENU ITEM 4] Cole Slaw - > [SOURCE] Purchase slaw mix from retailer

- Cold hold in refrigerator at 41° F or below
- Check temperature every few hours
- Add spices and mayo, use pre-chilled ingredients
- Mix quickly so temperature does not exceed 55° F
- Put into 4 oz. plastic condiment cups with lids
- Refrigerate at 41° F or below, check temperature every hour
- Take from refrigerator and give to customer

HACCP Plan Form

[RETURN ONE FORM PER MENU ITEM TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT]

Facility:_____ Preparer:_____ Date:_____

Menu item: _____

Flow diagram or descriptive narrative of the food preparation steps for the food item:

HACCP Chart

Critical Control Points (CCPs)	Monitoring Procedures	Corrective Actions
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Equipment Utilized at each Critical Control Point (include type and quantity of each unit)

CCP 1: _____

CCP 2: _____

CCP 3: _____

CCP 4: _____

PROCESS PLAN

Fact Sheet

TEMPERATURE LOG SHEET [example for your use] *Facility:*_____

Note: Cooling 135° F to 70° F in 2 hours, 70° F to 41° F in an additional 4 hours.

DATE	COOK START TIME	COOK END TIME	TEMP	COOLING START TIME (135°F)	TEMP AFTER 2 HRS	2 HR TIME	TEMP AFTER 4 HRS	END TIME (TOTAL 6 HRS)

Buffet Log

Fact Sheet

FOOD TEMPERATURE LOG [example for your use] *Facility:*_____

Required Temperatures:

- Temperatures of COLD FOODS = 41° F or below
- HOT HOLDING temperature (not initial temperature – see below) = 135° F or above
- Temperature of REHEATED FOODS = 165° F within 2 hours or less
- Cooked foods must be COOLED from 135° F to 70° F within 2 hours and from 70° F to 41° F or less within an additional 4 hours

Employee Initials	Date	Time	Food Item	Temperature	Corrective Action

The following is a summary of the minimum internal cooking temperatures of various food items as stated in COMAR Regulation 10.15.03.10A

- **145° F for 15 seconds for shell eggs prepared for immediate service, fish, meat, and all other potentially hazardous foods not specified below**
- **155° F for 15 seconds for shell eggs not prepared for immediate service, ratites, comminuted fish and meats, game animals commercially raised for food, and injected meats**
- **165° F for 15 sec for poultry, stuffed meat, pasta, or poultry, exotic bird species, wild game animals, and stuffing containing fish, meat or poultry**
- **165° F and held for 2 minutes raw animal foods cooked in a microwave oven**
- **135° F for fruits, vegetables, and ready to eat commercially processed foods cooked for hot holding**
- **130° F for 112 minutes for whole or corned beef, and pork and cured pork roasts**

Food Service Facility Grease Trap

Fact Sheet

Grease Trap Facts

The most common cause of sewage disposal system failure in food service establishments is the build-up of grease, oils and dissolved food particles in sewer lines and the drain-fields of individual septic systems. Improperly designed and maintained grease traps pose a significant threat to the sanitary operation of sewage disposal systems, shortening the functional life and causing failure. Public sewer lines can also clog with grease which stops the sewage flow. Improper disposal of sewage is a major public health issue and a critical violation of the Food Service Facilities Regulations, COMAR 10.15.03, which may lead to the immediate suspension of a food services operating permit.

Purpose of a Grease Trap

A grease trap looks very much like a septic tank. It is located at the end of the grey-water drain line from the kitchen and food preparation areas. Influent to grease traps is typically hot water and contains extremely high organic loads, including grease, oils, fats and dissolved food particles, as well as detergents. Upon entering the trap the waste water flow slows and cools allowing lighter grease to separate from the waste water and float to the top of the tank. In order to facilitate this cooling and separation process, grease trap tank capacities should be at least 1,000 gallons.

Who is Required to Have a Grease Trap?

Any permitted food service establishment whose menu produces grease during food preparation, either through the type of equipment in use or food products being prepared is required to have a grease trap. When a new facility is being designed or planned, an existing facility is being remodeled, or undergoing a significant menu change, a plan review is conducted by the Health Department. If build up of grease in the septic system or public sewer lines serving an existing food service is evident, then the facility is required to upgrade any existing grease trap or install a new grease trap. Older facilities constructed before grease traps were a plan review requirement may also be required to construct a trap if problems are discovered with grease build-up in the public sewer lines or septic systems that serve them.

Grease Management

Successful grease management is largely dependent on the employees of food service facilities. Food service managers should make sure that their employees understand the importance of proper grease management and they do everything possible to prevent expensive problems from occurring. During routine environmental inspections by the St. Mary's County Health Department, the sanitarian will be asking to see grease trap pumping and maintenance records. If the facility cannot provide records to demonstrate routine pumping of the grease trap, it will be listed as an item to be corrected on the inspection report before the follow-up inspection.

Grease Trap Capacity

Grease traps must be located outside of the structure of the food service building in an area easily accessible to routine pumping and maintenance. The waste line from food preparation areas must carry only waste water from sinks, floor drains, dishwasher and pot washing and must discharge directly into a properly designed grease trap. Effluent from the grease trap is discharged into the inlet portion of the individual septic system's septic tank or the public sewer line. The waste from restrooms must discharge directly into the septic tank or public sewer line without passing through the grease trap. Low capacity interior grease interceptors will not be approved for use in St. Mary's County facilities. The exterior grease traps will be sized in accordance with the facilities proposed menu, food preparation procedures and equipment under the following general guideline.

- **Minimum Capacity** of 1,000 gallons is required for food service facilities of small to moderate size, with cold hold-to-serve or cook-to-serve menus, no heavy grease producing procedures, and limited seating of no more than 25.

- **Standard Capacity** of 1,500 gallons is approved for moderate to large food service facilities with full cook-to-serve menus or complex food preparation procedures, large volume carryout, and with seating capacity between 25 and 150.

- **Large Capacity** of 2,000 gallons is required for large food service facilities with full service menu preparation, using preparation procedures that create large quantities of grease, and with seating capacity over 150.

The St Mary's County Metropolitan Commission requires all food serve establishments served by their public sewer system to have an adequately sized grease trap. Any alternative proposal would have to gain approval of the Metropolitan Commission and the St. Mary's County Health Department.

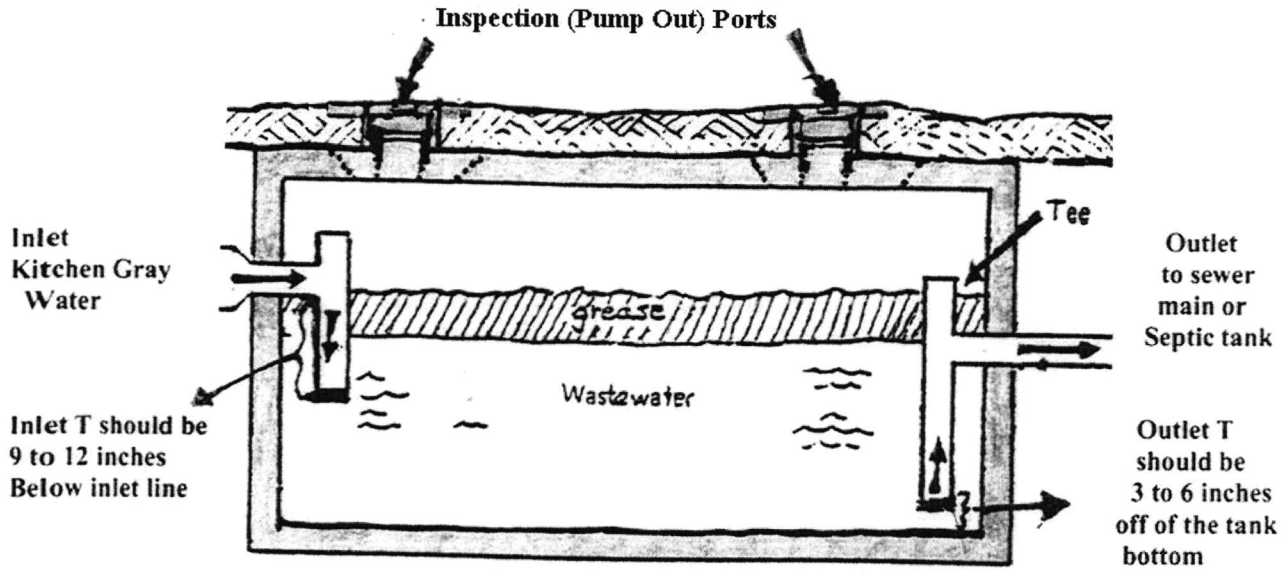
Installing a Grease Trap

The grease trap must be installed by a licensed septic contractor. The contractor is required to obtain a permit for installation from the St Mary's County Health Department and inspection approval when the job is completed. Copy of the final inspection report for grease traps at facilities served by public water and sewer will be forwarded to the St Mary's County Metropolitan Commission.

General Construction

The grease trap must be a properly sized, top seam, pre-cast, concrete tank with a single chamber. The inspection/pumping ports are required to extend from the top of the tank to the ground surface and must securely prevent leakage from the ground surface. A "T" fitting is attached inside the tank to both the inlet and outlet. On the inlet side, the lower end of the "T" should be 9 to 12 inches below the inlet pipe. On the outlet side, the lower end of the "T" should be 3 to 6 inches off the tank bottom. The tanks interior piping must be securely attached by screws so that they will not be knocked off into the tank. The tank should be gravity fed by the kitchen equipment's waste-water effluent and the length of pipe from the building to the tank should not be excessively long so that grease will not solidify in the line before reaching the grease trap. The line from the outlet should gravity feed into the sewer line or regular septic tank. If the grease trap is subjected to vehicle traffic it must be of load bearing construction. The diagram on the next page provides a description of a properly constructed grease trap.

Diagram of a Properly Constructed Grease Trap



Arrows indicate wastewater flow direction.

Pumping and Maintenance of a Grease Trap

Without proper maintenance a grease trap, no matter how expertly installed, can not continue to function properly. Bulk grease drained from deep fryers and scraped from grills should be stored in secure drums or bins for pick up by protein recovery companies. That type of bulk grease should not be disposed of down the drains of a food service facility. Grease traps are sized to collect a large quantity of grease and therefore spread out the frequency of required maintenance and pumping. As a standard practice, grease traps should be pumped quarterly (every three months). If a facility wishes to reduce that pumping frequency, they should provide a written best practices plan for grease management to the Health Department, and the St Mary's County Metropolitan Commission if the facility is served by a public sewer system. That grease management plan must detail how grease is controlled in the facility and include a recommended pumping frequency from a licensed septage pumping and hauling contractor, or recommendations from the Metropolitan Commission based on grease trap inspections. It is recommended that the grease trap be checked monthly and the grease thickness measured. This can be carried out with a simple measuring rod. If the grease layer is within two feet of the tank bottom, the tank should be pumped out by a licensed septage pumper-hauler.

For more information…

- St. Mary's County Health Department, Environmental Health Division: 301-475-4321
- St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission: 301-373-4733