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# Guidance for Developing Good Operating Practice Procedures: Chemical Control

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Amendment 1

## Background

**Chemicals** include compounds used for cleaning, sanitation, pest control, water treatment and the repair and maintenance of buildings, facilities and equipment.

*Exclusions:* food additives, ingredients and processing aids.

## 1 Purpose and Scope

Write up your purpose and scope for Chemical Control.

Example: To ensure all staff who handle chemicals:

- a) are competent and understand their correct use and storage; and
- b) minimise the potential for contamination of products, packaging, other inputs, equipment and the surrounding environment.

*See also:*

- Repairs and Maintenance; and
- Cleaning and Sanitation.

These topics have been covered individually in other guidance documents.

## 2 Authorities and Responsibilities

Write up who has specific authorities and responsibilities for Chemical Control. Think about managers, supervisors and other people as may be necessary, including contractors.

*Examples:* The business operator is ultimately responsible for Chemical Control.

Specific responsibilities are assigned as follows:

- [please specify who] identifies the chemical needs of your business, sources and purchases chemicals;

- [please specify who] trains staff in the appropriate safe use of chemicals;
- [please specify who] obtains/provides specifications and material safety data sheets for each chemical (Material Safety Data Sheets); and
- [please specify who] calibrates any equipment, such as mixing and diluting equipment, as required.

### 3 Control Measures

Write up how you ensure chemical control.

Consider at least the following points:

- how you ensure you have the necessary chemicals for the scope of your business (i.e. the right chemicals for the purpose), e.g.:
  - consult with your chemical supplier;
  - review the range of chemicals you need and determine whether you can cut down the number of chemicals you hold in stock (certain chemicals can serve more than one purpose); and
  - consider whether there are suitable products available that contain less hazardous components or which could be applied at lower concentrations.
- how you ensure chemicals are stored, handled and used in a manner that they remain effective for use, e.g.:
  - staff training to ensure the right chemicals are used at the right time and in the right concentrations for the purpose;
  - providing dedicated equipment to mix/apply chemicals;
  - ensuring instructions and conditions for use are readily available to staff, such as manufacturers' instructions, specifications, labels, mixing / dilution requirements, Material Safety Data Sheets; and
  - making sure any operator instructions are consistent with those provided by the manufacturer or supplier.
- how you protect the food, water supply, food packaging materials and other associated things from chemical contamination, e.g.:

- storing chemicals in designated areas, away from food, ingredients, equipment, packaging and processing aids etc.
  - ensuring chemicals are stored in closed containers when not in use;
  - ensuring chemicals can be clearly identified (including those that have been decanted into spray bottles and dispensers);
  - ensuring any containers and equipment used for measuring, storing and pouring chemicals can be clearly identified as for that purpose only (e.g. label 'For Chemicals Only');
  - ensuring empty chemical containers are not re-used in a way that could result in contamination of food or associated things;
  - ensuring chemicals are not stored in containers that could be mistaken for food;
  - ensuring food and food-contact packaging is removed from the area or covered before chemicals are used;
  - ensuring unused chemicals are disposed of appropriately (e.g. by a chemical waste company); and
  - ensuring appropriate cleaning is done after chemical use (Note: some chemical sanitisers are designed to air dry and therefore do not need to be rinsed off or wiped dry).
- how you can be sure the correct chemical dilutions are being used (e.g. calibration of any specialised mixing or dilution equipment. Manual mixing instructions and measuring equipment).

## 4 Monitoring

Write up how you check your Chemical Control requirements are being met.

Consider the following checks:

- inspection of storage areas, chemical containers, labelling and chemical disposition;
- maintaining an inventory of chemicals in stock.
- check concentrations of diluted chemicals (e.g. against manufacturers' colour chart);
- check calibration records for any specialised mixing / dilution equipment.

## 5 Corrective Action

Write up how you correct any problems that monitoring identifies, or that you otherwise become aware of.

Include how you cover the following:

1. Defining the extent of the problem (i.e. what has happened, why it happened, and how much and which (if any) product has been affected);
2. Restoring control (i.e. the action needed immediately to stop more product becoming affected and to fix problem);
3. Handling of affected things including ingredients, packaging, products, contaminated equipment, etc. (e.g. preventing any suspect product from being released; following your procedure for dealing with non-conforming product. Refer to separate guidance on Complaints, Non-conforming Product, Corrective Action and Recall); and
4. Preventing re-occurrence (e.g. using information gained from the problem to identify better ways to do things; develop better procedures; improve the checking systems; provide better staff training, etc.).

## 6 Documentation and Record Keeping

Determine what records you need to keep for this procedure. These will help you to introduce and maintain consistent good practices, and to demonstrate to your verifier (auditor) that you are sufficiently controlling those factors that can impact on the safety and suitability of the food.

Assess any records you already have, and introduce any additional records you need for the monitoring and corrective action activities you specify in your procedure. When monitoring, you may have an option to either:

- record every check; or
- indicate that checks have regularly been carried out (e.g. throughout a week) and only record the results of a specific check where something went wrong. In these instances, always make a record of what you did to put things right (the corrective action).

Keep blank record forms handy for staff to use and let people know where they are. Keep completed record forms together where they can be found easily for your regular internal verification checks.



For your [general programme requirements](#) refer to the guidance document on the appropriate risk-based programme or plan which can be found on the Food Safety website.