

Processing Seafood with Good Manufacturing Practices



Think of these GMPs as an important business tool. If your seafood is consistently known to be safe, fresh and wholesome, you can command a higher dollar value and a greater share of the market with repeat customers. It could lower your insurance premium by reducing your business risk.



GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICES (GMPs) are required by federal law and for Seafood HACCP compliance, and focus on eight sanitation control steps. These regulations are key to producing safe, sanitary and quality seafood.

1 SAFE WATER – All water used in processing must be to drinking level standards; whether it's obtained from a municipal source or treated from a well. This includes ice, and ice machines should be sanitized.

Proper plumbing is necessary to prevent backflow between potable (clean) water and post-process or wastewater. Hoses should be properly stored, off the floor and not submerged in tanks.

2 CLEAN CONTACT SURFACES – Any surface that the seafood touches should be kept clean and sanitized. This includes tables, conveyors, baskets, totes, cutting boards, knives and other utensils; even gloves and aprons should be kept clean and not used when torn or cut.

Sanitizer solutions must be used at full strength; check the solution often and add sanitizing chemical if diluted.

Proper cleanup should be a five-step procedure: solid waste removal, rinse, wash then rinse again, followed by the application of a sanitizer.

3 CROSS-CONTAMINATION PREVENTION – Cross-contamination happens when bacteria from something dirty come in contact with something clean. Ways to prevent this include:

- Keep raw and cooked seafood separate at all times.
- Maintain low temperatures, in the process and the product, to keep bacteria from multiplying; seafood should be kept below 41 degrees and ideally between 33-38 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Use hair nets and restraints and remove jewelry.
- Store shovels off the ground.

4 EMPLOYEE HEALTH – A sick employee can spread germs to the product; workers who are unwell should be sent home. It is also important to make sure all wounds are covered with bandages or gloves.

5 EMPLOYEE SANITATION – Enforce hand washing among your employees; this is the single best way to limit the spread of germs. Hand washing sinks should be located in processing rooms near entrances and in restrooms. Another important practice is keeping toilet facilities clean and in good repair. Keep soap and hand drying products available always, and trash emptied so not overflowing.

6 ADULTERANT PROTECTION – An adulterant is a substance that will contaminate something else; though it might not be harmful on its own. Seafood, packaging materials and surfaces should be protected from condensate or other dripping liquids, and from splashes of pooled water.



7 PEST CONTROL – Pests carry bacteria and disease, so control of insects, rodents and the like is a key sanitation practice. This includes maintaining the grounds outside and around the processing plant, as well as the use of indoor controls. Consider:

- Bait or traps outside and glue and other traps inside.
- Use screens, windows and doors that have a good seal or fit; install plastic or air curtains in doorways as an added protection.
- Drain covers should be in place and in good shape.
- Electronic insect killers (bug zappers) can help control flying pests.

8 LABEL, STORE & USE TOXIC COMPOUNDS PROPERLY – All chemical products, like cleaners or pesticides, should be clearly labeled and properly stored separate from processing areas. Labeling is especially important for containers used during processing, such as spray or mixing bottles, so that seafood and packaging are not mistakenly exposed to toxins.



For complete guidance to the Food & Drug Administration's current Good Manufacturing Processes, visit <http://bit.ly/FDASeafoodGMP>

