

HACCP, or Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points is a systematic approach to food safety that focuses on identifying, evaluating, and controlling hazards throughout the food production process—from raw materials to final consumption. HACCP serves as a crucial safety measure at Brooklyn Gardens Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center. HACCP begins with the assessment of potential hazards associated with food handling, storage, and distribution.

Upon delivery as early as 4:00am, incoming food products undergo thorough inspection for any signs of thawing, damage, spoilage, and verification of within acceptable expiration dates. This first step reflects HACCP's hazard analysis phase where potential biological, chemical, or physical hazards that could make food unsafe are identified and likelihood and severity of these hazards occurring are monitored. Critical control points are established throughout the food handling process to limit identified hazards. These critical points encompass various stages, including proper receiving and storage, cooking and preparation, temperature, and cross-contamination prevention. Food Service Staff at Brooklyn Gardens ensure this by practicing safety measures such as adhering to the dress code, using PPE and protective gear for appropriate tasks, and by upholding proper hygiene and sanitation standards set by DOH and facility, and thoroughly inspecting all products that are delivered to the kitchen

HACCP continues to be implemented through the food handling process by measuring food temp and quality of all meals prepared and distributed to residents. Some of these critical control points include maintaining freezer temperatures below 0 degrees F, cooking poultry to an

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internal temperature of 165 degrees F, Beef at 145-degree F, and maintaining all refrigerator

units are running above 32 degrees F and below 41 degrees. The monitoring CCP continues with documentation of critical limits to ensure compliance with food safety standards. Every shift (3x a day) inspections of freezers, cooling units, Sanitation room, Tray-line, documentation of temperature logs, and observation of food handling practices are recorded to ensure continuity of care. When deviations from critical limits occur, swift corrective actions are taken to address the issue and prevent potential foodborne hazards/illness.

Following the HACCP trail of Perdue: Chicken thighs involve a systematic routine of adhering to food safety protocols. Upon delivery, the shipment is unloaded and undergoes careful inspection to verify its quality and freshness. Next, the receiver will check the temperature and if correct, will sign for the shipment as another receiver promptly stores the meat in freezers. As food packed away, receivers follow First in First Out (FIFO) by dating all items and rotating older items to the front and new to the back. FIFO ensures the freshness of ingredients and prevents food waste. The preparation of chicken thighs involves cooks and sous chefs. First, all meats are seasoned and prepared by cooks and monitored for proper cooking temperature. Next, the cook/chill method is utilized to reduce the risk of bacterial growth and ensures the safety of the cooked meat. This process involves immediate cooling down in the blast chiller to bring the temperature to be below 40 degrees. The chicken thighs are then arranged and sorted on cooking racks, properly covered with Rack liners and stored for later use.

Serving and distribution of meals are conducted by well-trained Dietary workers who are tasked with paying attention to hygiene and cross-contamination prevention during food service

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operations. Once trays are ready to go to the units, one Dietary worker delivers hot meal carts to each unit in a timely manner adhering to DOH guidelines. During distribution to residents, all carts must be stocked up with bibs, 4 bottles of cranberry juice and orange juice, and apple sauce for medication, Tube feeding formula and oral nutritional supplements. Meals are sorted into appropriate meal kits for each resident based on delivery areas and diet.

Despite the efforts in maintaining food safety standards, opportunities for improvement exist within the facility. Nursing Staff is a critical area in need of attention. Mealtimes often cross over into Nursing staff scheduled break times which severely impacts food delivery time, mealtime and sanitation. More In-Services should be done to explain the importance of food illness. Optimizing workflow by hiring nonunion positions, for example due to 1199 Union guidelines meal tickets are Supervisor/Management task; this negatively impacts productivity and results in lack of proper patient care. A non-union, part time hire can easily take on the task “Diet- Tech”, does not have to abide by Union policies and will not take work away from union workers ,while allowing Management staff more flexibility to focus on Operations.

Following the HACCP trail of Perdue: Chicken thighs have revealed a comprehensive, systematic approach to handling food safety protocols across all stages of the process. Though there are opportunities for improvement, understanding and maintaining the process from delivery to essential traceability, and audits are key to why Brooklyn Gardens Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center will continue to uphold some of the highest levels of food safety practices and operational efficiency I have had the pleasure of working with.