Food safety plan (HACCP) for your stand

Exhibitor guide · trade shows, exhibitions and events

If you are serving or sampling food at a trade show or any other event, the organiser will almost always ask for a food safety plan based on HACCP. It needs to cover what you will do at this event, on this stand, not what happens in your factory or kitchen. This guide explains what to put in it and how to keep it short.

Why a plan for the stand

Food law requires every food business to put in place, and follow, a food safety procedure based on the HACCP principles (Regulation 852/2004, Article 5). The Food Standards Agency puts it simply: if you run a food business, you must make and follow a system for managing food safety (FSA food hygiene guidance).

At an event the risks are different from your normal operation. Food travels further, it sits on a stand for long hours, fridges are smaller, water is limited and the people serving may be temporary staff. That is why organisers ask you for a plan written for the event, even if your business has BRC or SALSA certification. The AEV eGuide, the standard most UK venues work to, says the HACCP principles must be followed and that you carry out and document a food safety risk assessment (HACCP plan) covering each activity on your stand (what the eGuide expects).

Your stand from start to finish



Follow the food from your base to the end of the show. Temperature is usually the step that needs a critical limit.

What to put in it

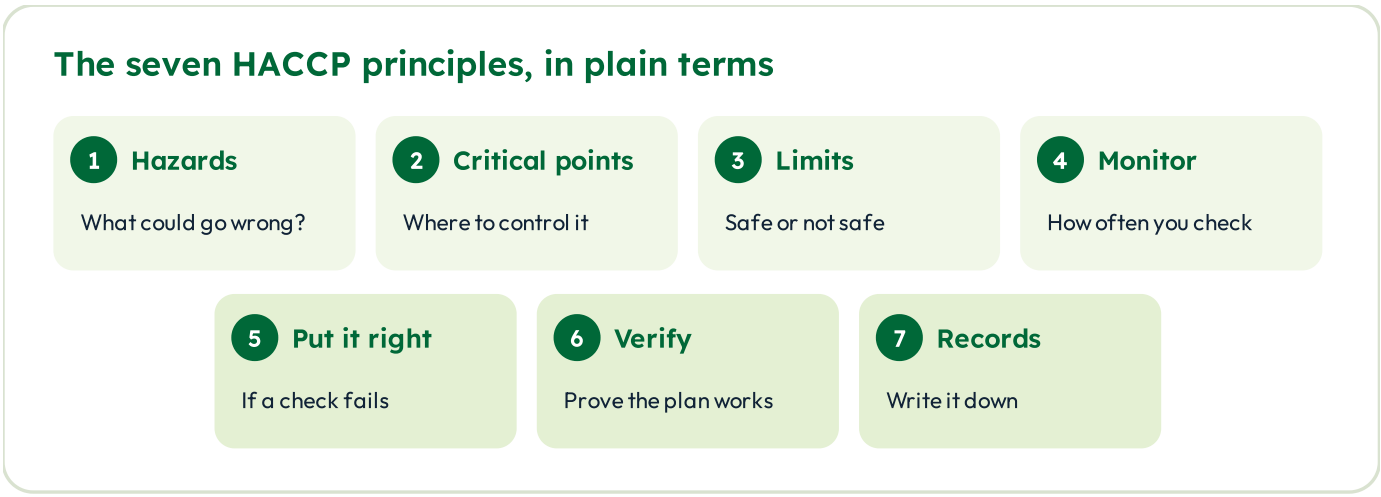
Keep the plan in proportion to what you are doing. A stand offering wrapped chocolates needs a page; a stand cooking chicken needs more. We recommend a simple table with one row per step:

Step	Hazard	Control and limit	Check and record
Buying and preparing at base	Bacteria growing, allergens missed	Approved suppliers, use-by dates, allergen specs for every ingredient	Delivery checks, allergen matrix
Transport to the venue	Chilled food warming up	Cool boxes or a chilled van, food at 8°C or below	Probe on arrival, write it down
Storage on the stand	Chilled food warming up, contamination	Fridge set to 5°C or below, food covered and off the floor	Fridge reading at opening and through the day
Preparing and portioning	Cross-contamination, dirty hands	Hand-wash basin, clean utensils, raw and ready-to-eat kept apart	Cleaning checklist

Step	Hazard	Control and limit	Check and record
Display and sampling	Time out of the fridge, visitor contamination	Covered display, single portions, 4-hour limit for chilled food out of the fridge	Time labels on each batch
Clearing down	Waste attracting pests, dirty equipment	Closed bins, food waste removed daily, equipment washed	Closing checks

If you cook or hot hold, add rows for cooking (core temperature, for example 75°C for 30 seconds) and hot holding (63°C or above). Our temperature control guide has the figures.

The seven principles in plain terms



The seven HACCP principles as they apply to a stand.

The law lists seven principles. On a stand they come down to a few practical questions:

1. **Hazards.** What could make someone ill? Bacteria growing in food left warm, cross-contamination from hands or utensils, allergens, foreign bodies such as cocktail sticks or broken glass.
2. **Critical control points.** The steps where control is essential, usually chilled storage, cooking and hot holding.
3. **Critical limits.** The figure that separates safe from unsafe, for example 8°C for chilled food or 63°C for hot holding.
4. **Monitoring.** Who checks, how and how often. "Probe the fridge at opening, midday and close" is better than "temperatures are monitored".
5. **Corrective action.** What you do when a check fails: move food to another fridge, reheat once, or throw it away.
6. **Verification.** How you know the plan works, for example a probe that has been checked for accuracy and a manager who reviews the records each day.
7. **Records.** Proportionate to the size of the business: a temperature log, cleaning checklist and allergen matrix are usually enough for a stand.

Allergens belong in the plan too

The eGuide asks for an allergen management plan, either separate or inside the HACCP plan. It should list the 14 allergens in everything you serve, say how visitors are told the information is available, keep allergen foods apart and set out what staff do if someone has a reaction. See allergen information on your stand.

Things that make a plan easy to accept

- It names the event products. If you are serving three cheeses and a chutney, list them.
- It matches the stand. If the plan says there is a hand-wash basin and fridge, there should be one on the stand.
- It says what happens if something goes wrong, including a food poisoning or allergic reaction complaint.
- It is on the stand during the show, on paper or a device, and the staff serving know what is in it.
- It has been reviewed for this event. A plan from a different show with the wrong products is one of the most common gaps we see.

If you are a small business without a plan, the FSA's free Safer food, better business pack is a good starting point. Use its safe methods and add a page for the event steps above. For more on how a full system fits together, read what a food safety management system is.

Who checks the plan

The organiser decides what they accept. At many shows the organiser appoints a food safety consultant, such as Event Food Safety, to review your plan before the event and advise you. Environmental health officers can also ask to see it on site. We recommend sending it in good time through the organiser's exhibitor portal.

Related guides

- The AEV eGuide explained
- Chilled food, hot holding and probe checks
- Allergen information on your stand
- Documents organisers ask for
- How we support events

This guide is general advice for you as an exhibitor at a UK trade show, exhibition or other event. The organiser and venue decide what is accepted at their event, so always read your exhibitor terms. Checked against the AEV eGuide (August 2026) and Food Standards Agency guidance, October 2026. Online version: eventfoodsafety.co.uk/exhibitor-resources/food-safety-plan-haccp/