

## Overview

This standard is about the skills and knowledge needed to cure meat products. Curing meat or poultry is important to the production of a variety of meat products including bacon, gammon, ham and salami using wet, dry, air and smoking techniques. The curing of meat or poultry is important to the production of added value products and extending the shelf life of meat.

You will need to know how to prepare to cure meat, carry out the curing process, adhere to regulatory and organisational requirements and how to address problems within the limits of your responsibility. You will need to know and understand the principles underpinning the curing of meat or poultry including regulatory requirements, the major systems typically used to cure meat or poultry and the factors affecting the final product flavour and quality and shelf life.

This standard is for you if you work in food manufacture and/or supply operations and are involved in carrying out curing of meat or poultry.

## Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

### **Prepare to cure meat or poultry products**

1. prepare to cure meat and poultry products in accordance with organisational standards
2. wear and use the correct personal protective equipment in accordance with regulatory standards and organisational requirements
3. check the availability and cleanliness of work area, tools and equipment for curing
4. address problems within the limits of your responsibility

### **Carry out curing operations**

5. carry out curing of meat or poultry according to product specification
6. take effective action to deal with problems during the curing operation
7. maintain quality of meat or poultry when curing
8. make product available to next stage of process
9. store waste for disposal according to organisational requirements

## Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

1. why it is important to follow organisational standard operating procedures and specifications during the curing of meat
2. why meat is cured
3. the key features of wet curing, dry curing, air drying and smoking
4. the work area tools and equipment needed to carry out the curing of meat
5. why it is important to check the cleanliness of tools and equipment
6. how to access and follow the correct curing specification
7. how to prepare dry and wet cures of different strengths and make suitable adjustments to achieve the required concentrations
8. how to check if the curing process is completed
9. the importance of storing cured meat separately from other meat especially during the curing process
10. how to dispose of waste products from the curing process
11. the effect of ineffective curing on potential customer complaints, lost revenue and food safety
12. how to deal with curing problems within the limits of your responsibility
13. why meat products are cured
14. the common types and cuts of meat commonly cured
15. the different production processes available to cure meat or poultry
16. the effect of curing on final product shelf life
17. the key differences between dry and wet curing including the advantages and disadvantages of each process
18. why it is important to apply dry cures mainly to the muscle area of the meat product
19. how to measure brine strength and temperature using a variety of different methods
20. the major features of large scale curing equipment including the use of massaging and tumbling systems
21. the key features of smoking as a curing process
22. why different time/temperature combinations are used in the smoking process
23. how meat can be air dried to produce a cured product
24. the cuts of meat most suitable for wet curing, dry curing, smoking, air drying, tumbling and massaging

25. regional and national differences in production of cured meat products including examples of typical products
26. how raw material quality and temperature can impact on the curing process and how this may be monitored
27. how the thickness/size of the meat joint impacts on curing times
28. how to establish what are appropriate curing times
29. how to assess the suitability of curing ingredients for use in curing
30. common product quality problems associated with each of the curing processes
31. how the different curing processes affect the flavour of the meat product
32. why it is important to store cured meat separately from other meat including during the curing process
33. how the curing processes affect yield and economic value of the meat product
34. the process of osmosis and its impact on flesh during the curing process

## Cure meat products

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**Developed by** NSAFD

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**Version Number** 3

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**Date Approved** January 2019

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**Indicative Review Date** January 2024

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**Validity** Current

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**Status** Original

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**Originating Organisation** Improve

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**Original URN** IMPMP162

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**Relevant Occupations** Process Operatives; Process, Plant and Machine Operatives; Manufacturing technologies; Plant and Machine Operatives

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**Suite** Meat and Poultry Processing

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**Keywords** Meat; poultry; curing; food; drink

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