

Overview

This standard is about the skills and knowledge needed for you to determine shelf life for a food and drink product. Shelf life determination is essential in ensuring compliance with food safety regulations and the continued supply of good quality food and drink to a UK and global market.

The quality of a food and drink product must be maintained from initial production through storage, distribution and sale through to consumption. The extension of the life of a food and drink product through processing, packaging and the use of additives enables food and drink to be kept safe for longer periods of time. Knowledge of the shelf life of a product is therefore essential if a product is to be safe, of good quality and adhere to regulatory requirements.

You must be able to plan the shelf life determination and liaise with relevant colleagues on the requirements of the shelf life test. You must be able to gather and evaluate results, determine a shelf life for the product and provide feedback to colleagues on suggested improvements to the shelf life determination process.

This standard is for you if you work in food and drink manufacture and/or supply operations and are involved in determining shelf life for a food and drink product.

Determine shelf life of a food and drink product

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

* *Plan activities**

1. source organisational requirements for shelf life determination
2. liaise with relevant people to source specific customer requirements
3. use historical data, knowledge and information within and external to the food and drink business to determine an approximate shelf life
4. confirm the shelf life protocol with relevant people internal and external to the food and drink business
5. check sufficient product, facilities, storage and additional requirements of the shelf life are available for the duration of the process
6. communicate to relevant people specific requirements of the shelf life determination

**Carry out testing

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7. source and label all food and drink products adhering to organisational shelf life requirements
8. store in correct conditions adhering to organisational shelf life requirements
9. check that the correct number of food and drink products are sampled and tested at accurate times and intervals

**Evaluate results

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10. gather together the results of all testing carried out on the food and drink products during the shelf life determination
11. evaluate all results to determine a shelf life for the product
12. communicate final evaluation and make recommendations to relevant people referencing the shelf life of the food and drink product
13. provide feedback to colleagues on the shelf life process including suggestions for improvements

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the regulatory and organisational requirements relating to the determination of shelf life for a food and drink product
2. the organisational methods of communication including new technology and how to use it
3. how to source customer requirements for shelf life determination and the importance of this
4. why it is important to determine a guide shelf life for a product and how to do this
5. what areas of the food and drink business must be liaised with to ensure the successful completion of a shelf life determination
6. why clear product labelling is essential to shelf life determination
7. what subjective and non-subjective tests can be carried out on a food and drink product during a shelf life determination
8. how to source all test results
9. how to evaluate test results to inform the determination of the shelf life of a food and drink product
10. the organisational methods of providing feedback to internal and external colleagues

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