

Acidification of Sushi Rice for Food Safety *APPROVED HACCP Plan and (Variance Required)*



Ready-to-eat, Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food, such as sushi rice, can be sufficiently acidified with vinegar to inhibit the growth of pathogenic microorganisms. Sushi rice that is not properly acidified and placed out of temperature control may support the growth of pathogenic bacteria, particularly *Bacillus Cereus* and *Staphylococcus Aureus*.

Most bacteria do not grow or produce toxins in food that is properly acidified to a pH of 4.2 or lower. Sushi rice that is properly acidified to a pH of 4.2 or lower can be out of temperature control for up to 12 hours. Food establishments that choose to use acidification to ensure food safety must follow an approved HACCP Plan and obtain a variance from the Snohomish County Health Department.

To ensure food safety when using acidified sushi rice:

The facility must develop their own Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) Plan to control the pH of their acidified rice. More information on how to develop your HACCP Plan can be found on the following page.

*HACCP reviews with Variance require a full Plan Review process and an application fee of **\$2,000** owed to the Health Department at the time of submittal.*



A calibrated pH meter will be required to test acidified rice for any approved HACCP Plans in Snohomish County.

Failure to follow the approved HACCP Plan demonstrated during routine inspections may result in the revocation of this approved variance in the future. The alternative to this HACCP Plan for Sushi Rice is to hold it under Time as a Control (TAC) during service.

Acidifying Rice for Sushi: a HACCP Plan Guide

The HACCP Plan submitted for review must contain certain required information in accordance with WAC 246-215-08215. All items on the checklist below should be submitted along with your application page and review fee. These items will be carefully reviewed to ensure they meet all requirements to render rice non-TCS so that it can be held at room temperature for up to 12 hours.

Sushi rice HACCP plan Checklist:

- _____ Operational steps including **receiving**, **storage** and **preparation**.
- _____ A **recipe/formulation** including type of rice (e.g., short grain) and the concentration of the vinegar. (e.g., 5%)
- _____ Methods for **cooking** rice including time and temperatures.
- _____ Methods for **preparing** the vinegar mixture. (e.g., vinegar, salt and sugar)
- _____ Method of cooling cooked rice indicating **time** and **temperature**.
- _____ Method of **mixing** rice and vinegar solution.
- _____ Identify the **Critical Control Points**. (adding vinegar and cooling rice)
- _____ Identify your **critical limits**. (target pH is ≤ 4.2 and must not reach critical limits ≥ 4.2)
- _____ Methods of **measuring** and the frequency of **monitoring** your Critical Control Points. (e.g., measuring the pH daily by using a pH meter accurate to 0.2-0.3)
- _____ Describe your **Corrective Action**. (e.g., if the pH is not less than 4.2, more vinegar will be added to the rice and retested, if pH test result is again not less than 4.2, the rice will be discarded)
- _____ Policy and procedures regarding the **storage** of sushi rice should indicate holding time. (e.g., 12 hours in rice warmer.)
- _____ Describe **policy** regarding remaining sushi rice following the holding time. (e.g., discard leftover sushi rice after 12 hours)
- _____ Describe policy regarding **recordkeeping**. (for example: keeping a record of all sushi rice HACCP plan related documents for at least 2 years)

All checklist items outlined above must be submitted with an application page and Variance Request form, along with \$2,000 payment to the Snohomish County Health Department for review and approval. Plans can be submitted online [Starting a Food Business | Snohomish County Health Department, WA](#). This plan may not be implemented until an approval letter is sent by the Food Safety Program to the operator and a preoperational inspection verifying the plan implementation and testing are compliant.