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# Performing effective food safety inspections of food premises

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quality, value, service & integrity



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## Purpose of inspections/audits

- To ensure that the operation is capable of producing safe food i.e. reducing the risk to public health
- To identify foreseeable incidences of food poisoning and other hazards
- Verification of the food safety management system
- To check standards have been achieved (legal, company, industry guide)
- To identify training needs or competency of staff
- To contribute to continuous improvement and the food safety culture.



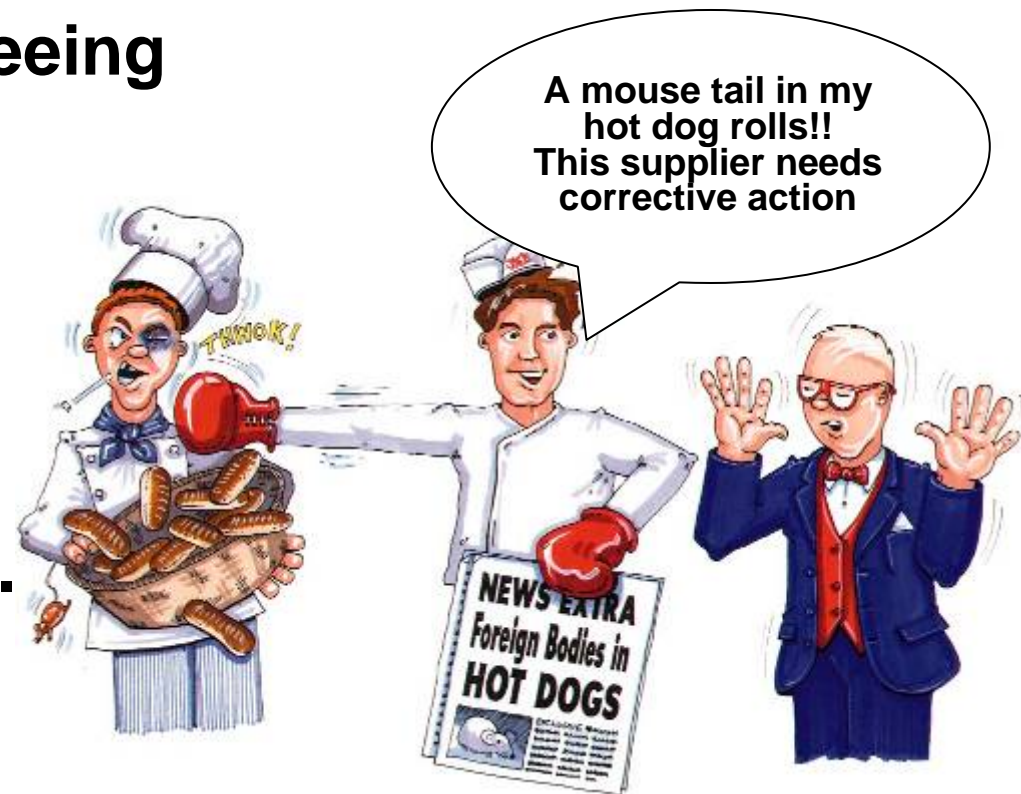
## Prerequisites for effective inspections

- **Science based legislation and government guidance and codes of practice**
- **Government targets which encourage comprehensive risk-based inspections**
- **Accessible, accurate and reliable up-to-date epidemiological and scientific information**
- **Competent managers, policies and procedures**
- **Sufficient resources and training**
- **Competent inspectors who are experts in food safety and “HACCP”**

**Are inspections valued or a burden on business?**

## Stages in effective inspection

- **Planning & preparation (document review)**
- **Conducting on site inspection**
- **Opening meeting**
- **Analysis**
- **Closing meeting/agreeing corrective action**
- **A written report that can be understood and complied with.**
- **Verifying effective completion (revisits).**



- Read file/correspondence - previous reports
- Prepare checklist/aid memoire

### Competencies:

- Technology
- Legislation/codes/guidelines/standards
- Main hazards/causes of food poisoning
- HACCP

### Associated with:

Place/equipment

Products/services

People

Practices (procedures/processes)

Documentation

## Planning is important to ensure:

- **Sufficient allocation of time**
- **Take account of:**
  - **Level of in-house expertise**
  - **Size and complexity of operation**
  - **Type of product/process**
  - **Available resources**
  - **Population at risk.**



**Dangers of a superficial inspection**

# Characteristics of a good inspector

Open minded

Objective

Tenacious

Good judgement

Fair

Diplomatic

Remains calm

Flexible

Polite

Good negotiator

Punctual

Concise

Competent

Knowledgeable

Honest

Analytical

Discrete

Good communicator

Approachable

# Undesirable characteristics of an inspector

Argumentative

Unprofessional

Untrustworthy

Blasé – laid back

Know-it-all

Condescending

Easily distracted

Gullible

Aggressive

Nit-picking

Cynical





- **Closed (yes/no) – use sparingly**
- **Open**
- **Probing (follow up)**
- **Hypothetical**
- **Clarification**
- **Sympathetic**
- **Confrontational.**

**Avoid:**

**Trick questions**  
**Leading questions**  
**Ambiguous questions**  
**Multiple questions**  
**Confrontational**  
**Sarcasm.**

**Show me.**

# Conducting an inspection

- Preliminaries -
  - Set the right example - clothing/equipment
- Start at a “datum”
- Orderly and systematic (follow the product from deliveries → **customer**)
- Thorough (CCPs) – record as much data as possible

If you can't see it...  
...you can't inspect it.

If you can't hear it...  
...you can't audit it.

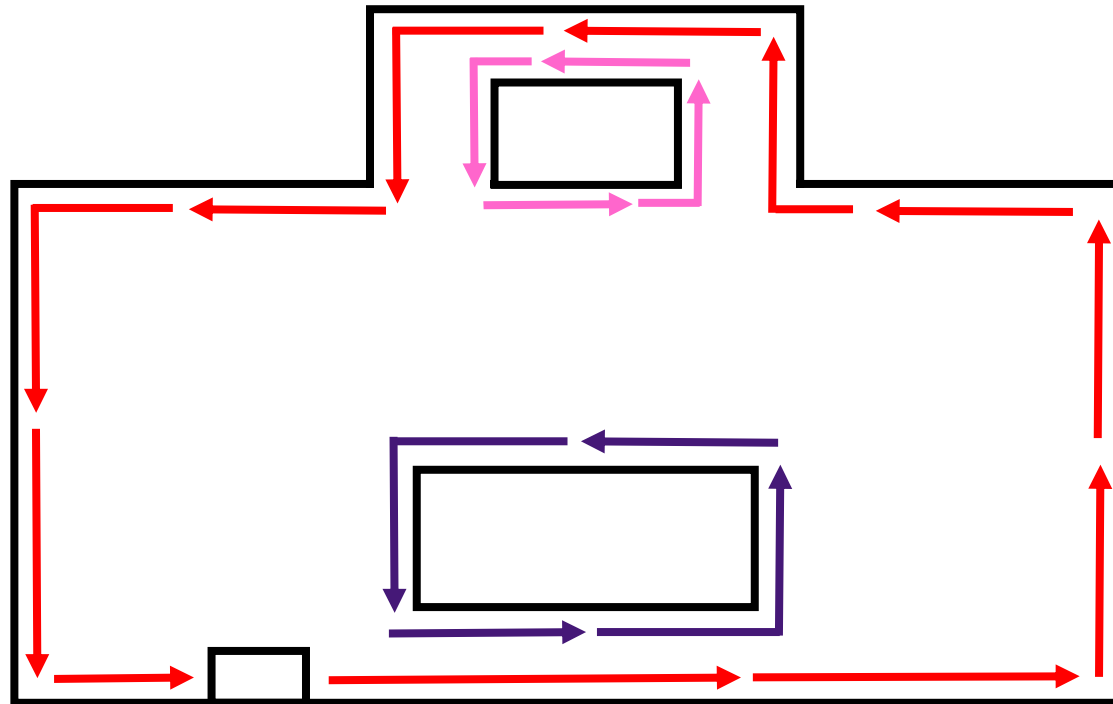


## Apply rigorous science

- **Concentrate on hazards and risks**
- **Avoid ritualistic defects and solutions**
- **Be prepared to justify demands**
- **Scientific understanding changes**
- **Be flexible in the face of new evidence**
- **New information – new solution.**

**Focus on the good as well as the bad.**

## Diagram 1



Step 1 →

Step 2 →

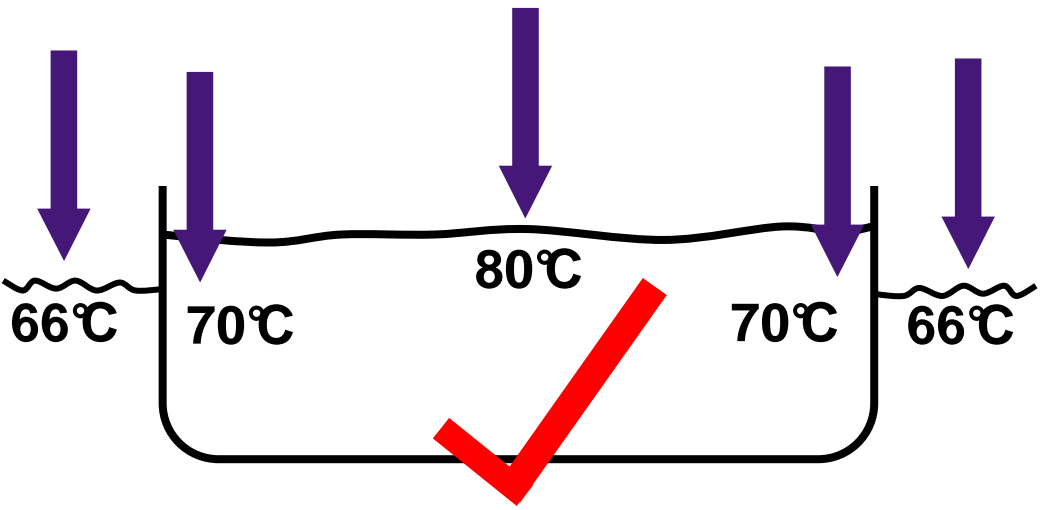
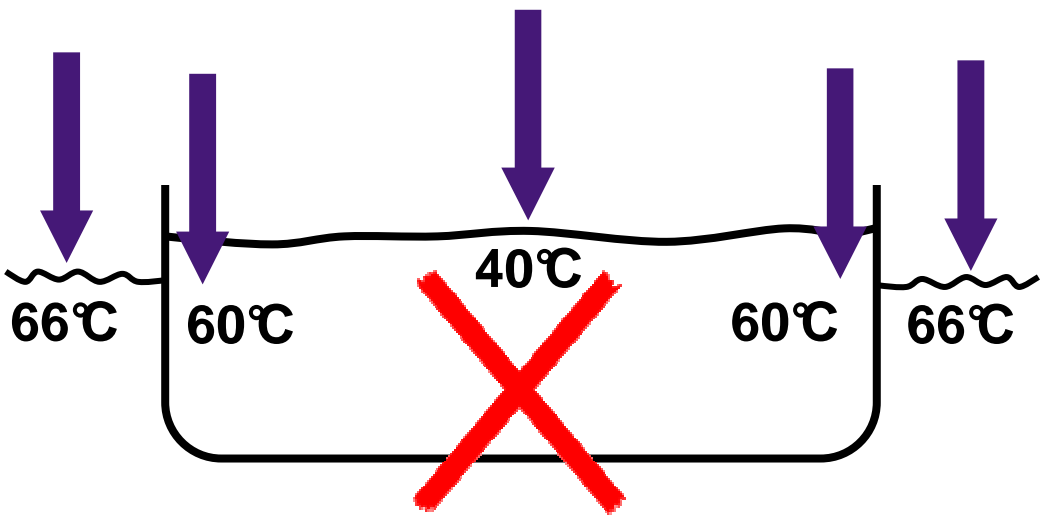
Step 3 →

Obtain physical evidence to confirm or refute what you have been told

- Use multiple sources
- Triangulation



# Triangulation



# Analysis and interpretation



**Inspection - gathering data  
A collection of incoherent facts.**

- **Single fault - multiple causation**
- **Look for permanent solutions which work and remove the cause of the problem e.g. management failures, inadequate training or no effective systems.**





- **Simple ‘findings’ are not enough**
- **Transform to coherent facts which enables action to be taken**
- **One soap dispenser empty**
- **Two soap dispensers empty**
- **Soap dispensers empty on revisit.**

## The closing meeting

- **Information should support presentation of findings – make life easier – assist not condemn**
- **Provide positive feedback as well as negative**
- **Provide guidance and advice**
- **Invite responses - obtain further information (recommendations may need changing)**
- **Discuss remedial programme/encourage manager to propose solutions (action plan)**
  - **Requirements must be practical**
  - **Agree timescale/re-inspection**
- **Written confirmation/instruction/warning to follow.**

- **Poor planning and preparation**
- **Inadequate equipment**
- **Lack of knowledge/competence**
- **Failure to recognise management failures and other contributory factors to food poisoning**
- **Inadequate time to achieve objectives**
- **Generic or badly designed checklists/inspection forms**
- **Too much time spent on paperwork**
- **Walls, floors ceiling approach.**