



# TIP SHEET 11

## CORRECTION, CORRECTIVE ACTION AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

Simply put, a correction is an immediate action taken to fix an issue identified during an audit or while monitoring and corrective action works to resolve the root cause of the issue. Preventative action is one taken to prevent a food safety problem in the future. Often the terms are used interchangeably, but each has their place in addressing food safety issues.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENCE AMONG CORRECTION, CORRECTIVE ACTION AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

### APPLICABLE CODE ELEMENTS

- PART A, 3.2
- 2.5.3

### KEY TERMS

- CORRECTION

Action to eliminate a detected non-conformity.

- CORRECTIVE ACTION

Action to eliminate the cause of a detected non-conformity or other undesirable situation.

- PREVENTATIVE ACTION

Action to determine and eliminate the causes of a potential non-conformity.

### PROCESS STEPS

1. Correction
  - a. A correction should be made when there is any observation within the site that indicates there is a food safety risk to the product. After the correction is made, the site must investigate to determine the root cause of the issue. When the root cause of the problem is identified, preventative actions can be taken.
  - b. An example of a correction would be: during his walk through the site, the person responsible for food safety notices the washdown hose on the floor of the production area. The correction is for the food safety person to return the hose to the hose reel.
2. Corrective Action
  - a. Corrective action is an important part of any food safety system. Corrective actions are proactive, rather than reactive responses to a deviation from regular operations. It requires the development a procedure that describes, before the event, who, what, when, where and how the site will address an identified problem or deviation. These



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actions can then be executed if a deviation from the prescribed course of action can be taken.

- b. Documentation of the corrective action is to be retained by the site.
  - c. The site should consider identifying the root cause of the issue, to prevent an occurrence of the same issue in the future.
  - d. There are many means and tools available to assist the site in identifying the root cause of an issue. Some of common tools include “5 Whys,” “Fishbone diagram,” and flowcharting.
  - e. Following the example above, the person responsible for food safety used the “5 Whys” tool to determine the root cause for the washdown hose being on the floor.
    - i. Why 1 – the sanitation person left the hose on the floor after washing down the equipment.
    - ii. Why 2 – the sanitation person attempted to place the hose onto the hose reel but found it broken.
    - iii. Why 3 – the maintenance person was informed that the hose reel was broken, but hadn’t received approval from Finance to purchase a new hose reel.
    - iv. Why 4 – the finance person had received the purchase request, but was not able to approve the request before leaving for vacation.
    - v. Why 5 – upon their return to the office, the finance person forgot to follow through with the approval of the purchase request.
3. Preventative Action
- a. An important part of the process is taking preventative action to assure the continuous improvement of the SQF System.
  - b. Following the example above, the person responsible for food safety realizes the approval process for food safety capital expenses needs to be reevaluated to assure expedience and works with site management to update the process.

### RELEVANT RESOURCES

- March 2015 SQFI Learning Lunch: A Practical Approach to Root Cause Analysis  
<https://youtu.be/Nk1rrld1X2w?list=PL0uh0zb5v1tT445EnBiEKKzIqKg37rAA7>
- Exemplar Global. *Top 5 Root Cause Analysis Tools*.  
<http://www.exemplarglobalcollege.org/top-5-root-cause-analysis-tools/>