

SPECIAL PROCESSING



Acidification of Foods to Prolong Shelf Life

Acid can be used in food to slow down or prevent the growth of disease or spoilage causing organisms. This can prolong the shelf life of a food while allowing the nutrient value to remain relatively unchanged.

If you would like to use acidification as a means of preserving potentially hazardous foods requiring time/temperature control for safety (PHF/TCS), you must provide the following to ensure you have control over pathogen growth:

Final product pH at or below 4.6 and confirmed by an approved food testing lab

Recipe with ingredients and amounts

Functional, calibrated pH meter on premises. Because composition of raw ingredients sometimes varies, you must have a framework in place to test and verify pH of final product

Staff training framework and documentation of such, including a process authority certified acidification class (Better Process School). Contact your inspector for more information

HACCP plan and State Variance application completed and approved

Documentation from process authority verifying that product meets shelf stable requirements. In this case, a process authority would be an individual or entity that has expert knowledge in the acidification and processing of acidified foods

Pickling of Foods Without a Variance

If you wish to pickle (acidify) potentially hazardous (PHF/TCS) foods without a variance, you must process and hold the product at or below 41° F for a maximum of 7 days. If you are pickling non-potentially hazardous foods such as raw vegetables, you can avoid variance requirements by using a cold brine. This means that you cannot use a cooking process or heat treatment of any kind.

Fruit jams and jellies can be canned without a variance. However, some lab testing and documentation is required. Contact your inspector for more information.

Acidification of non PHF/TCS foods that are not hermetically sealed (canned), and that are not acidified to prolong shelf life, can be conducted without a variance.

Reference the other side of this handout to determine if your product will require a HACCP plan and/or variance.

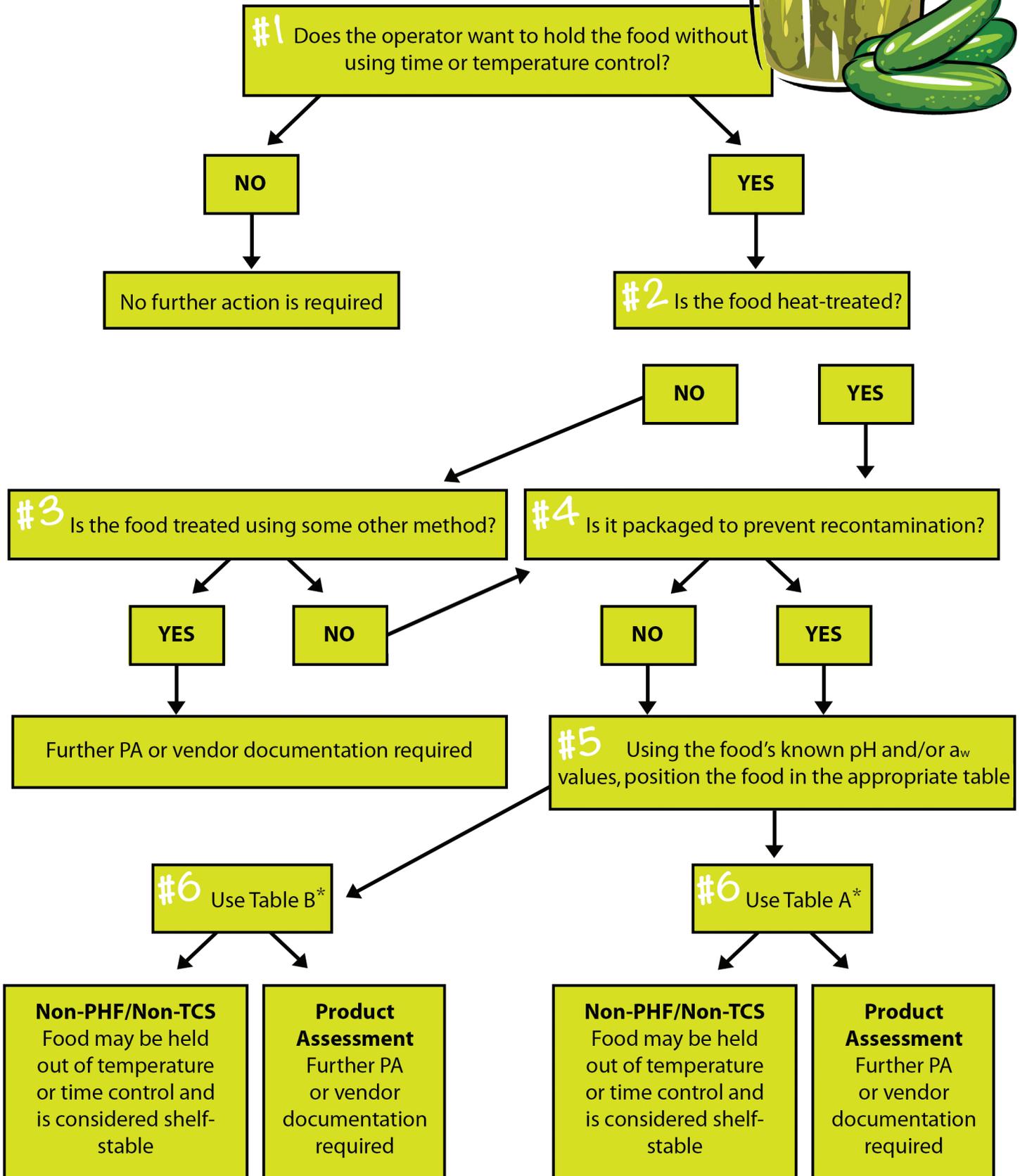


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*See page 38 of the HACCP Toolkit for this table. The toolkit is available at mhealthinspect.org or through your inspector.