

## Overview

This standard is about the skills and knowledge needed to cure meat products. Curing meat or poultry is important to the production of a variety of meat products including bacon, gammon, ham and salami using wet, dry, air and smoking techniques. The curing of meat or poultry is important to the production of added value products and extending the shelf life of meat.

You will need to know how to prepare to cure meat, carry out the curing process, adhere to regulatory and organisational requirements and how to address problems within the limits of your responsibility. You will need to know and understand the principles underpinning the curing of meat or poultry including regulatory requirements, the major systems typically used to cure meat or poultry and the factors affecting the final product flavour and quality and shelf life. You should also have an understanding of how the green circular economy supports repeated use of resources and products within your organisation.

This standard is for you if you work in food operations and are involved in carrying out curing of meat or poultry

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

1. prepare to cure meat and poultry products according to organisational requirements and standards
2. wear and use the correct personal protective equipment according to regulatory standards and organisational requirements
3. check the availability and cleanliness of work area, tools and equipment for curing
4. carry out curing of meat or poultry according to product specification
5. take effective action to deal with problems during the curing operation
6. maintain quality of meat or poultry when curing
7. make product available to next stage of process
8. store waste for disposal according to organisational and legal and regulatory requirements

## Knowledge and understanding

### *You need to know and understand:*

1. why it is important to follow organisational standard operating procedures and specifications during the curing of meat
2. why meat is cured
3. the key features of wet curing, dry curing, air drying and smoking
4. the work area tools and equipment needed to carry out the curing of meat
5. why it is important to check the cleanliness of tools and equipment
6. how to access and follow the correct curing specification
7. how to prepare dry and wet cures of different strengths and make suitable adjustments to achieve the required concentrations
8. how to check if the curing process is completed
9. the importance of storing cured meat away from other meat especially during the curing process
10. how to dispose of waste products from the curing process
11. the effect of ineffective curing on potential customer complaints, lost revenue and food safety
12. why meat products are cured
13. the common types and cuts of meat commonly cured
14. the different production processes available to cure meat or poultry
15. the effect of curing on final product shelf life
16. the key differences between dry and wet curing including the advantages and disadvantages of each process
17. why it is important to apply dry cures mainly to the muscle area of the meat product
18. how to measure brine strength and temperature using a variety of different methods
19. the major features of large-scale curing equipment including the use of massaging and tumbling systems
20. the key features of smoking as a curing process
21. why different time/temperature combinations are used in the smoking process
22. how meat can be air dried to produce a cured product
23. the cuts of meat most suitable for wet curing, dry curing, smoking, air drying, tumbling and massaging
24. regional and national differences in production of cured meat products including

examples of typical products

25. how raw material quality and temperature can impact on the curing process and how this may be monitored
26. how the thickness/size of the meat joint impacts on curing times
27. how to establish what are appropriate curing times
28. how to assess the suitability of curing ingredients for use in curing
29. how to dispose of waste products from flavour enhancement operations according to organisational and legal and regulatory requirements
30. common product quality problems associated with each of the curing processes
31. how the different curing processes affect the flavour of the meat product
32. why it is important to store cured meat away from other meat including during the curing process
33. how the curing processes affect yield and economic value of the meat product
34. the process of osmosis and its impact on flesh during the curing process
35. the limits of your own authority and competence and why it is important to work within those limits
36. what recording, reporting and communication is needed, how to carry this out and the reasons why it is important to do so

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