Crisis Management Plan

A crisis management plan that describes actions that will be taken as a result of external, environmental, climatic, equipment failure or other potential business threats that will impact the ability of the facility to provide their customers with safe, quality products. These threats, depending upon the facilities product, location and other factors may include fire, flood, power failure, storm damage, acts of terrorism, etc.

The facility should identify a crisis management team including a senior decision maker and ensure the team is trained in crisis management procedures. The team should identify known threats to the business which could disrupt or impact its ability to produce and provide safe, quality food and prepare a plan describing the methods and controls the facility will implement to address these threats if they were to occur and how to maintain continuity of product supply during the crisis.

The plan should document in detail the controls the facility will implement to assure that food safety and quality are not compromised and that if the integrity of any product is compromised, how the product will be isolated and controlled. The plan should ensure that everyone on the crisis management team is familiar with the withdrawal and recall procedures the facility has documented.

The plan needs to include criteria for when controls will be implemented (ex. numbers of hours with no power, rise in product temperature prior to moving to alternative storage locations, etc.) and how criteria will be monitored during the business threat condition. Criteria are to be product specific, as appropriate. Also included are product review and disposition criteria to determine what product is recoverable, what is salvageable and what is to be destroyed. Methods for recovery, salvage, and destruction shall be described within plan.

Communication during a crisis is important. Methods for communication with customers and news media should be described and the individual(s) who is/are responsible for communications should be identified.

The Crisis Management plan should include a crisis alert contact list, sources of legal assistance, which may counsel management in a crisis situation, and designation of responsibilities for internal and external communication during a crisis.

For some smaller suppliers, the Crisis management team and recall team may be one and the same. For larger suppliers, they may differ.