

Hygiene Requirements in the Production of Food Packaging Films

The hygiene requirements in the food packaging industry have significantly increased over the past decades. A good example are the hygiene requirements in the production of ready meals, which are thought to be heated by the final customer without undergoing any antiseptic treatment like boiling or grilling.

A great number of factors are essential in order to protect the hygiene and the quality of the goods produced by the food industry. Only by continuously following all the necessary requirements can we offer a quality product.

Most fresh food like meat, cheese, pasta or pizza are nowadays packaged using MAP. The materials used for the packaging of these products must meet high hygiene standards in order not to cause the quality of the packed good to deteriorate.

Food hygiene standards are taken from the "Codex Alimentarius" of the WHO (World Health Organisation). This codex was the source of the European standard E 93/43/EWG, which was used for the enactment of national laws in the different member states. The Klöckner Pentaplast group observes the different national laws in the plants where food packaging films are produced.

The HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) system has its origin in the European standard 93/43/EWG and it applies to the food industry. Although food packaging manufacturers cannot a priori apply HACCP to their production processes, the system has been implemented by all those manufacturers aware of their responsibility towards the final customer. This system ensures that the manufacturers of food packaging material use the same hygiene standards as the food industry.

The Klöckner Pentaplast Group was one of the first manufacturers of food packaging films to be audited by an external company (Montabaur plant (Germany): DQS, 09/2000; Weert plant (Holland): Lloyds Register Quality Assurance, 12/2002; Rayong plant (Thailand): BVQI, 01/04); Neoplástica St. Tirso (Portugal): Lloyds Register Quality Assurance, 03/2005; Neoplástica Gerona (Spain): Lloyds Register Quality Assurance, 03/2005; Neoplástica Porriño (Spain): Lloyds Register Quality Assurance, 03/2005. All other plants where food packaging films are produced are in the process of implementing the HACCP certification, which we expect to obtain at the end of 2005.

The technical standard BRC/IoP (British Retail Consortium and the Institute of Packaging) was voluntarily created with the aim of unifying the different requirements to be met by the food packaging industry and of reaching a safety level in the hygienic conditions of the film production. It is the belief of the food industry that this comprehensive standard can be the base for the creation of a European standard.

The Klöckner Pentaplast group was one of the first manufacturers of food packaging rigid films to have its plants certified according to the BRC/IoP standard for the production of food packaging films (B category). Up to now, we hold this certification at the plants of Montabaur, Germany (Q.A. International Certification Ltd., 11/2002), Crumlin, UK (Q.A. International Certification Ltd., 04/2002), Nordpak OY, Valkeakoski, FIN (Product Authentication Inspectorate Ltd., 01/2003) and OY Avanspack AB, Eura, FIN (Product Authentication Inspectorate Ltd., 01/2003). The other plants are in the process of getting this certification.

Through BRC/IoP we control among other things the handling of raw materials, the prohibition of eating, smoking and drinking in the production areas, the prohibition of wearing any jewels in those areas, the glass policy, the protection against insects and rodents, the usage of new pallets, the automatic packaging of the material, the infection control of all plant workers and visitors, the personal cleanness and hygiene of all workers in the plant and surrounding areas. In order to maintain our high standard of hygiene we also control the haulage companies we work with.

The hygiene standards are part of the management system of the Klöckner Pentaplast Group, which also includes the quality and environment management systems, among others.

The long term production knowledge and experience in packaging applications of the Klöckner Pentaplast Group, the use of different hygiene standards and the continuous training of our employees guarantee the highest technological and hygienic standards in the production of our food packaging films.