

## **Module 10: Technical Advice and Assistance**

**Goal** To provide instructions to in-plant inspection personnel on how to secure technical advice and assistance.

**Objectives** After completing this module, participants will be able to:

1. Know whom to contact for technical advice and assistance. **Page 4**
2. Understand the role of supervisors in providing technical advice and assistance. **Page 5**
3. Know when and how to contact the Technical Service Center for advice and assistance. **Page 4**

- Steps**
- Introduce the video.
  - Show video.
  - Review key points.

**Instructions to Facilitators**

*Read* The following video reviews sources of information that you are encouraged to use in order to make informed decisions.

**Discussion Points**

After viewing the video, review participants' understanding by asking the following questions:

1. What are the most common sources of technical advice and assistance?
  - a. **Immediate supervisor.**
  - b. **Circuit supervisor.**
  - c. **District staff.**
  - d. **Technical Service Center.**
  - e. **Regulations and Directives.**
2. Who may contact the Technical Service Center for technical advice and assistance?
  - a. **FSIS personnel.**
  - b. **State inspection personnel.**
  - c. **Industry representatives.**
3. Where is the Technical Service Center located?

**Omaha, Nebraska**
4. Where is the FSIS Training Center located?

**College Station, Texas**

5. What is the preferred method of communication with the Technical Service Center?

Primary: **E-mail your inquiry with copy to your immediate supervisor.**

Secondary: **Phone or fax inquiry.**

6. What are three major components of the Technical Service Center mission?

**a. Technical advice and assistance.**

**b. Reviews of domestic, foreign, and state inspection operations.**

**c. Training and education.**

7. What is the reason that industry has access to the TSC?

The TSC serves as a liaison for the Agency with industry and acts as a conduit to exchange information and provide guidance. The TSC will disseminate consistent information regarding the development and implementation of inspection programs. The TSC is not a forum for resolving industry complaints and controversies. This is a function of the appeals process.

**Point to emphasize:**

Remind participants that the TSC is there to assist them with questions about implementing inspection activities – particularly questions about HACCP implementation. Inspection personnel can call toll free any time from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. The TSC is available 24 hours per day by fax and e-mail. Inspectors are not required to go through their supervisor with questions. However, they are encouraged to keep the supervisor informed.

## Information

Technical Service Center  
USDA, FSIS, OFO  
106 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 904  
Omaha, NE 68102

Toll-free phone: (800) 233-3935  
Phone: (402) 221-7400  
Fax: (402) 221-7438

For HPDesk, use “Tech Center”

Hours of Operation: 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Central Time.

**TECHNICAL SERVICE CENTER FACT SHEET**

- **TSC Goal:**
  - A. **Response time:** The TSC will respond to questions received during business hours within a 2 hour time frame. The response may be an answer, or may be to let you know that the question is being researched and that the answer will be provided later.
  - B. **Answers:** The TSC will attempt to provide an answer to all questions within 1 working day.
  - C. **Accuracy:** Information provided by the TSC will be accurate, consistent, and timely.
- **Coverage:**
  - A. **Live:** ~~Beginning in~~ **Since** January 1998, there ~~will be~~ **is** live coverage of the TSC from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday.
  - B. **Electronic:** Answering and paging systems will be available at the TSC 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This **began** in January 1998 before HACCP implementation.
- **Expertise:** The TSC has brought together individuals with expertise from all parts of our former organization to assist you. This staff is dedicated to meeting your needs.
- **HACCP questions:** When training is completed, employees who have questions about clarifying the new requirements should contact the TSC. The TSC staff will analyze all questions and answers for use in information to be distributed to all field personnel (e.g., Q&As).

- **Contacting the TSC:**
  - A. **HP Desk/E-mail** - This is the preferred method for contacting the TSC. The account name is TECH CENTER. On the subject line, type HACCP. It is recommended that you CC your supervisor.
  - B. **800 number** - Call 1-800-233-3935 and state that you have a HACCP implementation question.
  - C. **Fax** - Dial -402-221-7438. List on the cover page that this is a HACCP implementation question.

- **Supervisory involvement**

Although it is not required that questions to the TSC be sent through your supervisor, we encourage you to involve them in the process when they are available because:

- A. they are a valuable resource.
- B. they will assist in ensuring consistency of information delivery.
- C. it allows them to be part of the problem solving process.

Supervisors will be informed of questions received and answers given at the TSC pertaining to standards and disputed issues. Questions pertaining to common issues, such as locating regulatory references, will not be referred back to supervisors.

Note: The TSC will not referee disputes between inspection personnel and plant management, nor rule on appeals. This is a line management function. The TSC role is to provide either party with the standards and other technical information needed to understand, implement, apply, and enforce regulatory requirements.