



## Restaurant Food Handling Safety

### Loss Control Bulletin

Safe food handling practices and procedures are vital in the restaurant industry to prevent employee and customer exposure to serious, potentially life threatening, illness caused by infection or contamination of foods in the food service industry.

Some states, including California, now require that every food preparation and dispensing facility have either an owner or employee who has passed a food safety certification exam. Even a single incident of illness attributed to improper food handling can result in a severe loss of income or even business failure.

Safe food preparation depends on four critical concepts: cleanliness, proper refrigeration, separation of foods, and cooking temperature.

Food contamination can occur during farming operations, bulk processing, transportation, retail distribution, and customer service. Because spoilage or contamination can occur over a broad range of activity, restaurant operators must be especially careful that foods are cared for and processed safely every step of the way. Because restaurants are the final and most important link in the delivery process, they are held most accountable for public safety.

The following general guidelines are offered to assist restaurant operators in setting up safe food handling procedures for their operations:

- Provide necessary training to personnel to comply with state requirement to have a Food Safety Certified individual for each restaurant site.
- Implement a weekly in-house operations self-assessment program utilizing the same forms used by local health inspectors.
- Review the findings of the self-assessment with the staff immediately following the assessment.
- Promptly correct any unsafe or unsanitary condition observed during the self-assessment.
- Purchase perishable foods only from suppliers who deliver properly cared for products and monitor quality at all times.
- Provide effective training to all employees covering the following priority items:
  - Verifying that foods received were properly refrigerated in transit, and that proper storage, cooking, and serving temperatures are maintained
  - Need to avoid cross food contamination between beef and beef blood, chicken, and all other types of food during food preparation
  - Need to avoid cross contamination between uncooked foods and ready to eat food items during food preparation
  - Review proper cleanup procedures to be followed with utensils, cooking appliances, serving trays and dinnerware, cutting boards and other working surfaces, floors, restroom facilities, etc.
  - Importance of proper hand washing between tasks, following contact with tools and materials that are not sanitary, and following each use of restroom facilities
  - Specific local health code requirements
  - The use of disposable single use plastic gloves when preparing food; use of hairnets during food preparation



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- As part of general safety orientation training, provide all new employees Food Handling Safety training before they begin work.
- Provide a separate kitchen sink, soap, and single use disposable towels to allow food preparation employees to wash-up between tasks that could result in cross contamination between food categories. Faucet controls that do not require hand contact should be provided.

The guidelines provided in this bulletin are only intended to provide an overview of some of the more important steps that can be taken by management to establish a safe workplace. The guidelines are not considered exhaustive of all measures and controls that can be implemented by management to address all potential loss or injury producing causes. Ultimately it is the responsibility of management to take the necessary steps to provide for employee and customer safety. It is not intended as an offer to write insurance for such conditions or exposures. The liability of Republic Indemnity Company of America and its affiliated insurers is limited to the terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies underwritten by any of them. © 2022 Republic Indemnity of America, 4500 Park Granada, Suite 300, Calabasas, CA 91302.