

Food Handlers & Service Booklet

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Booklet

This booklet is designed to provide food handlers and service staff with essential guidelines and best practices to ensure food safety and deliver exceptional customer service. It serves as a comprehensive resource for understanding the responsibilities and standards expected in the food service industry.

Importance of Food Safety and Service Standards

Maintaining high standards of food safety is crucial to prevent foodborne illnesses and protect public health. Excellent service enhances the dining experience, promotes customer satisfaction, and contributes to the establishment's reputation and success.

2. Food Safety Regulations and Standards

Overview of Local and National Regulations

Food establishments must comply with both local and national regulations to operate legally and safely. Key regulations include:

- FDA Food Code: Provides a model for safeguarding public health and ensuring food is unadulterated and honestly presented.
- Local Health Codes: Specific requirements set by city or state health departments.

Key Organizations and Agencies

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Oversees food safety regulations at the federal level.
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA): Regulates meat, poultry, and egg products.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Monitors foodborne illnesses and outbreaks.
- Local Health Departments: Conduct inspections and enforce regulations.

3. Personal Hygiene

Handwashing Techniques

- **When to Wash Hands:**
 - Before starting work and after breaks.
 - After using the restroom.
 - After handling raw food, garbage, or cleaning chemicals.
 - After touching face, hair, or body.
 - After eating, drinking, or smoking.
- **How to Wash Hands:**
 1. Wet hands with warm water.
 2. Apply soap and lather for at least 20 seconds.

3. Scrub all surfaces, including backs of hands and under fingernails.
4. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands with a single-use towel or air dryer.

Personal Cleanliness

- Bathe daily and maintain good grooming.
- Keep fingernails short, clean, and free of polish.
- Avoid wearing jewelry, except for plain wedding bands.

Proper Attire

- Wear clean uniforms or aprons.
- Use hair restraints like nets or caps.
- Wear closed-toe, non-slip shoes.
- Avoid strong perfumes or colognes.

4. Food Handling Procedures

Receiving and Storage of Food

- ****Receiving:****
 - Inspect deliveries for freshness, proper labeling, and temperature.
 - Reject items that are spoiled, damaged, or past expiration.
- ****Storage:****
 - Store perishable items promptly.
 - Keep raw meats separate from ready-to-eat foods.
 - Use the First-In, First-Out (FIFO) method to rotate stock.

Temperature Control

- ****Cold Holding:**** Keep refrigerated foods at 41°F (5°C) or below.
- ****Hot Holding:**** Keep hot foods at 135°F (57°C) or above.

- **Cooking Temperatures:**

- Poultry: 165°F (74°C)
- Ground meats: 155°F (68°C)
- Seafood and steaks: 145°F (63°C)

- **Cooling Foods:**

- Cool from 135°F to 70°F (57°C to 21°C) within 2 hours.
- Then cool from 70°F to 41°F (21°C to 5°C) within 4 hours.

Cross-Contamination Prevention

- Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces between tasks.
- Store raw meats on lower shelves to prevent drips onto other foods.

Safe Food Preparation Practices

- Thaw foods safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or as part of the cooking process.
- Avoid touching ready-to-eat foods with bare hands; use gloves or utensils.
- Monitor food temperatures regularly with calibrated thermometers.

5. Cleaning and Sanitizing

Difference Between Cleaning and Sanitizing

- **Cleaning:** Removes visible dirt and food particles from surfaces.
- **Sanitizing:** Reduces harmful microorganisms to safe levels after cleaning.

Cleaning Schedules

- Develop a routine cleaning schedule for all areas and equipment.
- Assign responsibilities and maintain records of cleaning activities.

Proper Use of Cleaning Agents

- Use appropriate detergents and sanitizers approved for food service.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution and contact time.

- Store chemicals separately from food and clearly label all containers.

6. Pest Control

Common Pests in Food Establishments

- **Rodents:** Rats and mice.
- **Insects:** Flies, cockroaches, ants.

Prevention Strategies

- Keep premises clean and free of food debris.
- Seal cracks, holes, and entry points.
- Use tight-fitting lids on trash containers.
- Store food off the floor and in sealed containers.

Reporting and Handling Infestations

- Report signs of pests immediately to management.
- Do not attempt to handle infestations personally.
- Cooperate with professional pest control services.

7. Customer Service Standards

Importance of Excellent Customer Service

- Builds customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.
- Differentiates the establishment from competitors.
- Encourages repeat business and increased revenue.

Communication Skills

- **Greeting Guests:** Offer a warm and friendly welcome.
- **Active Listening:** Pay attention to customer needs and preferences.
- **Clear Communication:** Provide accurate information about menu items and services.

Handling Customer Complaints

- ****Stay Calm:**** Maintain a polite and professional demeanor.
- ****Acknowledge the Issue:**** Listen without interrupting and show understanding.
- ****Resolve Promptly:**** Offer solutions or involve a supervisor if necessary.
- ****Follow Up:**** Ensure the customer is satisfied with the resolution.

8. Emergency Procedures

Fire Safety

- Know the location of fire extinguishers and how to use them (PASS method: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep).
- Be familiar with evacuation routes and assembly points.
- Do not block fire exits or equipment.

First Aid Basics

- Recognize common injuries and illnesses.
- Know the location of first aid kits and how to use basic supplies.
- Report all incidents to management immediately.

Incident Reporting

- Complete incident report forms accurately.
- Document details such as time, location, and witnesses.
- Submit reports promptly for further action.

9. Waste Management

Proper Disposal Methods

- Separate waste into general trash, recyclables, and hazardous materials.
- Use designated bins and liners.
- Do not dispose of grease or oil down drains; use proper collection containers.

Recycling and Sustainability Practices

- Reduce waste by minimizing overproduction and using recyclable materials.
- Implement energy-efficient practices like turning off equipment when not in use.
- Encourage customers to participate in sustainability efforts.

10. Allergen Awareness

Common Food Allergens

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster)
- Tree nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts)
- Peanuts
- Wheat
- Soybeans

Preventing Allergen Cross-Contact

- Use separate equipment and utensils for allergen-free meals.
- Clean and sanitize workstations thoroughly before preparing allergen-free food.
- Clearly label foods containing common allergens.

Responding to Allergic Reactions

- Recognize symptoms: hives, swelling, difficulty breathing, dizziness.
- Seek immediate medical assistance; call emergency services.
- Keep the affected person calm and monitor their condition until help arrives.

11. Conclusion

Summary of Key Points

- Adhere strictly to food safety protocols to prevent contamination and illness.

- Maintain high personal hygiene and cleanliness standards.
- Deliver exceptional customer service to enhance the dining experience.
- Stay informed about current regulations and participate in ongoing training.

Resources for Further Training

- **ServSafe Certification Programs**
- **Local Health Department Workshops**
- **Online Courses from Food Safety Organizations**

12. Appendices

Glossary of Terms

- **Cross-Contamination:** Transfer of harmful substances or microorganisms to food from surfaces, utensils, hands, or other foods.
- **FIFO (First-In, First-Out):** Inventory management system where older stock is used before newer stock.
- **Pathogens:** Microorganisms that can cause disease.

Contact Information for Relevant Agencies

- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** [www.fda.gov](<https://www.fda.gov>)
- **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):** [www.usda.gov](<https://www.usda.gov>)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** [www.cdc.gov](<https://www.cdc.gov>)
- **Local Health Department:** [Insert Local Contact Information]

Sample Forms and Checklists

- **Temperature Log Sheet:** For recording food temperatures during storage and service.
- **Cleaning Schedule Template:** Outlines daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning tasks.
- **Incident Report Form:** For documenting accidents, injuries, or safety incidents.