



Best Practices For Foodservice Operations

Developed By:

**Beef Industry Food Safety Council
National Cattlemen's Beef Association**

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Background

The United States has 900,000 restaurants with 12.2 million employees and industry sales of over \$476 billion projected for 2006. The restaurant share of the food dollar is estimated at 46.7%. *Commercial restaurant services* include subcategories of eating places such as full and quick service restaurants; *Noncommercial restaurant services* are located in public and private schools, hospitals, nursing homes, managed or contracted services such as may be in hospitals, universities, airlines; and foodservices associated with lodging facilities and community centers. *Military restaurants* are found in mess halls, officer and NCO clubs and associated with military exchanges. Unless these various facilities offer only snacks or unless they are vegetarian-only or seafood-only operations, most of these facilities handle meat products, including beef.

Objective

These best practices for foodservice operations feature the minimum recommendations as outlined by current regulations needed to maintain and enhance safety of beef products served to customers of all ages who consume food away from home.

Best Practices

Broad-based Best Practices for Foodservice Operations should be based on regulatory requirements of the Food Code and other authorities. Best Practices for individual eating establishments also should take into account regulations and requirements specific to certain chain operations, jurisdictions or locales that may be more stringent than those in the Food Code. References to the Food Code pertain to the Food Code 2001 or Supplement, US Public Health Service – FDA, USDHHS. Another reference would be the current Good Manufacturing Practices 21 CFR, Part 110.

All food safety components in an establishment must be integrated into the operation's philosophy and culture, whether the operation is a one-site independent foodservice facility or a large corporate entity with multiple foodservice venues. Food safety must be part of the foundation -- not just part of the building.

Personnel

All members of the foodservice organization should have knowledge of food safety principles. Food safety training should be conducted at all levels. The training should include: specific employee tasks, sanitation, health and hygiene, monitoring procedures mentioned here, all part of an ongoing program. Food safety training must be Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)-based. A program of staff development must be established. In addition to regular staff development, clear accountability for food safety must be established.

1. Manager/Person in Charge of the Operation

Demonstration of Knowledge - Food Code 2-102.11

...the person in charge shall demonstrate to the regulatory authority knowledge of foodborne disease prevention, application of the HACCP principles, and the requirements of the Code.

Demonstration of knowledge occurs in one of all three ways by: (1) complying with the Code by having no violations during the current inspection, (2) being a certified food protection manager through passing a test that is part of an accredited program, (ServSafe[®], NEHA – National Environmental Health Assn., etc.) or (3) correctly answering questions from the inspector related to the food operation as noted in the Code.

2. Employee training and supervision

Employees should know what is expected of them in the position they hold and how that relates to maintaining safety of the food. They need documented training at regular intervals and consistent supervision to provide food that is safe every time it is prepared and served. Employee performance should be monitored to verify compliance and measure success.

In Facility:

Standard Operating Procedures

1. *Facility Sanitation* - Standard Operating Procedures should be developed, written, and followed for operational and post-operational sanitation of the foodservice facility, including food handling and storage equipment, eating utensils, floors, walls, etc. Sanitation standards should be monitored for compliance and should include documented corrective actions and preventive measures.
2. *Sanitation Equipment* - Dishwashing machines and 3-compartment sinks must be maintained and operated to function as intended. Hot water temperatures and/or sanitizer concentrations should meet Food Code regulation and be monitored and documented.
3. *Employee Cleanliness/Hygiene* - Standard Operating Procedures should be developed, written, and followed for employee cleanliness and hygiene. These include frequent and thorough hand washing, applicable use of gloves/utensils (based upon health department regulations company policy, and food safety assessments) to minimize potential for cross-contamination.. Hygiene standards should be monitored for compliance and should include documented corrective actions and preventive measures.
4. *Employee Health* - Employees should understand the necessity of avoiding the workplace when showing symptoms of illnesses such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, that may lead to food contamination and disease transmission. Refer to Food Code Section 2-201.11-15.

5. HACCP - The foodservice operation should have a documented operational HACCP program that includes identification of hazards, critical control points, critical limits appropriate to the product and process, specific monitoring, corrective action, verification and record keeping procedures.

Food

Restaurant and Distribution Center Receiving – SOPs should be developed, written and followed for receiving. These include the following:

1. Products must come from a pre-approved supplier. (See “supplier” section later in this document.)
2. Food temperatures at receiving should be monitored to ensure cold-chain integrity so that refrigerated foods are received at 5° C (41° F) or below; frozen foods should be solidly frozen with no signs of temperature abuse. Food Code 3-202.11.
3. Food packages should be in good condition and protect the integrity of contents. Food Code 3-202.15.

Storing

1. Standard operating procedures for cold control should be developed, written, and followed, using first-in/first-out, to assure meat products are kept safe during storage and preparation prior to cooking.
2. Refrigerated meat should be stored at 5° C (41° F). Food Code 3-501.16.
3. Thawing of meat should be accomplished under refrigeration, while submerged under running water, or as part of the cooking process. Food Code 3-501.13.
4. Frozen meat should be maintained frozen.

Cooking: Equipment

Cooking equipment must be maintained and calibrated to function as intended. Company-specified cooking equipment parameters such as temperatures and times must be verified, at least daily, to assure proper operation. Standard operating procedures for equipment maintenance and function must be developed, written and followed.

Cooking: Product

Cooked product internal temperatures should be monitored and verified with appropriate, calibrated measuring equipment at a specified frequency. Cook times and temperatures as identified in the FDA Food Code* should be followed and recognized as minimum temperatures for safe food preparation. Higher temperatures may actually be used to meet palatability or degree-of-doneness objectives.

****Please note:***

The Beef Industry Food Safety Council recommends that at all times ground beef should be cooked to the minimum temperatures (155 degrees F) outlined in the FDA Food Code and recommended by the USDA FSIS, and any other local, Regional or State Regulatory guidelines or requirements, to insure that consumers are protected against any potential food-borne illness.

The National Restaurant Association suggests that all products should be cooked in accordance with the temperature endpoints or thermal profiles as identified by the 2001 FDA Food Code. It must be recognized that the FDA Food Code and most State Food Codes allows for "guest choice" food preparation. The act of responding to a customer's request for products to be cooked to a temperature less than those specified in the Food Code does not indicate that the Foodservice Operation is not following the Best Practices protocol.

Hot Holding

Meat that is cooked and held hot until it is served should be held according to Food Code Suppl. 3-501.16(1).

Cooling for Later Use

Cooling methods and standard operating procedures should be developed, written and followed based on Food Code 3-501.14-15.

Reheating for Hot Holding

Meat that is cooked, cooled and reheated for hot holding shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature as stated in Food Code 3-403.11.

Cross-contamination Control in Restaurants

1. Storage
2. Handling
3. Preparation
4. Equipment
5. Sanitation
6. Hygiene

Supplier Approval Recommendations:

1. All suppliers (including all food categories) should be approved in accordance with your company's quality and food safety standards. Beef supplier approval process should include operations that meet or exceed the Best Practices published at [www. BIFSCo.org](http://www.BIFSCo.org).
2. Program should include provisions for noncompliance. Provisions may include rejection of product, probation, suspension or disapproval of supplier. All corrective actions by the supplier should be documented.
3. All suppliers should be audited, monitored for compliance with all USDA regulations, validated HACCP plan, GMPs, and purchasing specifications.
4. Science-based ground beef/beef microbial performance standards must be established. The standards must be jointly developed and be nationally recognized by the food industry.
5. Foodservice operations should periodically provide an update of the purchasing specifications to each supplier and request on updated acknowledgement of receipt of the specifications and a willingness to comply.
6. Depending on risk-assessment of product, data should be collected and tracked on the following items to identify supplier trends and help make purchasing decisions. Examples might include:
 - a. Microbial profile data — may include, but not limited to: *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157:H7, generic *E. coli*, Total Plate Count (TPC), Aerobic Plant Count (APC), and coliforms. Certificates of Analysis or other documentation must be kept on file or sent to the establishment.
 - b. Foreign object contamination
 - c. Defect(s) (unacceptable indigenous inclusions)
 - d. Plant Audits Results related to food safety and security
 - e. Age of product at receipt
 - f. Temperature of product at receipt
 - g. Other establishment-specific requirements
7. A documented and effective traceability and recall program must be in place and tested for performance at least twice a year.
8. Documented food safety training programs must be established for employees at supplier level.

Consumer Education

Support the Partnership for Food Safety Education's "FightBac!" campaign

References

National Restaurant Association

<http://www.restaurant.org>

The leading business association for the restaurant industry, the NRA is the starting place for all issues and concerns related to the restaurant. Look to the NRA for tips from running your establishment to understanding the current food safety topics.

National Restaurant Association Education Foundation

<http://www.nraef.org>

The NRAEF is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to fulfilling the educational mission of the National Restaurant Association. Focusing on three key strategies of risk management, recruitment, and retention, the NRAEF is the premier provider of educational resources, materials, and programs which address attracting, developing and retaining the industry's workforce. The NRAEF is the creator of the ServSafe® program that has become the industry standard for food safety training. The ServSafe program provides accurate, up-to-date information for all levels of employees on all aspects of handling food, from receiving and storing to preparing and serving. It gives you the opportunity to learn science-based information on how to run a safe establishment.

International Food Safety Council

<http://www.nraef.org/ifsc>

In association with the NRAEF the International Food Safety Council recognizes the need for food safety awareness. Its mission is to heighten the awareness of the importance of food safety education throughout the restaurant and foodservice industry.

NEHA: National Environmental Health Association

www.neha.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recognized as the leading federal agency for protecting the health and safety of people. CDC serves as the national focus for developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, and health promotion and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/>

The *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* contains data on specific diseases as reported by state and territorial health departments and reports on infectious and chronic diseases, environmental hazards, natural or human-generated disasters, occupational diseases and injuries, and intentional and unintentional injuries. Also included are reports on topics of international interest and notices of events of interest to the public health community.

Foodsafety.gov

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

This web site is part of the National Food Safety Information Network. It is maintained by FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. FoodSafety.gov is a gateway website that provides links to selected government food safety-related information. It contains useful links on national food safety programs, news and safety alerts, foodborne pathogens and industry assistance.

National Agriculture Library

<http://www.nalusda.gov/>

The National Agricultural Library (NAL) ensures and enhances access to agricultural information for a better quality of life by acquiring, organizing, managing, preserving, and providing access to information. The NAL serves as a National Library of the United States and as the Library of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and enhances global cooperation through international exchange of information and the provision of services and technical assistance.

University of Guelph Food Safety Network

<http://www.foodsafetynetwork.ca/>

The Food Safety Network is an source of current information about new food safety initiatives, product recalls, consumer attitudes, and food safety tips from around the world.

International Food Information Council

<http://ific.org/>

A source for scientific information on food safety, nutrition, and health with easy-to-understand information on foodborne illness and health-related stories circulating in the news.

BSE Info (NCBA)

<http://www.bseinfo.org/>

An information resource produced by National Cattlemen's Beef Association on BSE and CJD reviewed by a scientific panel of experts in the fields of veterinary medicine, prion/protein studies, neuropathology, and disease surveillance.

Conference for Food Protection

<http://www.foodprotect.org/>

The Conference for Food Protection is a non-profit organization that originated in 1971. The membership of the conference includes regulators, industry, academia, professional organizations and consumers that work together to identify problems, formulate recommendations, and develop and implement practices that ensure food safety.

FDA Food Code

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodcode.html>

As the basis for many local sanitation codes, as well as the basis for information in this textbook, the FDA Food Code, available at this Web address, is a useful resource for information relating to food safety for the restaurant and foodservice industry.

FDA Bad Bug Book

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/into.html>

An online handbook that provides basic facts regarding pathogenic foodborne microorganisms and natural toxins. It brings together information from the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, and the National Institutes of Health.

FDA Plan Review Guide

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prev-toc.html>

The food establishment plan review document found at this site was developed for the purpose of assisting both regulatory and industry personnel in achieving greater uniformity in the plan review process.

FDA HACCP Resources

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/haccp.html>

A one-stop shop website for HACCP guidance documents for the restaurant and foodservice industry.

FDA Retail HACCP Guide

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/hret-toc.html>

This guide was prepared by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) based on input from state and local regulators, industry, academia, and consumers and is intended to serve as a guide in the writing of a simple plan based on HACCP principles that can be used to manage food safety.

National Advisory Committee for Microbiological Criteria for Foods

<http://www-seafood.ucdavis.edu/Guidelines/nacmcf.htm>

The guidelines found on this Web site are intended to facilitate the development and implementation of effective HACCP plans.

Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference

http://www.issc.org/On-Line_docs/onlinedocs.htm

The Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) was formed in 1982 to foster and promote shellfish sanitation through the cooperation of state and federal control agencies, the shellfish industry, and the academic community. This site contains many documents crucial to the purchase and service of safe shellfish.