

SANITATION AND FOOD SAFETY IN THE DELI

HOT AND COLD

With the increase of the types of foods offered for sale in deli departments, we have to recognize new dangers associated with handling hot and cold foods. The safety zone for foods is below 41°F and above 135°F. Therefore foods above 41°F and below 135°F are considered in the DANGER ZONE. Food has to be moved through the danger zone rapidly so bacteria and viruses do not have time or opportunity to grow. The longer food is in the danger zone, the more the potential for foodborne illness.

Restaurants, to include delis, are the second leading cause of foodborne illness in the country. Remember, food the leave the deli is ready to eat; the consumers will not do any further cooking.

A high percentage of raw chicken is infected with Salmonellae. The surface of beef contains C. Perfringens. Thirty-three percent of people have Staphylococcus organisms in their nose. Over a period of three weeks, every one of your food handlers will have been a carrier of Staphylococcus.

Four main controls that will go a long way in preventing a foodborne illness outbreak being attributed to the deli are:

1. Cleanliness
2. Temperature
3. Time
4. Cross-contamination

PREVENTION OF CONTAMINATION

- A. Workers who are ill with symptoms such as fever, sour throat, or vomiting, must be restricted from food handling operations
- B. Workers with infections on hands, arms, and face must be restricted from handling foods.
- C. Workers must wash their hands after: using the toilet, sneezing, eating, handling raw foods, handling dirty dishes, before starting work and as often as necessary to keep hands clean. Handwashing is a critical procedure within the deli.
- D. Workers should not taste or sample food while working.
- E. No bare hand contact with RTE (ready to eat) foods is allowed.

PROPER REFRIGERATION PRACTICES

- A. All potentially hazardous foods must be cooled and kept at 41°F or less (cool as quickly as possible). Foods must cool from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours or

less. Additionally, the entire process from 135°F to 41°F must not take more than 6 hours total. Foods made from room temperature ingredients must be cooked to 41°F within 4 hours. As you can see, the first two hours of cooling down to 70°F is most critical.

- B. Large quantities of foods such as soups, gravies and stews must be cooked in shallow containers. Pan depth should not exceed 4 inches and product depth should not exceed 2 inches. Otherwise, cooling will not happen rapidly.
- C. Foods must not be allowed to cool at room temperature.
- D. Prepare salad items to be served cold from cold ingredients.

COOKING

- A. All poultry and food containing poultry must be cooked to 165°F.
- B. All stuffing containing animal products must be cooked to 165°F.
- C. All pork, fish, whole muscle meat or food containing fish, meat, or pork must be cooked to 145°F or more
- D. Ground or injected or non-whole muscle meats, fish or pork must be cooked to 155°F for 15 seconds.
- E. All roasts must be cooked to 130°F and held for 112 minutes, at that temperature, prior to service. (High temperatures and lower holding times exist). Non-time monitored roasts must reach an internal temperature of 145°F for 15 seconds prior to service.
- F. Vegetable for hot holding must be cooked to 135°F.
- G. RTE foods from commercial processing plants can be cooked (reheated) to 135°F.

REHEATING

- A. Reheat foods cooked previously (leftovers) to an internal temperature of 165°F or more.
- B. Un-sliced portions of roasts that were cooked as required, can be reheated using the same time/temperature parameters used in cooking (ex: 130°F for 112 minutes)

PROPER HOLDING PRACTICES

- A. Cook foods first to the appropriate temperature.
- B. Maintain holding units and foods internal temperature at 135°F or more.

FREEZING AND THAWING

- A. Store all frozen foods in a frozen state (~0°F).
- B. Do not thaw at room temperature
- C. Thawing procedure choices
 - a. In a refrigerator.
 - b. Under cool (70°F) running water in a food prep sink.

- c. In a microwave oven as a continual step in the cooking process.
- d. As part of a cooking process.

CROSS CONTAMINATION

Do not store or process cooked foods or RTE foods in the same containers or on the same surfaces that have been used for raw foods or contaminated otherwise, without cleaning and sanitizing between usages, or use separate equipment for raw and cooked/RTE foods.

POTENTIAL ACCIDENTAL CONTAMINATION

All foods not stored in original containers and not obviously recognizable must be labeled. Additionally, all toxic items must be labeled and stored separately from food products and food equipment.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

Because food in the deli will not undergo further cook step by the consumer, it is extremely important for all food contact surfaces within the deli to be clean and sanitized often. Slicers should be cleaned and sanitized at least every 4 hours if in continual use. Scoops or utensils not stored in the food within the deli case should also be cleaned every 4 hrs or sooner. Surfaces within the deli, including counter and scales should follow the same 4- hour rule for cleaning. Sanitizer strength and required temperatures should be according to the manufacturers labeling.

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