



## Food Safety Training Manual

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every aspect of our food processes and practices affects the food itself. From transporting it to storing it, preparing it to serving it, each piece of the chain helps determine not only the quality of the food, but also the safety of the food. The safety of the food we provide and the health of the people we serve, are the most important priorities of the food bank. By following a few simple rules and implementing some basic procedures throughout your program(s), you can help ensure the highest quality product is distributed and the overall health of your food recipients is maintained.

## **AT RISK POPULATIONS**

When you are working in hunger relief work, many of the individuals you encounter will be considered part of an “at risk” population. What this often means is their at greater risk to contract food borne illnesses or to have an allergic reaction to food due to a compromised immune system. This could include individuals who are:

- Seniors
- Infants or Young Children
- Transplant Patients
- Chemotherapy Patients

Because there is no way of knowing everything about the health background of the individuals you serve, you should operate your pantry as if **everyone** you serve is at risk. This practice will help you avoid possible issues later on.

## **HOW FOOD BECOMES UNSAFE**

People who are seeking food assistance from the local food pantry system are depending on the staff there to help keep them safe from pathogens that might infect them. **Pathogens**, are tiny microorganisms, viruses or bacterias that can make people sick. Food becomes unsafe when it is infected with pathogens. Pathogens can infect food when food is exposed to different types of hazards. There are three primary categories of hazards:

**Physical Hazards** include items like shells from seafood items, fruit pits, and even machine parts from food processing.

**Chemical Hazards** usually in the form of cleaning supplies can also affect the safety of food. Other chemical hazards can be pesticides, charcoal, first aid chemicals, or hazardous metals like zinc and copper.

**Biological Hazards**, such bacteria, fungi or parasites can cause food borne illness and present serious risks to the overall safety of food. Implementing a cleaning schedule can assist with keeping such hazards at bay.

## **HOW PEOPLE MAKE FOOD UNSAFE**

Unfortunately, the number one hazard to the food we serve to individuals is us. Human beings can make food safe in a manner of different ways

**Poor Personal Hygiene**: When food handlers practice poor personal hygiene illness causing pathogens can be transferred from the body to the food. This is the **number one** cause of food-borne illness outbreaks that occur.

**Time-Temperature Abuse**: When food handlers let food stay out for too long in temperatures that encourage the growth of bacteria.

**Cross-Contamination**: Transferring pathogens from one surface to another

**Poor Cleaning and Sanitizing**: Transferring pathogens from one **incorrectly cleaned** surface to another.

## **FOOD ALERGENS AND HIGH RISK FOODS**

Some of the individuals you serve may have severe allergic reactions to certain types of food. Even the smallest exposure to the allergen can cause them to become very ill or even cause death. Because of these extreme reactions, it is important to be aware of what allergens are and how they can impact the populations of people you serve.

### **Most Common Food Allergens**

One of the best ways to protect the people you serve is to be aware of what the most common allergens are and how they affect individuals. The most common food allergens, sometimes referred to as the “The Big 8” are:

1. Milk
2. Eggs
3. Soy Beans/Soy Products
4. Fish (such as bass, flounder and cod)
5. Tree Nuts (such as walnuts, almonds and pecans)
6. Peanuts
7. Shellfish (such as crab, shrimp and lobster)
8. Wheat

Labeling is the most important way to help keep individuals with food allergies safe. All labels should have proper information regarding the presence of allergens. You can also keep people safe by avoiding cross-contamination of products and cleaning properly.

### **High Risk Foods**

Certain foods present a higher risk of food-borne illness than others. It's important to be aware of which food are particularly delicate so that you can maximize your efforts to keep the food safe. Some high risk foods are:

- Cut Melons
- Sprouts and Sprout Seeds
- **All** Homemade Items
- Ready-to-Eat Food

- Uncooked Deli Items
- Raw or Undercooked Eggs
- Undercooked Meats

These foods are considered high risk for various reasons. Some, like sprouts and sprout seeds, are grown in manuer and if improperly washed can get people sick. Others, like uncooked deli items (ex: potato salad) and raw eggs, can carry bacteria like salmonella or E.coli. Whether it's the way an item is grown or the way it is handled during preparation, by being aware of high risk foods you can help to protect the people you serve.

### **GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Cross-Contamination is one way people make food unsafe. Be practicing good personal hygiene you can reduce the risk of cross-contamination drastically.

#### **Handwashing**

Handwashing is the most important part of good personal hygiene. It is important because your hands can transfer pathogens to food. Because of this reason, it is critical that you wash your hands correctly and at the right times. The steps for handwashing are:

1. *Wet hands and arms*
  - Use running water as hot as you can comfortably stand
2. *Apply soap*
  - Apply enough to build up a good lather
3. *Scrub hands and arms vigorously*
  - Scrub them for 10 to 15 seconds. Clean under fingernails and between fingers.
4. *Rinse hands and arms thoroughly*
  - Use running warm water
5. *Dry hands and arms*
  - **DO NOT** use your apron or any part of your clothing to dry your hands. Use a single-use paper towel or hand dryer.

#### **After Washing Your Hands**

What you do after you properly wash your hands is as important as washing them. Once they are clean, you don't want to contaminate them again. You should:

1. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet
2. Use a paper towel to open the restroom door

#### **When to Wash Your Hands**

It's easy to contaminate your hands while going about your everyday activities and contaminated hands spread pathogens. To keep the food safe, wash your hands before you handle the food and after any of these activities:

- Using the restroom
- Touching your hair, face or body

- Handling raw meat, poultry or seafood (before and after)
- Touching clothing or aprons
- Taking out the garbage
- Sneezing, coughing or using a tissue
- Handling chemicals
- Smoking
- Chewing gum or tobacco
- Eating or drinking
- Before putting on food service gloves when starting a new task
- Leaving or returning to the food handling area

### **Using Hand Sanitizers**

Some agencies provide hand sanitizers to reduce pathogens on hands. If your agency uses hand sanitizers follow these guidelines:

- **NEVER** use hand sanitizer instead of washing your hands
- Use hand sanitizer **after** washing your hands
- Wait for it to completely dry before touching food or equipment and before putting on gloves

### **STORING FOOD SAFELY**

Food can be easily contaminated and exposed to pathogens if it is not stored correctly. It can also become unsafe if it is allowed to stay in the temperature danger zone. The good news is that there are things you can do to prevent this.

#### **General Storage Guidelines**

- Store refrigerated food at 41° or lower (this includes cut produce)
- Keep frozen food at 0° or lower (food should remain frozen solid)
- Store food only in designated food storage areas
- Store food at least 6 inches off the ground and away from walls
- Store ready-to-eat food **ABOVE** raw meat, seafood and poultry
- Store food only in containers made for food
- Cover or wrap food before storing it

#### **Rotating Product in the Pantry and FEFO**

Rotating products in the pantry is a very important activity that can help ensure not only the quality of the food, but also the safety of the food. Make sure the oldest food in storage is used first. Use the FEFO method to help you. This stands for **First Expired First Out. The rotation of product should be based on expiration date.** Remember:

1. Check the use-by or expiration date
2. Store food that will expire first in front of items that will expire later
3. Use the food stored in front first

## **EVALUATING THE CONDITION OF FOOD**

Not all the products you receive will be ready for distribution. Many products will require a closer look to see if they are usable. Never assume that the product has already been inspected and is safe to use. Each pantry is responsible to inspect food for safety on a regular basis.

### **Checking Cans for Defects**

Canned food that is damaged or defective can cause a foodborne illness. Here are some common can defects to watch for. Discard cans if they have these problems:

- Severe dent in can seams
- Deep dents in can body
- Crushed cans that are not stackable
- Missing labels
- Unreadable labels due to stains or tears
- No code dates
- Holes
- Visible signs of leaking
- Swollen or bulging ends
- Rust that cannot be wiped off

### **Checking Jars and Bottles for Defects**

Food in jars and bottles must be checked just as thoroughly as canned goods. Here are some common defects to watch for. Discard jars or bottles if they have these problems:

- Swollen, rusted or dented lid
- Missing or unreadable label
- No code dates
- Food contains mold or foreign objects
- Signs of dirt or mold under the lid
- Lid is loose
- Button in lid is raised (indicating a broken seal)
- Missing seal
- Signs of leakage
- Jar is broken or chipped
- Food is discolored
- Food has unusual appearance or separation

### **Checking Produce for Defects**

There are many ways produce will show signs of spoilage. You should be able to recognize the obvious signs as well as those that indicate the produce will spoil quickly. Discard produce if it has any of these problems:

- Mold, decay or rot
- Bad odor
- Signs of insects (live insects, bodies, or eggs)
- Severe bruises
- Skin not intact
- Cut produce not at 41° or lower; no code dates

### **Expiration Dates**

Although expiration dates are important, they are not always hard and fast rules. Below are several general guidelines regarding expiration dates on food:

- 2-5 years for non-acidic foods
  - Examples: carrots, corn, peas, beans
- 12-18 months for acidic foods
  - Examples: tomatoes, grapefruits, pineapple, juices
- **NO** expired baby food
- **NO** expired over the counter medication

### **FOOD LABELS**

The labels on the food we distribute are incredibly important to its safety. To help protect the people you serve from potential allergens it is necessary to check labels and ensure that they have all the information that is required. All complete labels should include the following information:

- Name of the product
- Name and address of organization that repacked the item
- Net quantity
- Full ingredients in order of prominence (by weight)
- Any of the “big 8” allergens
- Date of repacking
- Any safe food handling instructions
  - Cook times and temperatures

### **EGG SAFETY**

Eggs are a popular item to carry in food pantries. Most pantries like to provide eggs to the people they serve because they provide an excellent source of protein and round out the diet well. Although eggs are a necessary and important item, the rules regarding egg safety are strict.

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) sets the rules for how eggs must be handled, repacked and distributed. According to MDARD the following rules **MUST** be observed:

- Eggs **may not** be repacked into used egg cartons
  - These containers cannot be sanitized and they do not have complete information about where the eggs came from.
- You **may not** accept donations of eggs from independent donors
  - Example: Farmer Johnson has chickens and brings you the eggs they lay in cartons he collects.
  - Cartons do not meet MDARD safety requirements

Most agencies do not have the necessary tools to safely repack eggs in accordance with the state’s regulations. Because of this reason, Feeding America West Michigan has a policy that agency partners **MAY NOT** repack eggs. This includes the example given above and other in-kind donations of eggs may not be accepted.

The reasoning behind these strict rules regarding eggs is related to food safety. As we discussed earlier, you are serving a vulnerable population of people who are susceptible to food-

borne illness. Mishandled eggs can carry salmonella, a serious food-borne illness. Salmonella can take up to 72 hours to show symptoms, making it difficult to pin-point the eggs that may have caused it. Eggs that come from farm markets can be distributed because the consumer is obtaining the eggs directly from the farmer. This means the liability lies with the **consumer**, since the choice to purchase is theirs.

### **PESTS IN THE PANTRY**

Whenever you have food stored inside a building, you have a risk of being infested by some type of pest. Below is a list of common pests and important information about them. It is important to note that poison traps are **not** allowed as it is a food safety concern.

- Mice
  - Can contaminate surfaces with salmonella and damage food by chewing on it.
  - Can trigger asthma attacks in sensitive individuals
- Cockroaches
  - Droppings look like grains of peppers
  - Use glue traps to confirm an infestation
- Flies
  - Can carry bacteria and spread it easily
  - Use screens for open doors and windows
- Pantry Moths
  - Pheromone traps can be used to indicate or document infestations
  - If there is an infestation, discard, clean and seal all shelves
  - To prevent and infestation, seal shelving and put grains in containers, if possible

### **CLEANING AND SANITIZING**

One of the best ways to keep your pantry clean and free of pests and hazards is make sure it is properly cleaned and sanitized. This can also help protect the people you serve from being exposed to food-borne illness. Cleaning removes food and other dirt from a surface. Sanitizing reduces pathogens on a surface to safe levels. The most important reason to clean and sanitize appropriately is to prevent the spread of pathogens to food.

#### **Surfaces to Clean**

Not all surfaces are handled the same way. Some only need to be cleaned, where others must be both cleaned and sanitized.

- All surfaces must be cleaned and rinsed
  - Examples: Walls, floors, storage shelves, and garbage containers
- Any surface that touches food must be cleaned and sanitized
  - Examples: Plastic food bins, ladles, scales, scoops, prep tables and sorting tables



- If you notice worn or cracked equipment, set it aside and report it to the person in charge
  - Equipment can be difficult to clean and may hold pathogens if left without attention.

### **How to Clean and Sanitize**

The steps below will walk you through how to clean and sanitize. Be sure to avoid contamination when cleaning. For example, do not allow spray cleaner to contaminate food. Always use cleaners and sanitizers according to manufacturers' directions and your organizations policies.

1. Scrape or remove food from the surface
2. Wash the surface
3. Rinse the surface
4. Sanitize the surface
5. Allow the surface to air dry

### **When to Clean and Sanitize**

All food-contact surfaces need to be cleaned and sanitized at the following times:

- Before and after use
- When changing to a new product or between allergens
- Before repacking food (if you're facility is allowed to repack)
- After four hours if the items have been in constant use
- Any time the item has become contaminated

### **How to Make Sure Cleaning is Effective**

By following the below guidelines you can ensure that you maximize the effectiveness of your cleaning procedures.

- Make a comprehensive cleaning schedule and assign staff/volunteers to tasks
- Clean and sanitize surfaces regularly based on the schedule you created
- Keep cleaning supplies fully stocked so you're prepared
- Monitor your space and equipment

## **FOOD SAFETY RECALLS**

Occasionally, there are recalls when a product becomes unsafe. When this happens, the food bank will alert you via email when we receive notice of a recall. Even if your agency didn't specifically receive the product being recalled, we will let you know about the recall as a matter of precaution. Below are several very important notes regarding recalls:

- We **must** have an accurate email address on file to send food recalls to
- You are **required** to check all stock in your storage area for the appropriate information
- You **must** post the recall announcement and alert the people you serve.
- Do **not** return the recalled items if you have them; dispose of them properly.



### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Safe food is healthy food. By keeping the food you serve safe you will be ensuring that the families you help provide for will be kept safe as well. If you have any questions or concerns regarding food safety, please visit the food safety page of our website at: <https://www.feedwm.org/agencies/food-safety/> or contact a member of the Agency Relations Team.

### **ONLINE RESOURCES**

- Agency Food Safety - <https://www.feedwm.org/agencies/food-safety/>
- Egg Safety - <https://www.aeb.org/foodservice/egg-safety-handling>
- Food Keeper (Food Safety) - [FMI.org/Consumer/FoodKeeper](https://www.fmi.org/consumer/foodkeeper)
- Find Food - [FeedWM.org/FindFood](https://www.feedwm.org/find-food)
- Standards of Conduct - [FeedWM.org/agencies/conduct](https://www.feedwm.org/agencies/conduct)
- Volunteer Waiver - [FeedWM.org/agencies/mobilewaiver](https://www.feedwm.org/agencies/mobilewaiver)



**TRAINING EVALUATION**

This form serves as proof of training for Pantry Food Safety. The completed form will be placed in the Agency file.

Training Course: Pantry Food Safety Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Representative Name(s) receiving this training: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The above agency representative has completed the training specified above. Feedback on this training is as follows:

- 1. Circle method of learning: Self-study / Workshop
- 2. Circle level of topic knowledge prior to training: Unsure      Comfortable      Confident
- 3. Circle level of topic knowledge after training: Unsure      Comfortable      Confident
- 4. Was the content clear? Yes / No
- 5. Did the training meet your goals? Yes / No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What topics should be included in future training? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Recommendations to enhance this training \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Agency Representative Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Return completed forms at end of training or mail to:**  
Feeding America West Michigan  
Agency Relations  
864 West River Center Dr  
Comstock Park MI 49321 - Fax (616) 784-3255