






7 Common Food Safety Challenges & Solutions

From Chefs for Chefs

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Take a look at these common Food Safety Challenges and Solutions used by professional Chefs around the world and some challenges faced in the kitchen.

Food Safety is important in ensuring the continued survival of your establishment. However, we do understand that there will definitely be Food Safety Challenges when trying to practice food safety. We have identified the Top Food Safety Challenges and provided you with some Food Safety Tips on how to overcome them.

Challenge 1: Time and Money Investment

Finding the initial time and money to invest in staff training and proper kitchen equipment (such as appropriate cooking equipment, etc.) can be a challenge.

Solution: Although it may be costly at the beginning, such training and equipment has long-term benefits for your establishment. Do not save on these important investments – the last thing you want is to have a food safety incident caused by poor staff hygiene or improper use of equipment. This will severely affect the reputation of your business, leading to even higher monetary losses.

Challenge 2: Language and Culture

Your staff may come from different nationalities and cultures where there are varying standards of food handling practices.

Solution: It is the role of the head chef to formulate and implement food safety standards that are universally acceptable and this should also include standard recipes for all dishes. These standards should then be clearly conveyed to the various kitchen staff through a proper training programme.

Challenge 3: Education and Literacy

Your kitchen staff may have different educational levels and may not understand the cause and effect of their actions.

Solution:: Conduct trainings or write recipes in the simplest way possible. Include more visual representations and use more actions to demonstrate different food safety practices.

Challenge 4: Awareness of Staff

Your kitchen team may not be fully aware of the possible contaminants that can grow on food and how to prevent them.

Solution: It is the responsibility of the senior members of the kitchen team to firstly understand the factors that lead to microorganism growth, and then share the information with the rest of the kitchen staff. This information can be shared via more visual aids along with steps needed to counter the microorganism growth.

Challenge 5: Suppliers

It is almost impossible to monitor if the supplier or distributor of the food products is observing proper food safety standards.

Solution: Purchase only from reliable suppliers with a good track record. Build relationships with suppliers based on trust and visit their plant once in a while to check on the facilities, while also using the opportunity to catch up with them as part of goodwill. Other ways of knowing is via word of mouth or viewing their audit results.

Challenge 6: High Risk Customers in the Establishment

There is a higher chance of contraction of foodborne illnesses among more vulnerable diners such as young children, pregnant women and elderly people.

Solution: Treat every diner like a high risk customer. Therefore, it is important to adhere to food safety standards at all times. Strict monitoring and constant checks will urge kitchen staff to remain on their toes and be vigilant.

Challenge 7: High Turnover of Staff

High turnover of staff is a natural occurrence in the F&B industry. This leads to a vicious cycle of never-ending rehiring and retraining of staff on food safety standards.

Solution: First of all, try your best to retain staff through intrinsic motivational factors such as constant encouragement and praise or reward programmes for high-performing staff. Ensure that they are always engaged, learning and developing all the time. Additionally, you can create a standard and efficient curriculum for new-joiners to get up to speed in the quickest time possible, and pass the responsibility to the senior members of the team to conduct these onboarding trainings.

If you’re running on a tight budget, always ensure that a certain amount is allocated to food safety. There are efficient and cost-effective methods to practice food safety. What’s important is the mindset and willingness to do so.

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