






Food Safety. A Checklist

From Chefs for Chefs

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Keep your food safe from truck to table with our 10 step food safety checklist

Practicing food safety begins long before the food reaches the table. There are many steps along the way and you have to take the right precautions to prevent contamination. Here, we’ve provided a food safety checklist of best practices and what you can do to keep food safe during 10 stages, from truck to table.

Receiving

- Check the packaging for any signs of damage and take a temperature reading to ensure the food has been delivered at the **correct temperature**.
- When you first receive the food items, inspect your produce thoroughly and avoid keeping at room temperatures for a prolonged period of time.

Storage & Issuing

- Observe the **first in, first out method** of stock rotation.
- Always store cooked food above uncooked food, cover raw or cooked food at all times and cool dishes before placing them in the fridge.
- **Wrap and label all item’s** including production date and expiry dates.
- Store all foods on shelves and not on the floor.

Preparation

- If defrosting frozen foods use a fridge to ensure the temperature remains stable during the defrost cycle.
- Whilst preparing foods **maintain the chilled food chain** by preparing in small batches to avoid temperature abuse.

Cooking

- Cook food thoroughly to **kill or reduce microorganisms** to an acceptable level.
- Ensure food is cooked at the required internal temperature.

Holding

- Ensure that when hot holding that the core temperature doesn’t drop below the legal limit, if it does you can introduce the **2 hour rule**. All food marked for disposal must be wasted after the 2 hours to ensure that it doesn’t reach your customers.
- When displaying cold foods ensure that the **core temperature** doesn’t exceed the legal limit, if it does you can implement the 4 hour rule. All food marked for disposal must be wasted after the 4 hours to ensure that it doesn’t reach your customers.
- Don’t mix freshly prepared food with food held on display to prevent the spread of contamination.
- **Keep food covered** to avoid exposure to food hazards.

Food Cooling

- Divide your food into several portions in small container in an **ice bath to speed up cooling**. Ideally use a blast chiller to reduce the core temperature within the 90 minutes required.

Re-Heating

- **Reheat food** to the required internal temperature to ensure that the food is safe to serve.

Serving

- Ensure all food handlers observe **proper hygiene in handling cooked or ready-to-eat food**.
- Use only clean and sanitised utensils at all times.

Managing Leftovers

- Manage your displays to avoid wastage.
- Items such as breads, if untouched, can be **reused as croutons or in a dessert**.

Product Trace & Recall

- If you suspect the possibility of contamination, investigate the cause by **working backward** from the time the food was served to how it was prepared, stored and received.
- In any food contamination case, immediately recall the food from storage, the kitchen and even the table.

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