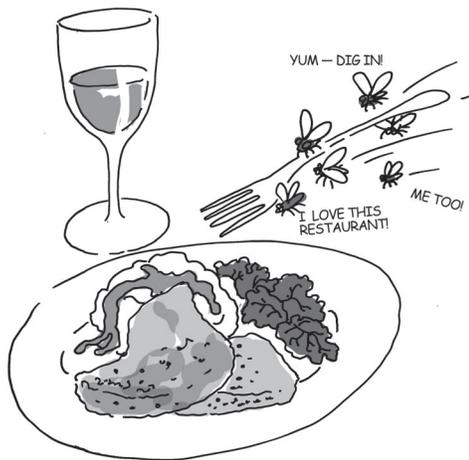


# FOOD TALK



SANITATION TIPS FOR FOOD WORKERS

SPRING 2014



## Top Tips for the Food Protection Manager

The Food and Drug Administration's 2013 model *Food Code* requires that at least one staff member in a food establishment be a certified food protection manager. Also known as the Certified Food Manager, this person is responsible for the safety of the food operations within a food establishment.

Health departments "seem to be holding the food protection manager more accountable," says Victoria Griffith, president of the Griffith Safety Group, who has more than 15 years of experience managing quality assurance for large-scale high-volume restaurants.

Instead of just focusing on violations, inspectors are engaging more with the food protection manager and are asking more questions to be sure the individual really knows about food protection practices and has the ability to do the job well, she says.

Griffith offers the following tips for how a food protection manager — and an establishment's entire staff — can prepare safe food:

- "Food safety has to be a top priority for a foodservice operation. Just like learning a language, you need to use it or you lose it. So, if you don't talk about food safety, you and your staff won't remember it."

### If you don't talk about food safety, your staff won't remember it.

- "Work food protection principles into daily talks with workers, to cover key topics such as food temperature safety zones, hand washing and the employee health policy. When the front staff starts a shift, for example, remind them to wash their hands and to tell you if they have symptoms of illness."
- "Create 'pocket cards' with basic information about the five food safety risk factors highlighted in the *Food Code*. They are: 1) food from unsafe sources; 2) inadequate cooking; 3) improper holding temperatures; 4) contaminated equipment, and 5) poor

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personal hygiene. At various times during the day, the food protection manager can talk about a particular risk with a worker, who can then look at the pocket card on that subject.

- “There is a concept in foodservice called the ‘one-minute manager,’ in which a manager sits down with someone and provides training. So, for example, you could talk about food safety with workers while you are on the cook line.

- “Use the book you received when you completed your food protection manager certification course. You can distribute information to staff, and talk about it as you walk around during the day. You can pick topics by chapter, and use the quizzes in the book. For new employees, who have probably just completed a class, you can adapt the materials they used in their class.”

## What’s New in the Latest FDA Model Food Code?

Late last year, the Food and Drug Administration released a new edition of its model Food Code which includes numerous changes. Here are some of the highlights:

### The “Big Six”

Remember the “Big Five” list of illnesses that employees must report to management? Now there are six. The Big Five included *Salmonella typhii*, *Shigella*, *E. coli* O157:H7, Hepatitis A and norovirus. The revised Code includes non-typhoidal *Salmonella*, which is a nasty illness even though it does not cause typhoid fever. The change in the 2013 Food Code means that even if you are diagnosed with non-typhoidal *Salmonella*, you need to report it to your manager.

### Glove Use

The revised Code says that if you use gloves to handle foods, your hands should be washed and cleaned prior to putting the gloves on. If you change from one task to another, you should remove the gloves, wash your hands and put on a new pair of gloves.



### Hand Antiseptics

The updated Code says that hand antiseptics are considered to be generally recognized as safe as a food additive. But this doesn’t mean

you can add hand antiseptics to food, just that it’s safe to use them on your hands when preparing food.

### Norovirus

Because norovirus can be transmitted by vomit or diarrhea, the 2013 Food Code requires that: “A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT shall have procedures for EMPLOYEES to follow when responding to vomiting or diarrheal events

that involve the discharge of vomitus or fecal matter onto surfaces in the FOOD ESTABLISHMENT.” Norovirus is highly contagious and can be spread quickly if surfaces are contaminated by vomit, even through tiny airborne particles.

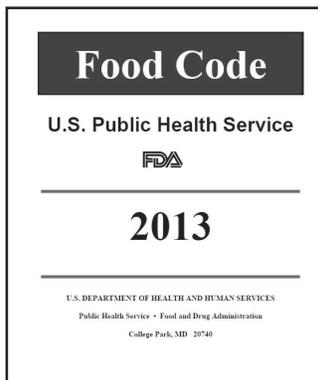
### Bare Hands

The revised Code says bare-hand contact with foods is allowed as long as all parts of the food are cooked to

145 degrees F/63 degrees C. But this is only for items that do not contain raw animal products — a vegetable stir-fry for example. This doesn’t apply when adding ingredients that will only be lightly heated, melted, or browned rather than cooked to a minimum temperature of 145 degrees F/63 degrees C.

### Equipment and Utensils

The updated Code deals with food contact with equipment and utensils, and says food may contact surfaces of linens and napkins. The revised Code clarifies that the term “napkins” refers to cloth napkins and that they are considered linens. Linens and napkins can be “used to line a container for the service of FOOD.” But they must be replaced each time the con-



tainer is refilled for a new consumer.

## Wiping Cloths

The 2013 edition of the Code explains that wiping a surface with a wiping cloth is not considered proper cleaning, because you can't sanitize a soiled surface by doing that. The surface must first be washed before it can be sanitized. Proper cleaning consists of three steps: 1) Washing the surface; 2) Rinsing the surface; and Sanitizing the surface.



## Thawing Food

The 2013 Code says that, when thawing frozen fish that was packaged using a Reduced Oxygen Packaging (ROP) method, the package must be opened before starting the thawing process under refrigeration, or immediately after the thawing process if thawing under running water.

## Non-continuous Cooking

The 2013 Code clarifies that raw animal foods cooked using a non-continuous cooking process shall be cooked to a time and temperature as specified in Chapter 3-401.11 (A)-(C). For non-continuous cooking of raw animal foods, including eggs, fish and meat (pork, beef), the food must reach 145 degreesF/63 degrees C or above for 15 seconds.

## Ground Meat

Comminuted (ground) fish and meat (pork, beef) or tenderized/injected meat (pork, beef) should reach a temperature of 155 degrees F/68 degrees C or above for 15 seconds. Poultry and stuffed fish, meat, pasta, poultry or stuffing containing fish, meat or poultry should reach a temperature of 165 degrees F /74 degrees C for 15 seconds.



## Date Marking

The revised Code clarifies that the date-marking provisions for ready-to-eat food requiring time and temperature control for safety do not apply to raw, in-shell molluscan shellfish. In addition, it says the exemption from date-marking for shelf-stable dry fermented sausages in USDA-regulated facilities is not dependent on the product staying in the original sausage casing.

## Allergens

The revised Code requires that any equipment or utensils that come into contact with a major food allergen must be cleaned and sanitized before being used with any other food item.



*(Note: Regulatory requirements in your jurisdiction may vary from those in the 2013 FDA model Food Code, so be sure you know and comply with your local requirements.)*

## What Customers Complain About Most

Can you guess the sanitation problem restaurant customers complain about most to health departments?

Is it dirty restrooms? Bare hand contact with food? Poor hygiene? Actually, according to research by the Alexandria Health Department, the single biggest reason for complaints is the presence of insects in restaurants.

There are some simple things you can do to keep insects out of your establishment:

- Either keep doors and windows closed at all times, or use screens.
- Repair or replace damaged screens.
- Insects are attracted to odors, so empty garbage containers often.
- Keep outdoor garbage containers as far as possible from entrances.
- Use electronic traps or sticky flypaper, but not over food preparation areas.
- Clean the traps often.

## Test Yourself on Food Safety

Try this quick test of what you learned in this issue of **Food Talk**.

1. Certified Food Managers can help ensure the establishment prepares safe food by:
  - a. Working food protection principles into daily talks with workers.
  - b. Using "pocket cards" to highlight the five food safety risk factors in the FDA model Food Code.
  - c. Frequent reminders to staff using food protection steps from the book they received when they completed their certified food manager training.
  - d. All of the above.
2. In the 2013 FDA model Food Code, how many illnesses must be reported to the manager?
  - a. Five.
  - b. Four.
  - c. Six.
  - d. None of the above.
3. What problem in restaurants draws the most complaints to health departments?
  - a. Dirty restrooms.
  - b. Food that tastes bad.
  - c. Portions too small.
  - d. The presence of insects.
4. The 2013 FDA model Food Code says:
  - a. Equipment coming in contact with a major food allergen must be sanitized before being used with any other food.
  - b. Date-marking provisions for ready-to-eat food requiring time and temperature control for safety does not apply to raw, in-shell molluscan shellfish.
  - c. Wiping a surface with a wiping cloth is not considered proper cleaning.
  - d. All of the above.
5. The 2013 FDA model Food Code says:
  - a. When thawing frozen fish packaged using a Reduced Oxygen Packaging method, the package must be opened before starting the thawing process.
  - b. Ground fish and meat should reach a temperature of 165 degrees F /73 degrees C for 15 seconds.
  - c. For non-continuous cooking of raw animal foods, including eggs, fish and meat, the food must reach 155 degrees/68 degrees C for 15 seconds.
  - d. None of the above.

Answers: 1(d), 2(c), 3(d), 4(d), 5(a)

Sources for this issue: 2013 FDA Model Food Code, Alexandria Health Department.



**Food Safety & Sanitation Program**  
**555 Cordova St.**  
**Anchorage, Alaska 99501**