

## 1.0 Purpose and Definitions

### 1.1 Introduction

Canada's food system is ranked amongst the best in the world in providing safe and wholesome food. Our status as a leader in producing safe, quality food is secure as long as we collectively commit ourselves to applying sound principles of food safety -- principles that have been acquired over the past century as a direct result of applied theoretical and scientific knowledge of foodborne diseases. The study of past or emerging diseases and of how food plays a role in the transmission of disease has had a dramatic effect, both in helping us identify key requirements in food safety and in highlighting the need for various regulatory interventions.

Foodborne outbreaks can affect us all. Foodborne illness can be very serious and even life threatening to some consumers, especially pre-school children, older adults in health care facilities, and those with impaired immune systems. Effective control of foodborne illness is vital, not only to avoid adverse effects on human health, but also to safeguard the Canadian food industry. The potential business repercussions of foodborne illness are many, including loss of earnings; unemployment and litigation; damage to trade and tourism through negative publicity; lower staff morale; and professional embarrassment.

The federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments are jointly committed to assuring a safe food supply for all Canadians, and have set out a framework in *A Blueprint for the Canadian Food Inspection System*. The Canadian Food Inspection System (CFIS) is a collaborative initiative of all levels of government. Its aim is the development of an integrated Canadian food inspection system that is responsive to both consumers and industry. The challenge, in all jurisdictions, is to continually reduce the risks and achieve excellence in food safety, while supporting the ability of the food industry to adapt to new technology and survive in a competitive environment.

### 1.2 Purpose

Working through CFIS, government and industry have developed a model regulation, the *Food Retail and Foodservices Regulation*, as well as this accompanying code of practice for the foodservice and food retail industries. The two documents provide a common set of harmonized food safety standards and operational guidelines that are recognized by government, the food industry and consumers.

Since Canadian legislation governing the food industry is moving away from a prescriptive, narrow definition of requirements, the model *Regulation*, wherever practicable, defines “outcomes” or performance-based expectations. It is complimented by the more comprehensive *Food Retail and Foodservices Code*.

The *Code* consists of **model** requirements for safeguarding public health and assuring food safety. It provides practical, user-friendly interpretations and guidance for compliance with legislation.

Both the *Food Retail and Foodservices Regulation* and the *Food Retail and Foodservices Code* embody sound scientific, risk-based approaches to food safety. This is the overriding principle underlying Canada’s food safety practices.

### 1.3 Application

Since the *Code* is an **interpretative guideline** that explains how to meet the objectives identified in the *Food Regulation*, it is not intended to be used as a rigid, inflexible document. The *Code* is not intended to stand alone, but rather is to be used in conjunction with companion provincial/territorial regulations, relevant statutes, research, and other resource materials. Taken together, these materials provide an extensive information base to assist in the safe operation of the foodservice and food retail industries.

As new technology becomes available, operational procedures and equipment standards in a foodservice premises may vary from that described in the *Code*.

**Food retail and foodservice operators may use materials and/or methods other than those specified in the Code, if the operators can provide sound, scientific evidence that clearly demonstrates compliance with the regulatory objectives.**

### 1.4 Scope

a) The *Code* has, as its primary focus, a broad range of retail and foodservice premises that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i) full service restaurants,
- ii) quick service restaurants,
- iii) foodservice operations in institutions, including hospitals and schools,
- iv) bakeshops, butchers and delicatessens,
- v) grocery and convenience stores,
- vi) food commissaries and food outlets on common carriers, and
- vii) other food establishment such as markets, food banks and vending operations.

b) The *Code* includes general information and guidelines to assist operators in the foodservice and food retail industries in the operation of their food establishment. It also establishes universal learning outcomes that will help standardize food handler educational courses and evaluation criteria.

c) Definitions found in this *Code* are in keeping with those found in the *Common Regulatory Base for Food Retail and Foodservices Premises* and other applicable regulations.

## 1.5 Guiding Principles

a) The safety of foods produced and sold through the food retail and foodservice sectors is a shared responsibility among many stakeholders including the operators of food establishment, food workers, regulatory agencies and consumers.

b) The *Code* has been developed on the basis of the following guiding principles:

- i) the retail and foodservice industries have the primary responsibility of ensuring the safety of their foods and, where applicable, of providing a reasonable level of descriptive product information to permit consumers to make informed decisions;
- ii) consumers have a right to be informed, and are also responsible for safe food handling;
- iii) government has a responsibility to:
  - set and enforce standards for health and safety based on sound scientific risk assessment and management principles,
  - work to ensure that food product information provided by industry is sufficient and accurate,
  - provide health and food safety information to consumers and to industry.

## 1.6 Outcomes

The primary objective of the *Code* is the safety of foods produced, served and sold by the food retail and foodservice sectors. In addition, there are a number of other expected outcomes:

- i) better knowledge of safe food handling practices by all stakeholders;
- ii) improved consistency in the interpretation and application of food industry regulations by all stakeholders;
- iii) the establishment of minimum health and food safety practises for the food retail and foodservice industries;
- iv) better communication among all sectors of the industry and government, concerning critical requirements in food safety, and a greater commitment to finding co-operative

- approaches to handling risks; and
- v) improved information concerning best practices, to complement industry-driven inspection, auditing and educational programs.

## 1.7 Definitions

Definitions of common terms contained in the *Food Retail and Foodservices Code* are listed below.

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| Act:                  | means the Public Health Act   |
| Adulterant:           | any undeclared ingredient in a food product which diminishes the economic or nutritional value of a food product or which may render the food product injurious to health.  |
| Applicant:            | one who applies for a permit.   |
| Bed and Breakfast     | a private dwelling that is occupied by its owner or operator, offers overnight hospitality to 8 or fewer guests at any one time and provides breakfast but no other meal.   |
| Clean:                | to render free from food residues and other foreign material.   |
| Code:                 | the <i>Food Retail and Foodservices Code</i> .  |
| Comminuted:           | to reduce to minute particles.  |
| Communicable Disease: | an illness in humans caused by an organism or microorganism or its toxic products, and transmitted directly or indirectly from an infected person or animal, or the environment.  |
| Container:            | means a food receptacle or covering used to package, wrap, contain or cover food.   |
| Contaminate:          | means exposure to conditions which permit:<br>a) the introduction of foreign matter including filth, a poisonous substance or pests, or<br>b) the introduction or multiplication of disease-causing microorganisms or parasites, or<br>c) the introduction or production of toxins. |
| Corrective Actions:   | procedures to be followed when a deviation occurs from the Critical Limits, i.e., a violation or deviation at any of the Critical Control Points.   |

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| Act:                    | means the Public Health Act  |
| Critical Control Point: | a point, step or procedure at which control must be applied and a food safety hazard can be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to acceptable levels.  |
| Critical Limit:         | a criterion that must be met for each preventive measure associated with a Critical Control Point.   |
| Equipment:              | means any appliance, apparatus or device that is or may be used in the operation or maintenance of a food establishment, but does not include a utensils.  |
| Fish:                   | fin fish and molluscan and crustacean shellfish.   |
| Food:                   | means any substance intended for use in whole or in part for human consumption, but does not include a drug, or medication or health related product regulated under the <i>Pharmaceutical Profession Act</i> or the <i>Food and Drug Act</i> (Canada);  |
| Food Bank:              | means a charitable/non-profit organization that:<br>a) operates exclusively to feed persons in need,<br>b) distributes food for consumption by such persons off the premises, and<br>c) does not process food.   |
| Foodborne Illness:      | sickness caused by the ingestion of food containing microbiological, chemical or physical hazards.   |
| Food Contact Surface:   | means the surface of equipment or utensils with which food normally comes into contact.  |
| Food Establishment:     | means a place, premises or vehicle where in, on or from food that is intended for public consumption is sold, offered for sale, supplied, distributed, displayed, manufactured, prepared, preserved, processed, packaged, served, stored, transported or handled, and includes a work camp.  |
| Food Grade:             | in the case of packaging, any material that does not violate the provisions of Division 23 of the <i>Food and Drug Regulations</i> . The document states (in part) that no person “shall sell any food in a package that may yield to its contents any substance that may be injurious to the health of a consumer of the food.”<br><br>Means an individual working in or for a food establishment whose |

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| Food Handler:             | functions require or permit the person to be in contact with any food, equipment or utensil.  |
| Food Recall:              | a process in which foods or food products are effectively withdrawn from the market place.  |
| Food Transportation Unit: | vehicles, aircraft, railcars, ships, containers, boxes, bulk tanks, trailers and any other transportation unit used to transport food.  |
| Game Animal:              | an animal, the products of which are food, that is not classified as cattle, poultry, sheep, swine or goat. This includes, but is not limited to, reindeer, elk, deer, antelope, water buffalo, bison, rabbit, aquatic and non-aquatic birds, non-aquatic reptiles and aquatic mammals.                                 |
| Good Operating Practices: | universal steps or procedures that control the operational conditions within a food establishment allowing for conditions that are favourable to the production of safe food (i.e., proper personal hygiene, sanitation and food handler training).   |
| HACCP:                    | an acronym for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point which is a systematic approach to be used in food production as a risk-based means to ensure food safety.   |
| HACCP Plan:               | the document which defines the procedures to be followed to ensure the control of product safety for a specific process, raw ingredient or recipe category.   |
| Handwashing Station:      | Means a hand basin that enables the provision of hot and cold running water and that, in its immediate vicinity,<br>a) has a dispenser for the provision of soap or is otherwise provided with soap in a container, and<br>c) has a method of hand drying that uses single service products or a mechanical hand dryer. |
| Mobile Vending:           | a cart, stand or kiosk that is operated either from a fixed location or on an established daily route; is stored, cleaned and maintained at a storage or service area; and from which food is served or provided to the public with or without charge.  |
| Nuisance:                 | means any condition that is or might become injurious or dangerous to the public health or that might hinder in any manner the prevention or suppression of disease.  |
| Operator:                 | Means in relation to a food establishment, its owner and includes any other person who operates it.   |

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| Pathogen:                   | a disease-causing organism.  |
| Permit:                     | means a food establishment permit issued or deemed to have been issued under section 3(3) of the <i>Food Regulation</i> , and “permittee” means the holder of a permit.  |
| Permit Holder:              | the person who is legally responsible for the operation of a food establishment, such as the owner or the owner’s agent, and who possesses a valid permit to operate the food establishment.   |
| Pest:                       | means <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) rodents, cockroaches or flies, or</li><li>ii) any other animals that are potentially destructive to the sanitary operation of a food establishment.</li></ul>   |
| pH:                         | the symbol for the negative logarithm of hydrogen ion concentration, which is a measure of the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a solution. Values between 0 and 7 indicate acidity and values between 7 and 14 indicate alkalinity. The value for pure distilled water is 7, which is considered neutral.                       |
| Potable:                    | Safe for human consumption.  |
| Potentially Hazardous Food: | means, with respect to food, in a form or state that is capable of supporting the growth or pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of toxins. This does not include foods which have a pH level of 4.6 or below and foods which have a water activity of 0.85 or less.   |
| Poultry:                    | any domesticated bird (chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese or guineas), whether live or dead.  |
| Processing:                 | means the process of transforming raw food into food that requires no further treatment before human consumption, and includes the washing, rinsing, thawing, heating, cutting, cooking, smoking, chilling, reheating, salting, canning, freezing and pasteurizing of the food, and the reprocessing of previously processed food. |
| Raw Ingredient:             | any food that enters into the composition of a mixture in a natural, crude, uncooked state.  |
| Ready-to-Eat Foods:         | foods not requiring any further preparation before consumption.  |
| Refuse:                     | solid waste not carried by water through the sewage system.  |
| Regulatory                  | the municipality, provincial, territorial or federal enforcement body having jurisdiction over the food establishment for the purposes of the  |

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| Permit:                   | means a food establishment permit issued or deemed to have been issued under section 3(3) of the <i>Food Regulation</i> , and “permittee” means the holder of a permit.  |
| Authority:                | appropriate Act and regulation.  |
| Retail:                   | the selling of food to the end-user.   |
| Sanitary:                 | free from contamination.   |
| Sanitize:                 | means treat a surface in such a way as to reduce the microorganism population to a level that does not constitute an insanitary condition.   |
| Service Animal:           | means an animal that is specifically trained or being trained for the purpose of providing assistance to persons with disabilities;  |
| Shelf Stable:             | foods not requiring refrigeration. (See <i>Water Activity</i> below.)  |
| Single Service:           | means designed to be used only once and then discarded.  |
| Tableware:                | eating, drinking and serving utensils for table use, such as flatware including forks, knives and spoons, and hollowware including bowls, cups, serving dishes, tumblers, glasses and plates.                      |
| Toxic Substances:         | substances that are not intended for ingestion, such as cleaners, sanitizers, pesticides, insecticides, paint, petroleum, etc.   |
| Utensil:                  | means kitchenware, tableware, glasses, cutlery or other similar items used in the handling, preparation, serving, dispensing, storing, containing or consuming of food.  |
| Vending Machine:          | a self-service device that dispenses servings of food in bulk or in packages without the necessity of replenishing the device between each vending operation.  |
| Voluntary Caterer:        | a member of a group, organization or agency who volunteers to prepare food for functions or gatherings.  |
| Water Activity ( $A_w$ ): | the ratio of water vapour pressure of a food product to the vapour pressure of pure water at the same temperature and pressure. Generally, food products with a $A_w$ of 0.85 or less are considered shelf stable. |