

6.0 Education and Training

6.1 Educational Programs

Those engaged in food operations who come directly into contact with food should be trained in food hygiene to a level appropriate to the operations they are to perform.

6.2 Mandatory Educational Programs

- a) Mandatory educational programs should be required in all jurisdictions for managers/supervisors of food establishments, or a designated person in their absence.
- b) The programs should be based on the level of food safety risk in the food establishment. The criteria to measure the level of risk can include items such as:
 - i) the number of meals served daily,
 - ii) the type of clientele (i.e., higher risk populations), and
 - iii) the type of menu items or the complexity of the processes used (i.e., prepared-from-scratch menu items versus preparation or reheating of prepackaged, ready-to-eat foods.
- c) These programs should be described relative to the expected learning outcomes and certification standards. (See Section 6.5.1 in this *Code*.)

Rationale

Food safety is dependent on many factors. Safety depends not only on the environment but also on the ways in which food is handled by employees.

Training is fundamentally important as food handlers are constantly making decisions and taking actions which could affect food safety.

One of the best assurances that an operator of a food establishment can have that the food or food product will be safe, is the employment of personnel that have the necessary knowledge and skills to process and handle products in a safe and sanitary manner. Moreover, all personnel should be familiar with their role and responsibility in protecting food from contamination.

6.3 Training Programs

6.3.1 Responsibility

- a) Food training programs shall be recognized by the regulatory authority having jurisdiction. The certification of the trainer should be the responsibility of the regulatory authority.
- b) The training of operators or food handlers can be undertaken by a third party who is authorized by the regulatory agency.

Rationale

All regulatory authorities provide education programs, since they play an important role in achieving compliance with food safety regulations. Some jurisdictions require mandatory food handler education programs while others prefer voluntary training programs.

6.3.2 Food Handler Training

Every operator of a food establishment must ensure that food handlers have the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to handle food hygienically.

6.3.3 Continuing Educational Training

Every food premise should promote food safety education through ongoing training, which may include additional classroom instruction, on-the-job training, food safety certification from a recognized program of instruction, seminars, and employee meetings.

Rationale

Studies have demonstrated that the quality of food handling techniques improves for the six months following a formalized training program. However, after that period, food handling practices can deteriorate to pre-education levels.

It is recognized that inspections by a regulatory authority or by an internal inspecting body can help alleviate the problem, by re-emphasizing the principles of good food handling practices.

However, food safety is too important to rely solely upon monitoring and auditing conducted by the regulatory authority. The food industry should take responsibility for adequately preparing food handlers to fulfil their job requirements, and to significantly contribute to a safe food industry.

6.3.4 Time Expiration of Training Programs

It is recommended that certification resulting from training courses should be valid for five years after completion of the course. After five years, operators or food handlers should be required to participate in a refresher or updating course.

6.4 Components of Food Safety Training Courses

6.4.1 Certification Programs

Courses should meet the learning outcomes described in Section 6.5 of this *Code*, and participants should be able to demonstrate competencies through standard testing recognized by the regulatory authority.

6.4.2 Course Content

The course content of food safety educational programs may be generic to all aspects of food safety. However, given the diversity of the food industry and the influx of new technologies and food science discoveries, consideration should be given to educational courses that are tailor made to address specific food venues or operations such as those developed by foodservice chain operations. The course presented should contain a minimum of 10 hours of instruction.

Rationale

When course content is specific, both educators and trainers can ensure that the principles taught are relevant to the people in attendance and the work that they do. This approach increases knowledge retention and program success rates.

6.4.3 Course Selection

Educational programs may originate from institutions; industry or regional health authorities, provided these programs satisfy the requirements of the learning criteria and are recognized by the regulatory authority.

Rationale

While a wide variety of training programs are appropriate, the objective is to harmonize standards, so that training and certification are applicable across jurisdictions.

6.5 Learning Outcomes

6.5.1 Operators

Upon successful completion of a sanitation course leading to the writing of the Provincial Food Sanitation and Hygiene Examination, a person will be able to:

- a) Describe why personal hygiene of a food service employee is important to the prevention of food borne disease.
- b) Describe the appropriate steps to be taken, by the person in charge, in dealing with an employee who has a condition that may cause food borne illness in others.
- c) List the most common diseases that are transmittable through food and describe the symptoms associated with these diseases.
- d) Explain the significance of time and temperature relationships in the growth of microorganisms associated with food borne illnesses.
- e) Identify the hazards involved in the consumption of raw or under cooked high-risk foods including (but not limited to) meat, poultry, eggs, fish, fruits and vegetables.
- f) Describe why proper food handling practices are important for the prevention of food borne illness.
- g) List the required temperatures for the safe freezing, thawing, refrigeration, cooking, cooling, hot holding, cold holding and reheating of potentially hazardous food.
- h) Explain the importance of providing proper equipment and facilities for the prevention of food borne illness.
- i) Describe the correct procedures for cleaning and sanitizing utensils and food-contact surfaces.
- j) List the acceptable sources of potable water for a food establishment and measures taken to assure that the water remains protected from contamination.
- k) List the procedures to safely store, dispense and dispose of poisonous and/or toxic materials.
- l) Identify the critical control points of a food operation that may contribute to food borne illness and the proper steps taken to assure that those points are controlled.
- m) Describe the correct procedures for dealing with a food borne illness complaint.

- n) Identify relevance of the Alberta Food Regulation.
- o) Identify the government agencies relevant to food service sanitation and explain their roles.
- p) Explain the importance of knowing acceptable methods of insect and rodent control within a food establishment relevant to food protection.

6.5.2 Food Handlers

- a) Educational courses and programs provided to food handlers should be designed to effectively meet or exceed the learning objectives outlined below, including knowledge of:
 - i) the food handler's role and responsibility in protecting food from contamination and deterioration;
 - ii) the main properties of common foods;
 - iii) the main types of microorganisms, their sources, the physical and chemical factors that affect their growth, reproduction, activity and death, and the difference between harmful and harmless microorganisms;
 - iv) the common causes of foodborne illnesses, their characteristics, and the procedures and practices that will prevent and control their incidence;
 - v) the basic elements of HACCP; and
 - vi) the allergenic properties of certain foods.
- b) Operators should maintain records indicating which employees have taken courses, the dates, and any relevant additional information.