Step-by-Step Food Safety Guide for Servers and Bartenders

# Step 1: Personal Hygiene

* Wash Hands Frequently: Always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before starting your shift, after using the restroom, after handling raw food, and after touching any potentially contaminated surfaces.
* Use Hand Sanitizer: When soap and water aren’t available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
* Keep Nails Clean and Trimmed: Avoid having long nails or wearing nail polish to prevent contamination.
* Hair Restraint: Use hairnets, hats, or tie back long hair to prevent hair from falling into food or drinks.
* Gloves and Bandages: Wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat food and bandage any cuts or wounds, covering them with a waterproof dressing.

# Step 2: Proper Food Handling

* Avoid Cross-Contamination: Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate. Use different cutting boards and utensils for raw meats and other items.
* Use Clean Utensils and Equipment: Ensure that all utensils, glassware, and equipment are sanitized before use.
* Temperature Control: Know the correct temperatures for storing, cooking, and serving food. Hot foods should be kept above 140°F (60°C), and cold foods below 40°F (4°C).
* Avoid Bare-Hand Contact with Ready-to-Eat Foods: Use gloves, tongs, or deli paper to handle food items like garnishes, fruits, or sandwich components.

# Step 3: Safe Beverage Handling

* Clean Bar Tools Regularly: Sanitize shakers, strainers, and other bar tools frequently, especially between making drinks with different ingredients.
* Avoid Contact with Drink Rims: Handle glasses by the base or stem to avoid touching the rims where customers drink.
* Ice Safety: Use a dedicated scoop for ice and never touch ice with your hands. Store ice scoops outside the ice bin.
* Proper Storage of Garnishes: Store drink garnishes (lemons, limes, cherries) in clean, covered containers at the correct temperature.

# Step 4: Cleaning and Sanitizing

* Clean Surfaces Regularly: Wipe down tables, bars, and any high-touch surfaces with a disinfectant regularly throughout your shift.
* Dishwashing Protocol: Ensure all dishware and glassware are washed at the correct temperature and sanitized properly.
* Trash Disposal: Dispose of waste promptly and ensure trash bins are lined and covered.

# Step 5: Handling Allergies and Special Requests

* Ask About Allergies: Always inquire if guests have any food allergies and communicate this clearly to the kitchen or bar staff.
* Prevent Cross-Contact: Take extra care when preparing and serving food or drinks for guests with allergies to prevent cross-contact with allergens.

# Step 6: Serving Food Safely

* Serve Food Promptly: Once food is prepared, serve it immediately to prevent it from sitting out and entering the 'danger zone' of temperatures.
* Carry Plates Properly: Hold plates from the bottom or edges to avoid touching the food surface.
* Be Mindful of Food Temperature: Inform guests if a dish or drink is particularly hot to avoid burns.

# Step 7: Ongoing Education and Compliance

* Stay Informed: Regularly attend food safety training sessions and stay updated on local health codes and regulations.
* Report Illness: If you are feeling unwell, especially with symptoms of foodborne illness (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea), inform your manager and avoid handling food.

# Step 8: Handling Complaints or Issues

* Respond Quickly: If a guest raises a concern about food safety, address it immediately and follow up with the kitchen or management to resolve the issue.
* Document Incidents: Report and document any incidents of foodborne illness or safety violations to maintain compliance and improve procedures.

Final Note: Food safety is everyone's responsibility. By following these steps, you ensure not only the health and safety of your guests but also the reputation and success of your establishment. Keep this guide handy and refer to it regularly to maintain the highest standards in food and beverage service.