

Here's how to...

Support a Food Safety Program in Your Store

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that 1 out of every 6 Americans will get sick—some needing hospitalization and some even dying—from eating contaminated foods and drinks each year. In 2013, 60% of reported outbreaks were related to food prepared in restaurants. A report of foodborne illness can result in damaged reputation, negative media exposure and loss of return customers. Lawsuits, legal fees and insurance premiums could force you to close your business.

What is a food safety program?

Customizable stock charts and checklists are available in the Ops Toolkit.

A food safety program is a documented set of policies and procedures, put in place to help prevent food safety issues before they arise. The program should cover every step of the food handling processes in your store, including:

- Product receiving and storing
- Food prep and serving
- Cleaning
- Opening and closing
- Waste management
- Pest control
- Staff training
- Store team health and hygiene

Train your team!

A properly trained staff is the only way to ensure effective food safety practices.

Tools, such as stock charts and checklists, are an essential part of any food safety program.

When used on a daily basis these tools can help implement some of the steps of your food safety program. If needed, they can be used as a reference to show you have taken precautions against foodborne illness.

Why important?

A comprehensive food safety program will help:

- Prevent foodborne illness outbreaks
- Increase efficiency and reduce waste
- Create loyal, returning customers
- Support the success of your restaurant

Identify risks and use resources

Your AD/RDO is also a great resource for advice on creating a food safety program specific to your store.

Look at each step of the food handling process in your store to find all the ways that something could go wrong. Make sure procedures are in place to **minimize food safety hazards**. **Monitor food safety** throughout the day and **document** your efforts. Also develop a plan of corrective action; what will you and your team do if procedures are not followed to keep both your customers and your business safe from potential foodborne illnesses? Consult the various resources on **KTEC Online** to help you implement your food safety program:

- *Here's How* documents
- Stock Charts and Checklists
- Manufacturer information for proper cleaning of equipment

Food Safety Training & Certification

Look online for links to the following food safety training programs:

- ServSafe™ Manager Training & Certification
- Learn2Serve®
- Tap Series®

Best Practices for supporting your food safety efforts

Always be on the lookout for signs of potential problems. Act on issues immediately; coach as issues arise.

Meet with the team – Meet either as a full crew or with each crew member at shift-start or shift-end, for example.

Stress the importance of a food safety program and how your store will implement it. Explain the importance of following food safety procedures—as well as the potential hazards if procedures are not followed on a daily basis. Regularly meet with your team to review procedures and ensure understanding. Discuss areas of opportunity and highlight processes that are working well so team members can see the difference their efforts are making.

Create visual reminders of food safety – On a “Food Safety Communications” bulletin board you can post best practices, weekly/monthly training topics, health inspection results, team member recognition, certificates, etc.

Share the responsibility with your team – Encourage everyone to be proactive and identify potential problems so corrective actions can be put in place immediately. If someone has particular knowledgeable or demonstration skills, ask them to help with training meetings and/or communications. Consider identifying a “Food Safety Lead” to help reinforce a culture of food safety awareness. Your Food Safety Lead could pursue additional levels of food safety certification, lead by example with peers, ensure continuous training, and help identify potential problems and act on them accordingly.

Train effectively and frequently – Make training a priority! Keep your crew's attention by making messages quick and easy, demonstrating the skills (not just having crew read) and decrease possible distractions. Train during either closed hours or non-peak hours, away from customer's eyes and ears. Customers hearing you or watching you talk about improper food safety could assume your store is unsafe—a misperception that could hurt sales and your reputation.

Ensure understanding – Create an acknowledgement statement and have team members sign-off, acknowledging their participation and understanding of the safety training topics and procedures.

Use and do inspections – Use a recent health department inspection as a resource for finding and fixing potential hazards. During slow times, have team members walk your store with the inspection form to find your greatest areas of opportunity. Divide your store into sections (e.g., front of house, freezers and refrigerators, exterior of store) so the entire store is inspected at least once a month.



**FOOD
SAFETY
FIRST!**