

# Food Security News

Please share with the person(s) in your organization responsible for security and food safety

Michigan's food industry is accustomed to dealing with risks. Since September 11, 2001, the increased risk of intentional contamination of the food supply has moved to the forefront. This update is provided to assist your efforts to protect your establishment and customers.

## **SUCCESSFUL RISK MANAGEMENT**

Risk management experts recommend that firms use emergency management principles to control risks.

- Prevention
- Planning
- Response
- Recovery

### **1. Prevention**

In cooperation with several national food industry associations, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has identified food security guidance measures, including:

A. *Operational Risk Management* -- a comprehensive six-step process for anticipating hazards and reducing risks:

1. Identify the threats
2. Assess the risks
3. Analyze risk control measures
4. Make control decisions
5. Implement risk controls
6. Supervise and review

Available at: [http://www.asy.faa.gov/Risk/SSHandbook/Chap15\\_1200.PDF](http://www.asy.faa.gov/Risk/SSHandbook/Chap15_1200.PDF)

B. *Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance* -- two documents have been developed that identify measures that food producers, processors, transporters and retailers can take to minimize the risk of intentional contamination of food. The guidance is divided into four sections:

1. Management capability
2. Human element -- staff and public
3. Facility
4. Operations

Guidance available from the FDA at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid5.html> (retail food stores and food service establishments) or at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid6.html> (food producers, processors and transporters).

### **2. Planning**

An effective crisis management plan can help minimize the impact of a full range of risks on a business. Typical plans include procedures for:

- Preventing product tampering
- Recalling products
- Responding to employee violence
- Preventing loss of power
- Tracing contaminated foods back to their source(s)
- Communicating during emergencies

Well-conceived plans can be the key to rapid restoration of normal operations and staying in business.

### **3. Response**

Response to food emergencies are most effective when government and industry work together. This requires employees to know:

- Their roles and responsibilities during emergencies
- Who to contact in the local community for assistance

An updated contact list identifying resources at the local community, state and federal levels is essential.

### **4. Recovery**

Government agencies and private firms can assist with issues ranging from on-site security to identifying alternative sources of water, power and food products.

***For more information about food security contact your local public health department, food association, or MDA Regional Office.***

Food establishments have been used in the past by extremist groups to harm people. In 1984, followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh sprayed several salad bars in a town in Oregon with *Salmonella* bacteria to make people too sick to vote. They succeeded in making 800 people ill.

Take the time to think about how your establishment may be vulnerable to anyone who might mean to harm you or your customers. Conduct a self-inspection. The following tips may help you prevent your food and your public space from being used to harm people.

## ***Example of a Food Security Check List:***

### ***Around Your Building***

- Secure your establishment by controlling and limiting access. Check what areas the general public has access to. Things to look for may include:
  - Roof (are ladders left out?)
  - Remote storage buildings (are they locked?)
  - Water supply (wellheads, pump houses, water storage tanks secure?)
- Demand proper identification from:
  - Delivery people (food, equipment, etc.)
  - Sales people
  - Service representatives (pest control operators, linen suppliers, etc.)
  - Repairmen
  - Public utility staff (phones, electricity, gas, water, sewer)
  - Law enforcement personnel
  - Health department personnel
- Train your staff to know:
  - To be alert for suspicious activity and to report it to supervisors immediately
  - How to contact help -- list 24/7 contact names and phone numbers
  - How to protect themselves and customers (example: facility evacuation plan)

- ❑ Identify when your establishment is potentially at increased risk.
  - Opening
  - Closing
  - Late night shift, slow times
  - Shift changes

#### ***At the Salad Bar & Self-Service Areas***

- ❑ Customer self-service areas should be considered areas of high risk.
  - Monitor self-service areas at all times.
  - Minimize quantity of food on display.
  - Whenever possible, avoid mixing new product with foods already on display.

#### ***At the Back Door***

- ❑ Know your suppliers and your products.
  - Purchase products only from reputable, established sources.
  - Maintain purchase records with product identification codes whenever possible.
  - Inspect deliveries carefully for signs of tampering or unusual physical characteristics. Knowing what is normal will improve detection of suspicious items.
  - Contact suppliers if you have concerns about the appearance of a product or package. There may be an explanation.
  - Bring all deliveries inside establishment or otherwise secure them to prevent tampering.
  - Restrict access to unloading and storage areas. Operations with many employees should consider ID badges coded to identify work areas.

#### ***In the Food Prep Areas***

- ❑ Know your employees.
  - Require complete applications and check references. Conduct background checks as allowed by law
  - Restrict access to food preparation areas to authorized personnel. Investigate and/or report suspicious activity.
  - Have an employee sick leave policy that encourages employees to report illness and to not report to work when they are ill with gastrointestinal symptoms or other communicable illnesses.
  - Restrict personal items allowed in food preparation and storage areas. Prevent workers from bringing lunch containers and purses into food handling areas.
- ❑ Before preparation:
  - Inspect stored food products for signs of tampering prior to preparation or service.
  - Thoroughly rinse all produce with drinking-quality water prior to preparation or service.

The information on this sheet came from "Retail Food Store Security: Preventive Measures for Food Store Operations," NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets and "Food Service Fact Sheet: Safety in Your Food Service Establishment," Division of Environmental Health Services, Genesee County Health Department."