Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples

Who can provide samples?

- **Farmers' Market, Fair and Festival Vendors** - All food vendors at these venues may provide samples of products they sell without additional licensure.
- Samples are limited to bite-size portions.

Cooking demonstrations must typically obtain a license. Cooking demonstrations operated by Farmers' Markets must call MDARD at 1-800-292-3939. Cooking demonstrations at other locations must contact their local health department.

Sampling Guidelines

Critical practices to avoid foodborne illness are good personal hygiene and proper temperature control of Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods (meat, milk, eggs, cut melons, cut tomatoes, etc.). Farmers' markets operating permanent operations within improved structures (i.e., pavilion, building) will be inspected using the FDA Food Code.

Processed Food Sampling

Processed foods include bakery items, jams, jellies, jerky, cheese, salsa, canned items, etc.

Best Practice

Prepare samples at a licensed kitchen prior to arriving at the market. For example, a vendor that operates a licensed bakery or a cottage food operator can cut baked goods into pieces at their production facility, place them on a tray, insert a toothpick in each piece, and keep the tray covered with plastic wrap.

- Packaged items (i.e., jelly, salsa, etc.) may be opened one package at a time and supplied with a disposable utensil for customers to use.
- Generally, use toothpicks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, or disposable utensils to distribute samples.
- Temperature control must be maintained on items needing refrigeration after opening until the food is consumed or discarded.

Minimum

Bring several clean, sanitized knives and cutting boards in protective plastic containers or food storage bags, wrapped in plastic wrap, etc.

- Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination.
- Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items every four hours.

- Use single service items whenever possible.
- Take soiled items with you at the end of the day. Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section.

Fresh Fruit And Vegetable Sampling

Due to quality concerns, preparation of most fruit and vegetable samples requiring cutting or slicing needs to be done on-site, immediately prior to consumption. Samples prepared ahead of time must be prepared in a licensed kitchen.

Best Practice

Prepare samples at an approved facility prior to arriving at the market, when feasible.

Minimum

Bring several clean knives and cutting boards in protective plastic containers or food storage bags, wrapped in plastic wrap, etc. Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination.

- Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc. with clean items every four hours.
- Use single service items whenever possible.
- Store soiled items in a closed bag or container to avoid attracting insects. Take soiled items with you at the end of the day.
- Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section.
- All fruits and vegetables must be rinsed thoroughly in clean water. Should a potable water supply not be available on-site, rinse products to be used for sampling in advance and store in disposable food bags. Rinsing melons in a 200 parts per million chlorine solution prior to slicing is recommended.
- Fruit and vegetable sample servings must be protected from contamination at all times. **Serving must be done in a manner protecting the sample from any bare hand contact.** Utilizing disposable gloves, single service utensils, napkins or tissues, or toothpicks are all adequate methods to avoid handling prepared samples. If preparing some samples ahead of time, wrap cut product samples in plastic wrap.
- Melons and tomatoes must be stored at 41°F or below, once cut. These items have been associated with foodborne disease outbreaks. Mechanical refrigeration is recommended. Any ice used for cooling must be continuously drained to avoid wrapped items soaking in melted ice water. Reusable ice packs must clean to sight and touch.

Meat/Poultry/Fish Sampling

All meats/poultry/fish must come from inspected approved sources. Vendors must be able to show proof of the approved source. Home-canned and home-prepared foods are not allowed.

Best Practice

- Provide meats in pre-formed patties, or pre-cut portions not requiring on-site preparation.
- Serve cooked items directly from a covered grill using sanitary methods, such as toothpicks or tissues.

Minimum

- When foods are cooked and held, the product must be held at 135°F or above.
- Foods must be protected from environmental contamination and insects at all times.
- Provide condiments in single service packets, unless the condiment is an item being offered as a sample.
- Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary, set up and operate as shown in warewashing section.

Personal Hygiene

The following practices will help assure food safety:

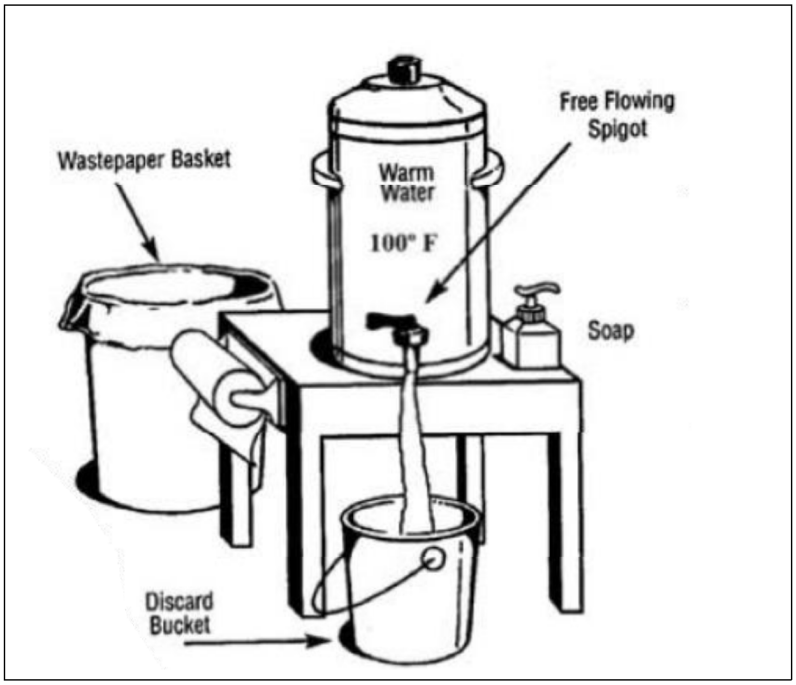
Avoid Bare Hand Contact With Ready-To-Eat Food
Food employees may not have contact with exposed ready-to-eat food with their bare hands. Suitable utensils, such as deli paper, spatulas, tongs, dispensing equipment, or gloves shall be used.

Practice Good Personal Hygiene
Food employees shall maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and shall conform to good hygienic practices during all working periods. Food employees shall have clean outer garments and wear effective hair restraints (i.e., baseball cap). Smoking, eating, and drinking are not allowed by food employees when preparing or serving samples.

Wash Hands Frequently
Food employees must wash their hands and exposed portions of the arms after touching bare human body parts, using the toilet room, handling animals, coughing/sneezing, using a handkerchief, using tobacco, eating/drinking, handling soiled equipment/utensils, as often as necessary to prevent cross-contamination, when switching between raw and ready-to-eat food, and after engaging in other activities that contaminate the hands.

Wash Hands Properly

Food employees shall clean their hands and exposed portions of the arms in a properly equipped handwashing facility by vigorously rubbing together the surfaces of the lathered hands and arms and thoroughly rinsing with clean water. Employees shall pay particular attention to the areas underneath the fingernails and between the fingers. To avoid contaminating hands, food employees may use disposable paper towels or similar barriers when touching surfaces such as faucet handles.



Provide Proper Handwashing Facilities

When cutting or handling exposed ready to eat food, use either handwash facilities provided in your space or located in close proximity to your space (i.e within app. 15').

Three levels of handwashing facilities are possible:

1. Potable hot and cold tempered running water under pressure with suitable hand cleaner, dispensed paper towels, and a waste receptacle. This option must be used when available.
2. When food exposure is limited, a food vendor may use a five-gallon insulated container with a spigot, which can be turned on to allow potable, clean, warm water to flow over one's hands into a waste receiving bucket of equal or larger volume; suitable hand cleaner; disposable towels, and a waste receptacle.
3. When items offered are pre-packaged or otherwise protected from contamination by hands AND a handwashing facility is available at the event and used by employees following toilet use, chemically treated towelettes may be used for cleaning hands.

Exclude Ill Employees From Work

The person in charge must exclude employees who have the following conditions:

- Symptoms such as diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat with fever. (A food employee with vomiting or diarrhea must be free of symptoms for at least 24 hours.)
- Illnesses such as Salmonella Typhi, Shigella, Eschericia coli 0157:H7, Hepatitis A, or Norovirus.

Temperature Control of Foods

Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods (i.e. meat, poultry, fish, milk, eggs, cut melons, cut tomatoes, etc.) must be maintained at proper temperature to prevent the growth of disease causing organisms.

Hot Holding: 135°F or higher.

Cold Holding: 41°F or below.

Cooking Temperatures for Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods are: 15 seconds @: chicken-165°F, Ground beef -155°F, wild game - 165° F. All other raw animal foods – 145°F. Partial cooking of TCS foods is prohibited.

A thermocouple or metal stem thermometer shall be provided to check internal temperatures of TCS hot and cold food items. Metal stemmed thermometers accurate to within ±2°F must be provided to monitor temperatures.

Food Protection

All food shall be protected from customer handling, coughing, sneezing, or other contamination by wrapping, the use of sneeze guards, or other effective barriers.

- Preparation of samples must be done using smooth, cleanable surfaces (i.e. tables) that are protected from customer traffic.
- Slicing must be done on cutting boards. Slicing may not be done on vehicle tailgates or by using pocket knives.
- Display food samples on disposable plates or trays, unless approved warewashing facilities are provided on-site or unless clean sanitized display trays are brought to the site from a licensed food establishment.
- When transporting pre-prepared samples, protect from contamination and maintain temperature control of Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods.

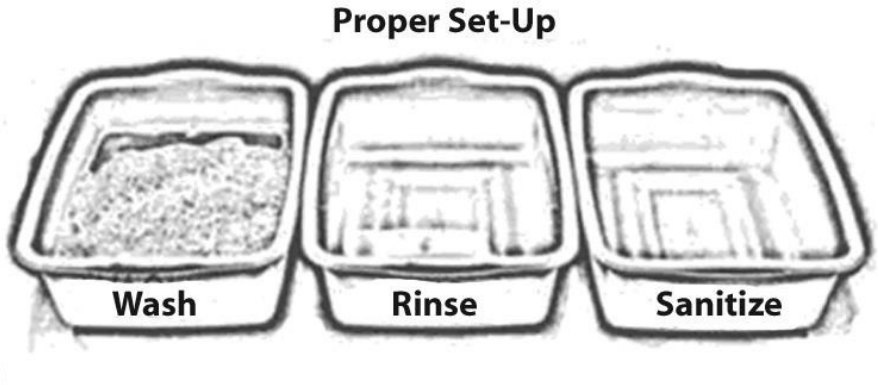
Warewashing

When on-site warewashing is necessary it must done as follows. Either a commercial dishwasher or a three-compartment sink set-up must be utilized to wash, rinse, and sanitize equipment and utensils coming into contact with food. The minimum requirements for a utensil washing set-up to wash/rinse/sanitize should consist of three basins that are large enough for immersion of the utensils, a potable hot water supply,

and an adequate disposal method for the wastewater. In-use equipment and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized at least every four hours.

Sanitizing

An approved sanitizer must be provided for sanitizing food contact surfaces. Sanitizers must be used at appropriate strengths as specified by manufacturer. Three common sanitizers, and the typical concentrations required by manufacturers, are: Chlorine solution = 50 ppm; Iodine solution = 12.5 to 25 ppm; or Quaternary ammonium compound = 200 ppm. Soak clean, rinsed items in sanitizing solution for at least 60 seconds and then air dry. An approved test kit to measure sanitizer concentrations must be available and used.



Overhead Protection

Outdoor farmers' market booths which offer food samples must be covered with a canopy or other type of overhead protection unless the food items offered are pre-packaged. Overhead protection is not required over outdoor cooking devices.

Floors

Flooring is necessary when located on dirt, gravel or a surface that can allow dust or mud to be generated and contaminate food samples. When temporary flooring is provided, it should be constructed of materials such as non-absorbent matting, tight wood or removable platforms that minimize dust and mud.

Insect Control

When flying insects and other pests are absent due to the location of the establishment, the weather, or other limiting conditions, no insect protection is required. When insects are present, any exposed food samples must be protected by providing walls, screens, doors, etc. designed to prevent the entry of pests.

Contact MDARD for Assistance

MDARD food inspectors are available to discuss specific questions you may have. Contact your inspector by calling the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at 1-800-292-3939.

Any farmer's market booth that serves full meals must obtain a temporary food establishment license from the local health department.

Safe Food Sampling at Farmers' Markets Self Inspection Checklist

Facility and Equipment

- ○ Refrigerator or cooler with drained ice provided, if needed.
- ○ Adequate supply of clean cutting boards, knives, disposable display plates, disposable gloves, deli tissue, etc. available.
- ○ Metal stem thermometer available if hot or cold samples provided.
- ○ Table for preparing, storing, handling samples provided and located in an area protected customer traffic, rain, insects, etc.
- ○ Warewashing sinks, detergent, hot water, sanitizer and sanitizer test strips provided, if needed.
- ○ Covered garbage container available.
- ○ Insect protection provided, if needed.
- ○ Container to store soiled items in provided (knives, cutting boards, etc.).
- ○ Flooring provided if dust and mud can be generated.

Operational Requirements

- ○ Ill employees excluded from working.
- ○ No bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food- gloves, tongs, deli tissue, etc., used.
- ○ Cooked samples cooked to proper internal temperature.
- ○ Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods maintained at proper temperatures (i.e. items such as meat, milk, eggs, cut melons, cut tomatoes, etc.).
- ○ Use of single service, disposable items maximized.
- ○ Display samples protected from insects, sneezing, handling, etc. during preparation, storage and display (i.e. store and display wrapped, covered).
- ○ Bagged ice stored and handled in a manner that prevents contamination.
- ○ Warewashing conducted properly (wash, rinse, sanitize, air dry).
- ○ Wastewater properly disposed of in sewer (not on ground or in storm drain).