

# Operator's Edge

The Successful Independent Operator's Resource

## The Top 10 Food Safety Tips

Every restaurant wants to provide not only the best tasting food, but food that is safe to consume. Below are 10 food safety tips you should follow to ensure you are protecting your employees and restaurant customers alike.



- 1. Wash your hands.** Those that prepare the food in a restaurant should be regularly washing their hands. This should especially be done before and after handling any raw foods. Contact after working with raw meats or produce can infect already cooked items.
- 2. Wash your produce.** Wash produce, even if it looks clean. If eating a fruit that can be peeled, scrub the surface to be sure any germs on the outside do not make their way into the interior section.
- 3. Use clean plates.** Serve food on clean plates or trays. If surfaces used for raw meats are not cleaned correctly before cooked meats are placed there afterwards, bacteria is spread.
- 4. Replace serving plates.** If fresh food is placed on an old tray, then the food becomes contaminated.
- 5. Take advantage of food thermometers.** Use a food thermometer and be aware of Minimum Cooking Temperatures for each item. If an exact temperature is not provided, know the characteristics of the food to know when it is ready to serve. For example, different seafood items have certain colors or textures once they are prepared properly.
- 6. Find the right hot temperature.** Keep hot foods at 140 degrees F or above by using slow cookers or other appliances. Before cooking, thaw frozen meat in a fridge, microwave, or under running water.
- 7. Find the right cold temperature.** Keep cold foods at 40 degrees F or below by sitting foods in ice or keep in small serving trays. Foods - hot or cold - should never sit out on a counter for longer than two hours.
- 8. Properly handle leftovers.** If there are leftovers after a meal, put them into the refrigerator or freezer immediately. When putting them into containers, divide food into shallow ones to allow the food to cool faster. Be sure to eat the leftovers within four days of cooking.
- 9. Use two cutting boards.** Be sure to have two cutting boards in the kitchen - one for raw meats and one for ready-to-eat foods. This will keep the risk of cross-contamination at bay.
- 10. Buy the right products.** When purchasing canned foods, be sure to buy cans without any holes, bumps, or bulges. Any evidence of careless handling will most likely be visible and a warning sign to buyers.

Source: Restaurant and Kitchen Supply