Guidelines to Enhance Food Security in Retail Food Facilities

The potential for contamination of our food supply has always been present; however, the recent rise in terrorist activity has focused new attention to this possibility. To minimize the threat to your customers and to your business, food security should now become an important part of your overall food safety plan. The following suggestions are offered to retail food facility operators in Santa Clara County to enhance security in your facility and reduce the potential of food contamination from a terrorist incident.

Food Prep & Storage Areas
- Limit access by unauthorized persons to food preparation and storage areas.
- Know your employees and who should be working in each area.
- Lock exterior doors and windows but do not block fire exits.
- Identify and eliminate “gaps” in your security. Trusted employees who are familiar with your workflow and procedures may provide useful suggestions.
- Randomly inspect your facility for compliance with security measures.

Food Sources & Supplies
- Know your suppliers and delivery personnel. Be sure delivery vehicles are adequately identified and are from your known suppliers.
- Require delivery personnel to ring doorbells, or knock, to gain access for delivery. Consider use of a sign-in log.
- Assign trained personnel to “check-in” all deliveries and inspect all incoming foods and supplies. Check product condition and quality — inspect for tampering, discoloration, pinholes in packaging, or any other unusual condition.
- Do not accept unattended shipments that are “dropped” at your door. Do not accept shipments at times when products cannot be inspected.
- Maintain records of invoices and receipts for all food product purchases and deliveries in an easily retrievable filing system.
- Encourage suppliers to develop their own food security plan.

Displays, Salad Bars, Buffets & Retail Areas
- Develop a plan to continually monitor these areas... not just during replenishing or restocking. Any unattended self-serve open food display may pose a greater risk than an attended display.
- Do not refill a partially empty food container. Instead, replace with a new, clean container of fresh product. Using clean containers helps break the cycle of potential contamination.
- Be sure that customers do not reuse dishes when returning to a self-serve display.
- If you suspect a food item has been tampered with, remove it from sale.
- Develop a written policy describing how returned products are to be handled.

Employees
- Establish and follow a policy for employee screening and background checks. Consider checking references from previous employers.
- All employees should receive adequate food safety training that includes training in food security measures.
- Closely supervise all employees. For example:
  - All employees may not need access to food preparation areas.
  - Place new employees on shifts where oversight by trusted senior employees is provided.
  - Consider restricting personal items from work areas.

Visitors
- Check the identification of all inspectors and others who visit the non-customer areas of your facility. Consider the use of a sign-in log for all visitors.

Who to Call if an Emergency Occurs
- In caso of an emergency such as a suspected terrorist act, dial 911 immediately.
- Report any suspected foodborne illness to the Department of Environmental Health at 408-918-3400. To file a report at night, on holidays, or on weekends, call County Communications at 408-299-2507.
- Immediately report any unusual activity to the appropriate authorities.

Additional food safety information is available on the Internet at: usda.gov cdc.gov fda.gov EHinfo.org

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