

Unit 1: Kitchen Areas Considered Important by Health Inspectors

Health inspectors prevent food contamination by visiting restaurants to check cleanliness. Some areas that health inspectors examine are loading docks, doors, windows, walls, foundations, and plumbing for cracks, gaps, and holes. The delivery area should be the shortest route from the delivery trucks to proper storage.

Rodents and insects need to be kept out of the restaurant. Air curtains repel flying insects. If pests get into the restaurant and multiply, pest control is expensive. Locate rubbish areas away from the building to prevent infestations.

Refrigerators and freezers must be well-lit, located close to food preparation areas, and kept at the proper temperatures. Refrigerated food should be stored on shelves according to cooking temperatures. Ready-to-eat items go on the top shelf. To help prevent cross-contamination, all other foods should be arranged on shelves by the internal temperature required when cooking, with the foods requiring the highest temperatures on the bottom shelf. For example, poultry, which requires internal temperatures of 165°F, should be on the bottom shelf. Properly cool all food. Cover, label, and date items. Dry food storage must be dry. Dry food should be rotated off the floor by the “First In, First Out” rule. Lock chemical storage, and locate it away from food areas.

Employees must practice good personal hygiene. Hand-washing stations, employee rest rooms, and guest rest rooms must be accessible, must operate properly, and must contain soap and drying supplies, with water at a temperature of 110°F. Do not allow smoking and chewing gum in food preparation areas. Workers should wear hair restraints and should have clean hands and uniforms. Full first-aid kits must be available if employees cut themselves. Open cuts and burns must be treated, bandaged, and covered with proper-fitting gloves.

Preparation areas must be clean, sanitized, and located away from open doors and chemicals, with good access to the dishwashing areas. Dishwashing areas need adequate hot water or chemical sanitizer systems. Use proper utensils: clean, sharpened knives and designated cutting boards, receiving pans, and storage containers. Work on a manageable amount of potentially hazardous food within the four-hour limit. This will keep food out of the temperature danger zone of 41-140°F.

Check cooking and holding temperatures for service with properly calibrated thermometers or probes. Pay good attention to potentially hazardous foods, including dairy, eggs, meats, poultry, and stuffed menu items. Reheat food rapidly and check for safe temperatures. Throw out food that has been in the temperature danger zone for more than four hours.

Dining rooms, bars, side work areas, and service ware must be easy to clean and sanitize. Train food servers to serve ready-to-eat food with gloves and utensils to prevent contamination. Check all areas and correct all problems as quickly as possible.