



SOCOA :: Food Safety And Food Loss Reduction Brief

Safe Consumption

Food contaminants are any harmful substances e.g. chemicals, microorganisms or toxins intentionally or unintentionally added to food, which may be chemicals from natural sources, environmental pollution, formed during farming, food processing, distribution, marketing or preparation.

Some tips to ensure consumption of safe food are:

a) Purchasing

- Know your vendor / avoid consuming food from vendors you don't know and trust
- Go to shops/vendors that have clean premises, clean personnel and those who use fresh products (fresh meat, eggs, vegetables)

b) Preparing

- Clean vegetables and fruits with clean running water.
- Wash hands, counters, equipment, utensils and cutting boards with soap and water immediately after use
- Don't let juices from raw meat, poultry or seafood come in contact with cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits or salad ingredients.
- If eaten raw, vegetables should first be soaked for at least one minute in a water-bleach solution with a ratio of 1 tsp. of regular bleach to 2 liters of clean water.

c) Serving

- Wash hands with soap and water before serving or eating.
- Never leave raw or cooked food at room temperature any longer than necessary
- Use clean utensils and surfaces



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Safe Production

Food contaminants are any harmful substances e.g. chemicals, microorganisms or toxins intentionally or unintentionally added to food, which may be chemicals from natural sources, environmental pollution, formed during farming, food processing, distribution, marketing or preparation.

Some tips to ensure safe production of food are:

- Do not use contaminated water or industrial waste to irrigate your crops or for mixing chemicals intended for spraying.
- Misuse of agro-chemicals, including pesticides and growth hormones may have harmful effects on human health.
- Do not use fresh manure on any fresh fruit or vegetable crop. Properly composted manures may be used but the exact conditions of composting must be known to ensure that all pathogens have been eliminated.
- Set up an effective system to clean and maintain facilities, equipment and machinery in good condition.

- Implement Integrated Pest Management and give preference to non-chemical methods.
- Check the pre-harvest interval on the label of the chemical to know how long to wait before harvesting.
- Provide adequate training and appropriate supervision of staff to avoid food contamination- Educating staff on how to ensure food safety practices are followed will help reduce the risk of contamination. Regulations require that food handlers are supervised and trained in food hygiene practices suitable for their work activity.
- Provide adequate facilities to ensure personal cleanliness.
- Ensure hygienic production process to mitigate risk from chemical contamination by having an appropriate procedure to dispose waste e.g. empty pesticides containers



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Safe Processing and Storage

Food contaminants are any harmful substances e.g. chemicals, microorganisms or toxins intentionally or unintentionally added to food, which may be chemicals from natural sources, environmental pollution, formed during farming, food processing, distribution, marketing or preparation.

Some tips to ensure safe processing, distribution and marketing of food are:

- Provide adequate facilities to ensure personal cleanliness and measures to prevent biological and physical contaminations. Ensure the following factors are considered;

- ✓ *Hand Washing - ensure effective hand washing techniques are followed at appropriate times*
- ✓ *Minimize hand contact with food - try to minimize direct hand contact with raw food by using appropriate utensils and safe use of disposable gloves*
- ✓ *Personal cleanliness - cover hair; do not sneeze or cough over food; cover cuts and sores; and do not wear jewelry*

- ✓ Wear protective clothing — wear suitable clean protective clothing and handle appropriately to prevent cross contamination
- Use a foot sanitizing foam/dip at the entrance to the processing area.
- Do not handle food in case of illnesses such as vomiting or diarrhea. Report or seek medical attention.
- Grading is very crucial - produce that has mechanical damages are separated as they ripen faster and may lead to contamination of the whole produce if they go bad.
- Hygiene is essential - ensure that hands, cupboards, refrigerators, freezers and storage containers are kept clean since bacteria frequently gets into food through storage facilities and poor personal and environmental hygiene.
- Fresh produce should be stored in low temperatures, away from direct sunlight and where there is free circulation of air to prevent growth and spread of pathogens



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- The storeroom should be easy to keep clean and free from rodents and vermin. This means all walls, ceiling, and floor openings should be sealed and protected to prevent access

- Keep dry storage areas clean with good ventilation to control humidity and prevent the growth of mold and bacteria.

- Store foods off the floor on pallets and away from walls to allow for adequate air circulation

Safe Distribution

- Vans should be suitable for their intended use and easy to clean.

- Where possible vans should be refrigerated.

- Prevent contamination of produce by

- ✓ Separating raw food and non-food items in the same load.

- ✓ Inspecting vans prior to loading.

- Use dedicated containers or crates and inspect them before packing and loading.

Safe Marketing

- As a marketer familiarize yourself with potential contamination risks such as cholera due to poor hygiene standards.

- Use raised stands for your produce (tables or platforms) while selling your produce. Avoid placing fresh produce on the ground and on walkways, in contact with dirt as this leads to contamination.

- Avoid selling your fresh produce next to garbage bins or waste piles.

- Provide adequate facilities to ensure personal cleanliness.

- Adopt measures to prevent biological and physical contaminations.

- Have an appropriate procedure to dispose waste.



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