

SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY



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COIMBATORE-641 035, TAMIL NADU



UNIT I: FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE

HYGIENE AND SANITATION IN FOOD SERVICE INSTITUTIONS

Hygiene and sanitation in food service institutions are critical to ensuring food safety and preventing foodborne illnesses. In such settings, poor hygiene practices can lead to contamination, spread of diseases, and harm to both customers and staff. Below are key areas of hygiene and sanitation that need attention in food service establishments:

1. Personal Hygiene of Staff

- **Handwashing:** Employees should wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling food, after using the restroom, and after touching any potentially contaminated surfaces. This is essential to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Clothing and Protective Gear:** Employees should wear clean uniforms, aprons, gloves, and hair restraints (e.g., hairnets or hats) to prevent contamination from hair, skin, and clothing.
- **Health Checks:** Regular health screenings for food handlers are important to prevent sick individuals from contaminating food. Ill employees, especially those with symptoms like vomiting, diarrhea, or skin infections, should not handle food.

2. Kitchen and Food Preparation Areas

- **Cleaning and Sanitizing:** Surfaces, equipment, and utensils should be cleaned and sanitized regularly using appropriate cleaning agents and disinfectants. This includes cutting boards, countertops, and machines like blenders or slicers.
- **Pest Control:** Implement measures to prevent pests like rodents, insects, and flies from entering the kitchen. This involves sealing entry points, maintaining cleanliness, and using traps or pest control services.
- **Proper Waste Disposal:** Trash bins should be emptied frequently, and waste should be stored away from food preparation areas to reduce the risk of contamination.

3. Food Storage

- **Temperature Control:** Ensure perishable foods are stored at the correct temperature to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. Refrigerators should maintain food at or below 4°C (40°F), while freezers should be at or below -18°C (0°F).
- **First In, First Out (FIFO) System:** Implement a system where older stock is used first to prevent expired or spoiled food from being served.
- **Separation of Foods:** Raw and ready-to-eat foods must be stored separately to avoid cross-contamination. Raw meats, for instance, should be placed on lower shelves to prevent their juices from dripping onto other foods.

4. Food Handling and Preparation

- **Cooking Temperatures:** Foods must be cooked to their appropriate internal temperatures to kill harmful pathogens (e.g., poultry should be cooked to 165°F/74°C).
- **Avoid Cross-Contamination:** Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw and cooked foods. This reduces the risk of bacteria from raw meat contaminating other food items.
- **Sanitization of Tools:** Knives, cutting boards, and other utensils must be sanitized between uses, particularly when handling different types of food.

5. Water and Ice Supply

- **Clean Water:** Water used for cooking, cleaning, and drinking must be from a safe and clean source. Regular testing of water quality is essential, especially if it comes from wells or local sources.
- **Ice Handling:** Ice must be made from clean, potable water and handled with sanitized equipment. Ice machines should be cleaned regularly to prevent bacterial growth.

6. Sanitation in Dining Areas

- **Tableware and Utensils:** All plates, glasses, and utensils should be washed in hot water (or in a commercial dishwasher) to ensure they are properly sanitized.
- **Cleaning of High-Touch Surfaces:** Tables, chairs, and other high-touch areas in dining spaces should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- **Restroom Cleanliness:** Restrooms for both staff and customers should be cleaned regularly, and soap and hand-drying facilities should be provided to encourage hand hygiene.

7. Training and Monitoring

- **Staff Training:** Regular training sessions should be conducted to teach staff about hygiene practices, food safety standards, and sanitation procedures.
- **Regular Inspections:** Internal inspections should be conducted to ensure compliance with food safety regulations. External inspections from health authorities should also be expected.

8. Documentation and Record-Keeping

- **Temperature Logs:** Keep records of temperature checks for refrigerators, freezers, and cooked foods to ensure they are stored and served at safe temperatures.
- **Cleaning Schedules:** Maintain cleaning and sanitizing schedules to ensure all areas are cleaned at the appropriate intervals.
- **Pest Control Logs:** Document any pest control measures taken, including inspections and treatments, to monitor and control potential infestations.

By following these hygiene and sanitation practices, food service institutions can significantly reduce the risk of food contamination, protect public health, and comply with regulatory standards.

