

06 Dec 2024

To: Food Business Operators

## **ADOPTING GOOD FOOD SAFETY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES**

The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) would like to remind all food business operators to exercise care and to take the necessary preventive measures to ensure that the food that is sold or supplied to consumers is prepared hygienically and is safe for consumption at all times. This is particularly crucial during the busy festive seasons when food safety and personal hygiene practices may be compromised. Below are some guidelines which food businesses should adopt.

### **Food Handlers and Food Hygiene Officers**

#### Training and Registration

2. Food business operators should ensure that all food handlers have attended the requisite food safety training and are registered with SFA. This requirement also applies to part-time staff and manpower provided by outsourced contractors. SFA will take action against food business operators if unregistered food handlers are found to be preparing food for sale. Certain food business operators are also to appoint a Food Hygiene Officer (FHO) to oversee and implement effective food safety measures.

- (i) Food handlers who are involved in food preparation are to attend and successfully complete the WSQ Food Safety Course Level 1. More information is available on SFA's website at [Requirements for Food Handlers](#).
- (ii) Appointed Food Hygiene Officers (FHOs) are to attend and successfully complete the WSQ Food Safety Course Level 3. More information is available on SFA's website at [Requirements for Food Hygiene Officers](#).

#### Adopt Good Personal Hygiene Practices

3. Food business operators should also emphasize to their staff the importance of adopting good personal hygiene practices. These include:

- (i) Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing/sneezing and dispose the tissue into a covered bin immediately. Wash hands before continuing with food preparation. Sufficient hand soap should be provided at hand-wash points for staff to exercise proper hand-washing practices.
- (ii) Seek medical attention promptly and stay home if unwell.
- (iii) Avoid touching face with hands when preparing food.
- (iv) Avoid sharing food / drinks with others.

### **Upkeep and Maintenance of Premises & Equipment**

4. The upkeep and maintenance of the premises is crucial in mitigating food safety risks. Food should only be stored and prepared in clean locations and under sanitary conditions. The following are some key points to note:

- (i) Keep licensed premises clean and ensure all utensils and storage and cooking equipment are clean before use. Sanitise surfaces and equipment regularly and when necessary.
- (ii) Regularly sanitise food contact equipment and utensils (e.g., knives, tongs, chopping board) by proper washing using detergent, rinsing with hot water and wipe dry with a clean towel.
- (iii) Equipment and utensils with permanent stains or damages should be replaced immediately.
- (iv) Ensure licensed premises are free of pest infestation. Engage registered pest control operators and ensure that sufficient pest control measures are in place. Repair cracked infrastructure promptly, as such crevices may serve as potential places for pests' harbourage.

### **Adopt Good Food Safety Practices**

5. Food business operators should remain vigilant and remind food handlers to exercise good food safety practices at all times. Good food safety practices are key in ensuring that pathogens in food are destroyed, or in preventing proliferation to dangerous levels during storage.

#### Proper Temperature Control during Cooking and Storage

- (i) Thaw frozen food in a chiller maintained at a temperature between 0 to 4°C, or by using a microwave oven. Frozen food can also be thawed by submerging in ice water, with frequent change of water and sealed in a clean leak-proof packaging or container.

- (ii) Check internal temperature of cooked food using probe thermometers (especially for meat and poultry dishes) to ensure food is cooked to an internal temperature of at least 75°C for 2 minutes.
- (iii) Divide large amounts of food into smaller portions for quicker cooling and refrigerate immediately.
- (iv) Do not keep ready-to-eat food within the temperature danger zone (5 to 60°C) for >4 hours, as pathogens can multiply to dangerous levels.

#### Proper Segregation to Prevent Cross-contamination

- (i) Ready-to-eat (RTE) and non-RTE food should be stored and prepared separately. Always store cooked and ready-to-eat food above raw food to prevent cross-contamination.
- (ii) Wash all utensils and equipment thoroughly between each use. Implement a colour-code system to differentiate utensils and equipment for RTE and non-RTE food.
- (iii) Avoid washing raw meat to prevent the spread of pathogens. Sanitise surfaces and equipment regularly and when necessary.

#### Proper Handling of RTE Raw Fish and Seafood

- (i) Wash hands after touching raw food and before preparing RTE food. Do not handle RTE food with bare hands, and exercise regular change of disposal gloves that are in contact with food.
- (ii) Food business operators preparing and selling RTE raw fish dishes (e.g. sushi, sashimi), are also encouraged to adopt the Singapore Technical Reference (TR) 79:2020 Code of Practice for the Preparation of Ready-to-Eat Raw Fish developed by the Standards Development Office. A copy of the Technical Reference can be purchased via Singapore Standards eShop at the following website: [Singapore Standards - TR 79:2020](#)
- (iii) Do not serve thawed frozen oysters as raw oysters. Serving thawed frozen food in the raw form increases the risk of food poisoning.
- (iv) Store / display RTE raw seafood at below 5°C in chillers or immersed in food-grade ice. Keep the display time as short as possible. Shuck the oysters only upon customer's order or display the shucked raw oysters in smaller portions and replenish when required.

## **Food Safety is a Joint Responsibility**

7. Food safety is a joint responsibility between the government, industry and consumers. While SFA continues to inspect food establishments to ensure compliance to the SFA's regulations and requirements, it is also the responsibility of food business operators to ensure that all food safety regulations and licensing requirements are complied with at all times. This includes managing your business activities appropriately such that you are able to cope with the customer orders. Functioning beyond your operating capacity could potentially result in hygiene lapses due to poor food safety practices, and therefore compromising food safety.

## **Safe Food For All**

8. Posters are made available on SFA's website at [Guidelines for Licensed Food Retail Premises](#) for use in communicating examples of good food safety practices.

9. We thank all food business operators for your collaborative efforts in ensuring safe food for all.

Yours faithfully,

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NB: This is a computer-generated letter. No signature is required.