

Food safety • Many important factors are involved

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We refer to Mr Eric J. Brooks' letter (Don't rely on masks alone to maintain food safety, prevent contamination, Aug 27).

As Mr Brooks rightly pointed out, food safety goes beyond just mask-wearing. Other important factors such as proper cold chain management, prevention of cross-contamination, cooking to

the appropriate temperature and holding cooked food at that temperature, proper hand-washing, thorough cleaning of food preparation areas and equipment, and pest control management have to be in place in order to safeguard food safety. Any lapses in these aspects may compromise food safety.

As part of the Singapore Food Agency's (SFA) licensing requirements, food establishments are required to adhere to good food safety and hygiene practices.

It is also mandatory for food handlers to attend the Workforce Skills Qualification Food Safety Course Level 1 to be trained in

proper food safety and hygiene practices, such as separating raw from cooked food and washing hands before handling food.

In addition, food handlers must don face masks or spit guards to prevent them from coughing or sneezing onto and contaminating food during the food preparation and handling process. They may

take on other duties as long as they ensure that their hands are properly washed before handling food again.

Food safety is a joint responsibility. While SFA puts in place and enforces the regulatory measures, retail food establishments must play their part by adhering to good food hygiene and preparation practices. The food industry is reminded to comply with licensing conditions

by continuing to wear masks or spit guards for adequate protection to prevent contamination of food.

SFA will not hesitate to take firm action against anyone who does not comply with the mask- or spit guard-wearing requirement.

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