

Food Storage Guidelines

Risk Engineering



Reviewing these tips can improve your restaurant's operations and keep guests safe!

- Establishments should always try to purchase food from reputable sources. Are your vendors' warehouses and delivery vehicles compliant with accepted safety standards?
- Ensure employees are trained on how to receive and deny orders from vendors. Food products should arrive in good condition, at the correct temperatures, and with USDA stamps when required.
- Remember FIFO – First in, first out should determine stock rotation and use. When you receive a delivery, place the new stock behind the existing stock. Use the stock at the front to always make use of the oldest products first.
- Dry goods should be stored in a cool, dark, dry and well ventilated area between and 50° and 70° F. Shelving should allow air to flow freely between product and be at least 6" off the floor and 12" beneath the ceiling. Chemicals cannot be stored next to food products.
- Protect food products from foreign debris such as pests, paint chips, or dust by ensuring all containers have tight fitting lids or have been secured with plastic wrap.
- When storing foods not in their original packaging, place them in labeled containers to prevent using the incorrect product.
- The temperature in a refrigerator should be 40°F or below throughout the unit and your freezer temperature should be 0°F. This should be communicated to your employees via notices and all equipment should be checked regularly (the equipment should have thermometers inside) to ensure that these temperatures are being met.
- Raw meat, poultry, and seafood should be in a sealed container or wrapped securely to prevent raw juices from contaminating other foods and placed on the lowest shelves available.
- Meats must be kept separate during storage, preparation, and display.
- Ready-to-eat and cooked foods need to stay on the top shelf, wrapped tightly to prevent cross-contamination. RTE foods must be labeled with the date the food must be consumed, sold, or discarded.
- Keep equipment, shelves, and storage units clean to safeguard against all kinds of contamination and the build-up of bacteria. Ensure workers have a daily, weekly, and monthly schedule of cleaning duties.

United States, Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration. (2013). Retrieved August 19, 2018, from <https://www.fda.gov/downloads/food/guidanceregulation/retailfoodprotection/foodcode/ucm374510.pdf>

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