

The Everclean Report

Self-Service Food Bars

When you have a self-service food bar, it is important to take extra care to ensure that the food served is safe. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

1. As is the case with all food handling, proper handwashing should be practiced by all persons attending to the food bar. Be sure to wear gloves while handling RTE foods.
2. Maintain proper holding temperatures (Pre-heat/pre-cool holding units prior to placing food items in or on them).

- A. Cold holding: 41 °F or less*
- B. Hot holding: 135/140 °F or higher*

* Keep in mind that local jurisdictions have different temperature requirements for food bars.

3. All food items should be under a sneeze guard, in a covered container with lid, or wrapped up for self-service.
4. Do not use spray chemicals around the food bar.
5. Store utensils intended for guest use with the handles up, or in a manner that protects food contact surfaces from contamination.
6. Ensure that the serving utensils used at the food bar are stored with the handles up and are out of the food product.
7. Each time a guest returns to the food bar, they must use a new plate/ bowl.
8. When a food container is empty, remove the container from the bar and replace it with a new, clean container. In other words, do not refill containers with new product.
9. Monitor the food bar to ensure that guests are not handling the food product with their bare hands, sneezing/ coughing on the food items, or placing foreign items into food.
10. Take temperatures of the food items regularly and record them in temperature logs. Take corrective action if food items are found to be in the temperature danger zone.

Defrost Cycles

Defrost cycles help keep refrigeration units operating smoothly by increasing the ambient air temperature in the unit periodically (typically, a few times a day). During these times, you can usually see the unit thermometer increase; however, since the defrost cycles are short in duration, they do not raise your food product above the proper holding temperature. During the defrost cycle, try to limit the time spent with the unit open. If your unit has a timed cycle, avoid setting the timer for periods of heavy use such as your lunch rush. Also, be sure to take temperatures and rotate product when necessary. Keeping cold food cold is an important control measure when it comes to food safety, and commercial units are designed to help you do just that.

Training Food Safety

Food safety training does not only occur in employee training classes. In fact, food safety training should be a part of every staff member's day so that they can learn, perform, and properly demonstrate food safety practices. Keep the following tips in mind:

1. **New employees.** Most locations have an employee orientation which includes communicating the expectations for the employee in regards to food safety procedures.
2. **On-the-job training.** Remember that training opportunities occur throughout the day so take time to train! Review how to change gloves, wash hands, measure temperatures of cooked food, use sanitizer properly, etc. On-the-job training is a quick and effective way to reinforce proper food safety procedures.
3. **Pre-shift meetings.** Utilize any brief meetings that occur before shifts to remind employees of the importance of safe food handling. Food safety practices can be great topics for discussion.

By making time to discuss and demonstrate good food safety practices on a daily basis, you help ensure that the food served to customers has been handled properly!

Any comments or questions should be directed to info@evercleanservices.com.



Special Interest Articles:

Self-Service Food Bars

Defrost Cycles

Training Food Safety

Everclean Services

Phone:

(877) 532-5326
(818) 874-1290

Fax:

(818) 865-0465

E-Mail:

info@evercleanservices.com