



FOOD SAFETY & SANITATION

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The Everclean Report

Special Interest Articles:

- Receiving Procedures
 - Thawing Out the Options
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Receiving Procedures

Receiving is the first line of defense in providing safe food. Therefore, it is essential that food deliveries are inspected upon entering a food service facility. The following are basic procedures that should be followed when receiving food.

Education

All authorized receiving individuals should receive training on proper receipt procedures. Training should include procedures in verifying approved sources, reading product codes and determining product temperature.

Receiving employees should know what constitutes acceptable color, texture and odor of products and what signs determine rejection of a product.

Plan Ahead

Ensure there is adequate space for the new products. Remember "first in, first out" (FIFO) and store newer products behind or under older products. Ensure that hand trucks and carts are clean and easily accessible. The receiving area should be maintained clean and uncluttered.

Inspect Immediately

The first inspection to be conducted is a visual inspection. Check to ensure the product packaging is clean and intact, without signs of thawing, refreezing, or insect damage. Any packages found to be damaged should be further examined. Check use-by and/or expiration dates. Review the truck to ensure it is clean and, if required, refrigerated.

Next, check temperatures of potentially hazardous foods. Temperatures must be verified using a calibrated, clean and sanitized thermometer. Temperatures found to be out of range indicate that further inspection of the product is needed to determine if the product condition and/or quality has been affected.

Disposition

Products found to be in acceptable condition should be immediately stored and labeled with date of receipt or expiration/use by dates to ensure proper stock rotation. Products identified as unacceptable should be returned to the vendor for replacement.

Thawing Out the Options

Potentially hazardous foods (PHFs) must be thawed properly so that their internal temperature does not enter the temperature danger zone. Food should never be thawed at room temperature because the outer surface will warm above 40° F while the center remains frozen. When the temperature of PHFs rise above 40° F, bacteria multiply rapidly. To safely defrost foods, use one of the following methods:

Option I: Refrigerator Method

Place the product in a pan away from other foods. Placing the food in a pan is important to prevent potential cross contamination from drippings as the product thaws. Thawing by this method can take several hours or more, so advance planning is necessary.

Option II: Cold Water Method

Place the wrapped food in a container, completely submerged, under a stream of running water until it thaws. The water temperature should not exceed 70° F if using this method.

Option III: Microwave Method

Frozen foods can be thawed in a microwave if you plan to cook them immediately. When thawing with this method, be sure to rotate the food regularly to ensure even thawing.

Option IV: Cooking Method

Foods can also be cooked from frozen. A common example where this method is used is with hamburger patties. Use a probe thermometer to verify the food is cooked to the proper internal temperature.

What is a Gasket?

The refrigerator gasket is the flexible stripping around the outside edge of freezer and refrigerator doors that provides an airtight seal. This part keeps cold air in and warm air out, and should be cleaned frequently to extend the life of this product. When cleaning the gasket, gently lift the inside edge away from the door. Grime and spills collect here, especially at the bottom of the refrigerator and freezer doors. Harsh detergents and bleach will deteriorate gaskets, so a mild cleaner should be used. It's not uncommon for the gasket itself to dry out and break down. If your doors don't seal properly, you might have to replace the gasket.

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