
Food Safety Process

Unit I: Getting Started



Gain and Maintain Support

If you have started a school community garden, you already know that it takes time, commitment, and support.

Now, you have stepped up to the next challenge: *Getting the School Community Garden Produce in Your Classroom, Cafeteria, and Home.*

School Garden Produce in the Cafeteria

In order to make this a reality, you will need continuous support from key personnel at your school and community. The continuous support begins by forming a committed food safety team and developing a thoughtful food safety program. It is also important to communicate your food safety initiative with all stakeholders such as principals, teachers, students, volunteers, staff and other personnel. Teacher, student, parent and volunteer involvement is fundamental to sustaining your food safety program.

Food Safety Team

Who is Responsible for Food Safety at Your Garden?

The number of individuals who are responsible for food safety accountability depends on the size and manageability of your operation. Accountability can be with one person or a number of individuals with designated responsibilities.¹ For any school community garden, it is very important that there be at least one person who is committed to that garden's food safety program.



1. Food Safety Administrator

Your garden committee needs to select a *Food Safety Administrator* who oversees the entire food safety program ensuring that the food safety plan is properly implemented. Gardens are usually led by parents who are volunteering their time or teachers who already have an overwhelming work load; so, it is important to choose an individual who is committed to the garden's food safety program. Throughout the manual, wherever you see *Food Safety Administrator*, this denotes this role's responsibilities.

Food Safety Administrator responsibilities:

- Becomes trained in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) pertaining to school community gardens.
- Delegates and documents those responsible for each food safety risk area covered.
- Ensures *Garden Coordinator(s)* are thoroughly trained in food safety best practices.
- Oversees *Garden Coordinator(s)* to ensure food safety best practices are implemented.
- Communicates with the *Food Service Managers* ensuring the food safety plan is properly implemented.
- Manages all garden related food safety documents and tracks any necessary updates.
- Ensures garden staff and garden participants are familiar with food safety protocols.



Resource:

- Appendix A - School Garden Food Safety Checklist



2. Garden Coordinator(s)

The primary role of the *Garden Coordinator(s)* is to oversee the preparation and work in the garden. They need to be familiar with the food safety protocols outlined in the Food Safety Field Guide for Garden Coordinator(s). *Garden Coordinator(s)* who are trained on food safety best practices must be on-site during harvest days. Throughout the manual, wherever you see *Garden Coordinator(s)*, this denotes this role's responsibilities.



Garden Coordinator(s) responsibilities:

- Becomes trained in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) pertaining to school gardens.
- Ensures all Garden Participants are following food safety best practices.
- Completes any necessary food safety documentation (e.g., Harvest Activity Log, Incident Reports, etc).
- Communicates with *Food Safety Administrator* and *Food Service Manager*.



3. Food Service Manager

The *Food Service Manager* must be trained in all food service food safety protocols. Including how to properly handle fresh produce and must have a valid Food Services Sanitation Manager Certification. The *Food Service Manager* should receive and handle garden produce deliveries in the same manner as any other incoming product.

Throughout the manual, wherever you see *Food Service Manager*, this denotes this role's responsibilities.

Food Service Manager responsibilities:

- Ensures all Food Service Staff implements food safety best practices.
- Communicates with the *Food Safety Administrator* and *Garden Coordinator(s)*.
- Completes all necessary food safety documentation.
- Manages all food service related food safety documents and tracks any necessary updates.



Resource:

- Appendix B – Food Safety Team



Food Safety Training

The *Food Safety Administrator* and *Garden Coordinator(s)* assigned to oversee school community gardens must participate in an approved training to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with the protocols and expectations. The person assigned as your garden's *Food Safety Administrator* must undergo training conducted by the PUSD/PPHD/ENVT and develop a personalized food safety plan to be kept on record and updated annually. The *Food Service Manager* must have a valid Food Services Sanitation Manager Certification and should receive and handle garden produce deliveries in the same manner as any other incoming product.

All trainings must be documented.



Record Keeping

IF YOU DID NOT RECORD IT, YOU DID NOT DO IT!

Developing your garden's record keeping strategies will likely be the most time-consuming part of your food safety program and one of the most important. Keeping these records will act as a reminder and to-do list as well as an assurance the appropriate precautions have been taken, in the unlikely event that there is a food safety issue. It is recommended that all documents are filed together in a food safety binder. *The Food Safety Administrator* must ensure the binder is kept up-to-date.

Here is a list of Good Food Safety Practices to keep in mind:²

- Documents, records, and policies should be included in your food safety files.
- All documents should be readily accessible for review/inspection and kept up-to-date. All documents should be kept for a minimum of four years. Please note that charter schools are not required to follow the Board document retention policy and can follow their own policies.

A self-audit of your food safety manual should be performed annually. The assigned *Food Safety Administrator* should document that the audit was performed and record any corrective actions required. Appendix E (Food Safety Plan Review) can be used to record this information.



Resource:

- Appendix E – Food Safety Plan Review



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