
Food Safety Process

Unit V: Food Service Handling





Training Food Service Staff

All kitchen staff must be properly trained on how to handle fresh garden produce and follow the same requirements enforced by the food service provider or stricter health department guidelines.

The *Food Safety Administrator* should work with the *Food Service Manager* to plan what to grow for the season. The assigned *Food Safety Administrator* and *Food Service Manager* should ensure that all kitchen staff is trained on the following:

1. Receiving Garden Produce
2. Washing Produce
3. Produce Storage
4. Produce Preparation



Receiving Garden Produce²

The *Food Service Manager* and Food Service Staff need to be properly trained on how to receive garden fruits and vegetables and should have a Service Sanitation Manager Certification. The Food Manager Certification is not issued by Pasadena Environmental Health. Several agencies provide this certification and Pasadena Environmental Health can supply a list of providers upon request.

- Before the harvest can be received by the Food Service Staff, the *Garden Coordinator(s)* or *Food Safety Administrator* must approve the quality of the harvested produce and communicate this to the *Food Service Manager*.
- A completed Harvest Activity Log must accompany every garden produce delivery.
 - ◆ The Food Service Manager or trained Food Service Staff must check that the *Garden Coordinator(s)* or *Food Safety Administrator* has initialed the Harvest Activity Log.
- The *Food Service Manager* or trained Food Service Staff will receive the produce by checking the produce against the produce listed on the *Harvest Activity Log* and inspect the cleanliness of the product.
- The *Food Service Manager* will then initial the Harvest Activity Log.
- The *Harvest Activity Log* should then be returned to the *Food Safety Administrator* where it will be filed accordingly with all other food safety records.
- Produce must be used within 2 days of being received.



Washing Produce

Follow these steps when washing garden produce:

1. When washing produce, all Food Service Staff must properly wash their hands using the techniques discussed in the Health and Hygiene section.
2. Garden produce must be washed separately from other school produce and washed the SAME day that it is served. Unwashed garden produce must *not* be mixed with other school produce.
3. It is acceptable to give produce a triple wash if it has excessive sand, dirt or soil. Be sure sinks are washed and sanitized in between.
4. Use a sanitized sink to wash produce. It is recommended that a kitchen have a designated food preparation sink. If the kitchen does not have a designated food preparation sink (and only a sink that is used for pot and pan washing is available), make sure there are no cleaning chemicals attached directly to the water faucet at this sink. You must be able to dispense clean, clear tap water. If this is not possible, you may use large food containers that have been properly sanitized.

Keep a cleaning log near the sink to ensure it is properly cleaned before washing produce.

Fill the sanitized sink with tap water. For certain types of produce (e.g., apples, celery, and tomatoes) wash water temperature should be warmer or no more than 10°F cooler than that of the produce.

5. Produce with thick skins, such as potatoes, can be scrubbed with a vegetable brush to remove all visible dirt.
6. Remove the produce from the sink, rinse again and drain excess water in a colander.
7. You can air-dry or use a clean paper towel to remove excess water.



Resource:

- Appendix D – Harvest Activity Log Crop Profiles of Common Garden Produce



Proper Storage



Storage Bins

- Produce must be stored separately from other school produce.
- The **Food Safety Administrator** and **Garden Coordinator(s)** should develop an organized labeling system with the Food Service Manager to identify garden produce.
 - a. Label storage bins.
 - b. Include the date of harvest and produce harvested.



- In order to avoid damage to produce, Food Service Staff must keep fruit and vegetable off of the floor. Keep produce stored in storage bins in the refrigerator, which should be kept sufficiently clean.
- Keep a cleaning log to ensure regular produce storage maintenance and cleanliness.
- The *Food Service Manager* needs to check this log daily.
- When all entries have been filled, the completed log should then be returned to the *Food Safety Administrator* where it will be filed accordingly with all other food safety records.



Temperature Control

Cold Storage is a Critical Control Point meaning that foods can become unsafe if they are not kept at proper cold storage temperatures. You must have a thermometer to check that your refrigerator is at the proper temperature. The *Food Service Manager* is responsible for making sure refrigerators are kept at the correct temperature range.

- When placing a portable thermometer in a refrigerator, put it in the warmest part of the unit, which is usually near the door.
- Proper Refrigerator Temperature: 40°F or less.
- The vegetables should be stored in the cooler/refrigerator for one day to reduce their temperature to below 40°F.¹²
- A Cold Storage Temperature Log will help record this information.
- The Food Service Manager or an assigned Food Service Staff needs to check and update this log twice a day. It's best to make it a routine by checking the thermometer first thing in the morning and at the end of the day. Assigning the same staff to this task may also help make sure that it is done.
- Important Note – USDA Forms – In some states a USDA form may be required to be used for storage area temperature checks. In this case you must use the USDA form instead of the Cold Storage Temperature Log. Your food service director should provide the *Food Service Manager* with the required forms.
- Important: Never leave refrigerator doors standing open for any reason!
- The *Food Service Manager* needs to be immediately notified if:
 - a. Unsafe temperatures are noted.
 - b. A refrigerator is not working properly.
 - c. Water or ice is building up in or around the refrigerator.



The *Food Service Manager* needs to post Cold Storage Signage to remind staff about critical food safety rules for cold storage.

- Important: Never leave refrigerator doors standing open for any reason!
- The Food Service Manager needs to be immediately notified if:^{8,12}
 - a. Unsafe temperatures are noted.
 - b. A refrigerator is not working properly.
 - c. Water or ice is building up in or around the refrigerator.

Preparing and Serving Produce

All Food Service Staff must have a Service Sanitation Manager Certification or Safe Food Handling issued. If teachers, parents or students are helping with the preparation in a school cafeteria, they should be supervised by a trained food safety staff person and follow the food safety instructions of the certified staff person. Garden produce must be served separately from other school produce. Garden produce will often be served raw; so, implementing best practices in food safety is very important when preparing and serving fresh fruits and vegetables, especially raw produce. All Food Service Staff must be trained on how to properly prepare and serve produce.

Follow these steps to help minimize food safety risks:

1. Practice Good Hygiene and Sanitize Work Area

- Wash your hands! All Food Service Staff *must* wash their hands before handling raw fruits and vegetables using the techniques discussed in the Health and Hygiene section. Hands must be washed before and after handling produce.
 - ◆ Single-use gloves *must* be worn when handling ready-to-eat produce and should be replaced using the same rules used for hand washing.
- Food Service Staff must clean all food-contact surfaces before washing and preparing produce.
 - ◆ Food Service Staff should complete cleaning log whenever food-contact surfaces (sinks, utensils, cutting boards, countertops, etc.) are cleaned.
 - ◆ Clean work surfaces and utensils before and after handling produce.
 - ◆ Use a food service approved sanitizer for cleaning work surfaces. Let utensils and surfaces air dry.

2. Washing and Preparing Produce¹¹

- The produce can be used in the salad bar or at lunch service the day after the harvest if the temperature of the produce is below 40°F.
- Bruised or damaged parts of fruits and vegetables should be cut away before eating or preparing. Throw moldy produce away.

- The produce will not adversely affect the Food Service Manager’s menu plan/ordering if the amount is small and the produce can easily be incorporated into the salad bar or any of the following recipes that are on the menu plan.
- Again, produce must be washed in the school kitchen following the proper food service handling procedures. Wash produce thoroughly to remove dirt and germs. Produce washing instructions should be posted in the kitchen.
- Always wash produce before:
 - ◆ Cutting or chopping
 - ◆ Adding as a recipe ingredient
 - ◆ Cooking
 - ◆ Serving
 - ◆ Displaying whole fruit, such as apples or pears, for service
- Use a sanitized sink to wash produce. It is recommended that your kitchen have a designated food preparation sink. If a food preparation sink is not available (and only a sink that is also used for pot and pan washing is available), make sure there are no cleaning chemicals attached directly to the water faucet at this sink. You must be able to dispense clean, clear tap water. If this is not possible, you may use large food containers that have been properly sanitized.
 - ◆ If you must use the same sink that is used to wash pots and pans, do not wash produce at the same time.
 - ◆ Select a specific time to wash all produce, such as the morning.
- Never use soap, detergent, or bleach solution to wash fruits and vegetables. These products are not meant for washing produce and may not be safe to ingest. They can also adversely affect the flavor.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables even if you don’t eat the skin or rind.
- Prepare produce on a clean work surface making sure all contact surfaces (e.g., cutting boards, knives, countertop, etc.) are properly sanitized using approved food service sanitizers.

3. Follow these easy steps to ‘double-wash’ all raw produce for safety:¹

- Again, clean and sanitize your two sink compartments*.
 - ◆ *Or other containers your supervisor tells you to use.
- Add cold water to both sinks until they are about half full.
- Remove outside leaves and trim product as needed.
- Put produce in the first wash sink. Make sure it is completely covered with water.
- Give the product a good shake under the water to loosen dirt.
- Use a vegetable brush on the surface of items like cantaloupe and potatoes.



- Remove produce from the first sink and place it in the second wash sink, again making sure it is completely covered with the cold water and not too full.
- Let the produce soak in this rinse water for at least 1 minute.
- Remove produce from the second sink, and drain, shake, or spin it to remove water.
- Produce has been ‘double-washed’ and is now ready for use.
- Properly store washed fruits and vegetables.
 - ◆ *Never* return washed fruits or vegetables to their original boxes.
 - ◆ *Always* store washed fruits away from unwashed raw produce to prevent cross-contamination.
- If you have leftover produce that has been cut, sliced, or cooked, store it in a clean, airtight container in the refrigerator at 40°F or less. To be safe, do not use fresh, cut-up fruits and vegetables if they have been held longer than 2 hours at room temperature or longer than one hour at temperatures above 90°F, unless you intend to cook them.



Trace Back and Recall Procedures

Trace Back Procedures

In the event that it is proven that your garden produce is the source of a food borne illness outbreak, you need to have a system already in place to trace the product in order to effectively identify the source of the contamination. Again, here is an example where record keeping is essential. You can create this traceability system simply by identifying the product using a basic Harvest Activity Log. Please see Appendix B for a Harvest Activity Log example. It is recommended to have a system in place when harvesting. During each harvest, the *Garden Coordinator(s)* must record the following information:

- Produce harvested
- Weight of produce
- Names of participants who harvested and packed the produce
- The plot it came from
- The date it was harvested and packed
- The date of sale or distribution (if applicable)



Resource:

- Appendix C – Harvest Activity Log



Best Practice

- The *Food Safety Administrator* should annually conduct a trace back and trace forward exercise that will test how easily produce can be traced using the harvesting documentation on file.
- It is helpful to ask someone not familiar with your system to undertake the trace back check as it will allow your system to be reviewed by a new set of eyes to assess availability, legibility and interpretability of your trace back system

Recall Procedures

Again, most sites including schools do not have the capacity to transport garden produce. However, if your school garden is distributing its produce to third parties, it is especially important to have a recall procedure in place. In the event of a recall, it is important to keep accurate and complete records during this process. Please refer to the Appendix for the following recall forms: Appendix F - Recall Communication and Retrieval Form for recording communication with the parties concerned and retrieval confirmation. Appendix G - Follow-Up Plan Form to determine preventive plans.

Resources:

- Appendix F - Recall Communication and Retrieval Form
- Appendix G - Follow-Up Plan Form

Corrective Action Procedures

Corrective action is required whenever an observation or audit indicates a non-conformance with PUSD /PPHD/ENVT food safety policies. *All* Garden Participants and Food Service Staff must be trained on what they must do if there is an observed non-conformance. Non-conformances can either be *minor* or *major*. If it is minor, then immediate corrective action should be taken.



Minor Non-Conformance



Here is a list of possible *minor* non-conformance issues in the garden or in the food service kitchen:

1. Equipment used to harvest produce is not properly sanitized.
2. Produce accidentally dropped on the floor.



For a Minor non-conformance, what do you do?

1. Take immediate corrective action; for example, if produce drops on the floor, dispose of the potentially contaminated produce.
2. If a *minor* non-conformance is observed by a Garden participant or Food Service Worker, they must communicate the issue and corrective action to the *Garden Coordinator(s)* or *Food Service Manager*.
3. Documentation is not necessary.



Major Non-Conformance

Here is a list of possible *major* non-conformance issues in the garden or in the food service kitchen:

1. Animal fecal matter is present.
2. Garden produce has been stored at an unsafe temperature.

For a major non-conformance, what do you do?

1. When these non-conformances are observed, they must be reported immediately to the *Food Safety Administrator* or the *Food Service Manager*.
2. The *Food Safety Administrator* and/or *Food Service Manager* (wherever the issues are observed) must assess the non-conformance and:
 - a. Determine the required corrective action.
 - b. Determine the cause of the issue.
 - c. Determine the required preventive action.
 - d. Determine new food safety procedures if found necessary.
 - e. Train staff and Garden Participants on new procedures.
 - f. Document the non-conformance, corrective actions, and preventive actions in the food safety records. The Food Safety Policy and Plan Review Form can help you to document corrective and preventive actions throughout the year.



Resource:

- Use Appendix E – Food Safety Plan Review