



# Veterinary Services, Preventive Medicine and Public Health Newsletter

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## Tips for Maintaining a Good Working Relationship:

A good working relationship with those that you work with is key to a successful operation. This is not only true for your fellow AAFES associates but also the regulatory authority that comes to inspect your facility(ies). Knowing your local Air Force Public Health, Army Preventive Medicine, and Army Veterinary Service officials and collaborating with them on sanitation/food safety issues is essential to not only preventing problems and improving inspection results, but also protecting our customers from potential health hazards. Here are some helpful tips:

- Collaborate and Cooperate with the inspector. Answer questions and tell your fellow associates to do the same. Open communication is important for building a good working relationship.
- Always accompany the inspector during the inspection and take notes – this will help you remember what was said and what issues, if any, require corrective action. If you disagree with an inspector's findings, documenting the information will assist in resolving the matter with the regulatory authority later.
- Be organized and have records readily available for review – these include pest control treatments, temperature logs, employee training logs, proof of food safety training (e.g. ServSafe), list of chemicals used in the operation, etc.
- When explaining processes/procedures with the inspector, use common food safety/handling terminology and not EOP/NBFF OPS lingo. For example, rather than saying "it is AAFES or Burger King policy to keep the lettuce and tomatoes at room temperature", say instead *"we use time instead of temperature as a control method; no food is kept in the temperature danger zone more than 4 hours"*. Most military inspectors are not intimately familiar with AAFES or NBFF policies/procedures, but they do understand food handling practices as outlined in the Tri-Service Food Code. Speaking the same language will prevent misunderstanding and unnecessary write ups on the inspection report.
- Discuss violations and time frames for correction with the inspector. Make sure you understand the violations and how they affect food safety or public health, and whether or not the inspector will follow up. The best way to understand what the inspectors are looking for and the violations they find is to be familiar with the standard they are using. The Tri-Service Food Code is available on the Exchange Portal and managers should be familiar with its provisions.
- Send unsatisfactory reports to your GM and the Food

& Drug Safety Office at HQ with a brief summary of corrective actions taken. We use these documents to drive policy change and to address potential systemic food protection issue. We also review them for accuracy

- Take action on all deficiencies noted in the report within the timeline given by the inspector. Review operating procedures to see if procedural changes or training are needed to prevent recurrent findings.

## Keeping Cold Foods Cold:

To keep foods safe and to prevent spoilage, it is critical that foods are maintained at the proper temperature. For refrigeration units, this temperature is 41°F or below. Each refrigeration unit must contain an easily visible temperature measuring device (TMD) located at the warmest part of the unit. These devices should be monitored and the temperature of the unit recorded using AAFES Form 6500-019, Temperature Chart.

Facilities should also maintain extra calibrated TMD's and make them available for use at all times. A frequent inspection finding is missing or non-operational TMDs within refrigeration units. If you are checking temperatures as required, there should be no excuse for not having a TMD in the storage unit. All temperature discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the person-in-charge immediately. Contact your local inspector if product has reached the temperature danger zone (>41°F) immediately. Some foods are salvageable depending on the type of food and the amount of time in the danger zone.

## Soda Fountain Cleaning:

When drinks are dispensed from a soda fountain there is always a small amount of overflow that goes down the drain. As the drain is constantly receiving a dripping flow of sugary drink residue, there is a constant food source for bacteria and insects. Proper cleaning and maintenance is critical to ensuring a safe health environment for our customers. Fountain drink dispensers should be cleaned and sanitized at the following frequencies:

- **Soda Fountain – Daily** remove nozzles, diffusers, and cup rest. Clean and sanitize equipment including top cover, chute, and drip tray and splash areas. Air dry. Clean beverage nozzles as specified by the manufacturer.
- **Soda Fountain Syrup Connectors - Weekly** disconnect the syrup lines from empty syrup containers and place

the connectors in soapy water. Rinse in warm water. Air dry and reconnect.

- **Soda Fountain Ice Bin – Monthly** empty ice bin completely. Clean with soapy water, rinse and sanitize. Rinse again to completely flush then refill with ice.

Do not install soda fountain drain lines so that the end of the machine's drain line is placed within the floor drain. There should be a 3-inch air gap between the drain line and floor drain, to prevent backflow of waste water into your unit. If needed, contact your local FMO to place a work order.

#### **Food Safety Knowledge - Listeria:**

Several recent national food recalls have been caused by the same bacteria, *Listeria monocytogenes (Lm)*. This bacteria can cause Listeriosis, a serious infection usually caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium. In healthy people, a person ill with listeriosis usually exhibits fever and muscle aches, sometimes preceded by other gastrointestinal symptoms. Symptoms usually appear from within a few hours to 2 or 3 days. A more serious, invasive form of the illness resulting in sepsis and meningitis can be seen in people with compromised immune systems to include the elderly. With the invasive form, the incubation period can range from 3 days to 3 months. Pregnant women, who are infected with *LM*, may experience fever, or other non-specific like symptoms similar to the flu, however, if infected during pregnancy, miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery or life-threatening infection of the newborn may occur.

*Lm* can be found in a variety of foods, such as raw or unpasteurized milk; smoked fish and other seafood; meats, including deli meats and hot dogs; cheeses (especially soft cheeses), and raw fruits and vegetables.

*Lm* is an extremely hardy organism. This bacterium can multiply slowly at 0°C (32°F), defeating one of our primary traditional food safety defense measures--refrigeration. The risk from *Lm* in foods is increased substantially when foods are stored in refrigerators that are too warm (>41°F) or when foods are stored for extended periods, especially foods that have passed their "best use" or "expiration date".

#### **Express Store Food Safety:**

With all of the new foods concepts in our Express Stores, it is hard to keep up with food safety requirements. Food safety must be a top priority for all to help prevent foodborne illnesses.

Time and temperature play a significant role in food safety. Hot food items i.e., Rollergrill and Hot-to-Go, must be heated to an internal temperature of 165°F prior to placing in the warmer or leaving on grill. Using a food

thermometer to check product temperatures is the only sure way to know if your food has reached the proper temperature to destroy bacteria.

- Wear disposable gloves and/or use tongs to pick up the product.
- Insert sanitized temperature probe into the end of the product.
- Check the product temperature to ensure an internal reading of at least a **165°F**
- Record the temperatures on the food temperature log.
- Clean and sanitize the thermometer probe between uses. Alcohol swabs or designated sanitizing wiping cloth solutions are acceptable.
- Once product has reached **165°F** it can be held for the prescribed amount of time at **135°F** or higher.
- Ensure heated products are marked with the appropriate date and time of when the product should be discarded if not sold. This includes nacho cheese, boiled peanuts, sandwiches, burritos, etc.

#### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Hair Clipper Blades:**

To ensure health and safety of customers, operators should be thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting their clipper blades and guards between each and every customer. Clippercide® or a similar product works well since it cleans, disinfects and lubricates all in one spray. Prior to using, all debris must physically be removed with either a brush dedicated for this purpose or compressed air. After applying, the spray must remain on the clippers for a minimum of **10 minutes** and then allowed to air dry before using. With our high customer demand for service, this means each operator should have multiple clippers at their station. Guards should be washed with detergent and water and then sanitized using an EPA approved sanitizer between use.

#### **Contact Us –**

##### **Dallas Team**

[Food-Drug.Safety@aafes.com](mailto:Food-Drug.Safety@aafes.com)

COL Tarring: 214-312-3604 [Toringeh@aafes.com](mailto:Toringeh@aafes.com)

SMSgt Sigley: 214-312-3736 [Sigleyj@aafes.com](mailto:Sigleyj@aafes.com)

FAX: 214-465-2488

##### **Europe Team**

MAJ Agresta: 9-011-49-6134715475 [Agrestake@aafes.com](mailto:Agrestake@aafes.com)

#### **Useful links (control-click to use links):**

- [Worldwide Directory for Sanitarily Approved Food Establishments for Armed Forces Procurement](#)
- [Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety Program \(AAFES Associates Only\)](#)
- [Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety Program \(Non-AAFES Associates\)](#)