



Beware of heavy metals in cooking & beverage storage vessels

Fortunately, today most manufacturing cookware companies or products shipped to the US or made in the US adhere to FDA guidelines to ensure their products are free or within safe limits of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. The [Tri-Service Food Code](#) provides guidance in Section 4-101.13. Heavy metals have a poisoning effect, if accumulated, in the human body. Once ingested, the body has no way of excreting these metals, some of which include arsenic, antimony, lead, cadmium, zinc, and copper. Leaching of heavy metals from food and beverage vessels made of pewter ware, earthenware, ceramic ware, chinaware, ironware, lacquerware, bronzeware, brassware, and coated/plated items with a heavy metal base can cause serious medical problems, including brain damage and death. Although lead-glazed pottery is not a widespread source of lead, it can release large amounts of lead into food and drink. Lead-glazed pottery has been responsible for outbreaks of serious poisoning. Lead has long been used in ceramic ware, both in glazes and in decorations. When used in a glaze, lead gives a smooth, glasslike finish that allows bright colors and decorative patterns to show through. It is often associated with rich or intense colors. Lead-free glazes and low-solubility lead-bisilicate glazes made with frits ceramic composition have lower lead-release figures that are well within international standards. Lead is rarely found in plain white dishes.

To avoid procuring tainted cookware products for sale, AAFES Services Business Managers (SBM) and retail managers working with contracting officers should ensure products used for food and beverages are free from lead and cadmium. According to [AAFES Exchange Operating Procedures \(EOP\) 66-01, Quality Assurance](#), the vendors wishing to sell cookware to AAFES must provide lead and cadmium test results, or an FDA or China Commodity Inspection Bureau (CCIB) certification for safety testing **before** AAFES authorizes sale of product. People's Republic of China (CNCA) products that meet US ceramic lead safety requirements will have the following seal affixed to shipping and retail cartons of ceramic tableware imported into the United States from CNCA-certified factories.



Send reports to [AAFES Quality Assurance](#) department in Dallas, TX, for review at QAManagement@aafes.com, with cc: to AAFES Food and Drug Safety staff at food-drug.safety@aafes.com.



Tri-Service Food Code (TSFC) Reminders:

1) Food Safety Training Requirement, TSFC Section 2-5:

Did you know that online training is available for AAFES employees through LEX Course 112F, ServSafe Employee Guide/Intentional Contamination Awareness? This course can be applied to the new employee initial food sanitation and safety training, as well as the annual four-hour refresher training, both required by the [Tri-Service Food Code](#), Section 2-5. Additionally, a brief video at the end of the course addresses the topic of intentional contamination. LEX course 112F training is available in English, Korean, Japanese, and German. For contracted food service operations, Services Business Managers may choose to print out the slides for the person-in-charge and have employees sign off when the training is completed. Managers must ensure that all training is documented and training records available for review by inspectors. For group training, a sign-in sheet should be used indicating the date and topics covered. **PLEASE NOTE:** LEX Course 112F only supplies a portion of the initial and annual four-hour refresher training requirement. Additional training is required. Contact installation Public Health, Preventive Medicine, and/or Veterinary Service personnel for additional training resources.

2) Food Labeling Requirements, TSFC Section 3-6:

One of the more frequent write-ups identified by inspectors has to do with proper labeling of food items. It can sometimes be confusing when the requirements in the [Tri-Service Food Code](#) may be different than those identified by a specific name brand fast food facility (NBFF) or specific product such as Deli Express. Ensure that a copy of the NBFF or food manufacturer requirements are available for the inspector to review.

A few examples where labeling is required:

- Working containers holding food or ingredients removed from the original packages that are not readily and unmistakably recognizable. This includes oils, flour, herbs, spices, etc., that must be labeled with the common name of the food.

- Products removed from the freezer and placed in refrigeration to thaw before use must be marked with the date by which the food is to be used or cooked.
- Potentially hazardous leftovers must be labeled with the date and time of original preparation, as well as the discard date and time.

These are a few of the more common inspection findings related to labeling food items. More information can be found in the [Tri-Service Food Code](#).

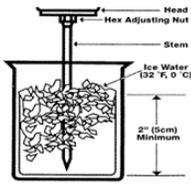
3) Leftovers, TSFC Section 3-501.110:

The TSFC defines leftovers as, "Food that was prepared for a specific meal, but not offered for service at that meal, provided the food was protected from contamination and held at a safe temperature. Leftovers include unused portions remaining in the hot and cold storage cabinets and food on the serving line that was kept at safe temperature, protected by sneeze guards, and served by food employees. Food offered for consumer self-service such as a buffet or serving line may not be retained as leftovers."

Prohibited leftovers include (but are not limited to):

- Foods made up of ingredients that have been peeled, sliced, or diced by hand on premises, after cooking
- Items prepared in-house/on the facility premises, including potato salad, chicken salad, turkey salad, macaroni salad, and egg salad
- Most gravies, dressings, and seafood
- Non-packaged or unwrapped food offered for consumer self-service, such as from a buffet
- Leftover foods that have been previously retained as a leftover or contain previously leftover foods as an ingredient
- Leftovers are prohibited from being frozen to extend the shelf-life

To ensure that leftovers are being stored, handled, or discarded, as appropriate, please consult the [Tri-Service Food Code](#), Section 3-501.110.



Calibrating Dial Stem Thermometers

Where temperature is used as a food safety control point, the importance of maintaining potentially hazardous foods in the safe temperature zone cannot be stressed enough. The [Tri-Service Food Code](#) is not specific on the required thermometer calibration frequency, but it does state that thermometers should be calibrated as often as necessary to ensure accuracy and in accordance with the

manufacturer's specification. Our recommendation is to calibrate thermometers:

- 1) Weekly
- 2) When used for the first time
- 3) After being dropped

To calibrate a dial stem thermometer:

- Fill a large cup with finely crushed ice.
- Add water to the cup and stir well.
- Immerse the thermometer stem a minimum of 2 inches into the ice/water mixture without touching the sides or bottom of the cup.
- Wait at least 30 seconds before adjusting.
- Without removing the stem from the ice, adjust the nut under the head of the thermometer until the point reads 32°F.

Tag Team with Local Installation Preventive Medicine/Public Health to Maximize Safety

Good communication is the key to a safe and successful AAFES operation. Please keep in mind that both you and the PH/PM/VS personnel have the same goal: **Keeping customers safe!** If there are communication issues between you and installation PH/PM/VS personnel, the Exchange Food Safety Team may be able to help. Preserve your relationship with your inspectors by utilizing this valuable resource!

The Exchange Food Safety & Defense Internet Portal

Looking for past newsletters on food safety, food defense and barber/beauty/spa sanitation? Previous editions can be found by accessing either of the Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety links at the end of this newsletter. Associates are also able to consult the site for quick access to commonly required Air Force and Department of the Army regulations, references, Exchange policies, and guidance.

Contact Us:

Food-Drug.Safety@aafes.com

Dallas Team

LTC Mey: 214-312-3604 meywe@aafes.com

SMSgt Sigley: 214-312-3736 sigleyj@aafes.com

FAX: 214-465-2488

Europe Team

LTC Brglez: 9-011-49-6302-6098475 DSN: 314-545-6475

brglezb@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 \(AAFES Associates Only\)](#)
- [Veterinary and Public Health Newsletters: Staff Vet/Food & Drug Safety Program \(Non-AAFES Associates\)](#)