



## SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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### 5 Tips to prevent cross-contamination at your Restaurant



Pathogens can be spread from food or unwashed hands to prep areas, equipment, utensils or other food. Fortunately, steps you can take to prevent this. Here are five important tips for preventing cross-contamination in your operation:

**1. Implement a personal hygiene program.** To lessen the possibility of food handlers contaminating food, institute a good personal hygiene program that includes policies addressing critical hand practices like proper hand-washing, hand care and glove use. Also address staff cleanliness and work attire, focusing on topics such as bathing, clean clothing, the proper use of hair restraints and prohibited jewelry. Finally, policies should be put in place to

make sure food handlers come to work healthy. Include actions such as reporting illnesses and covering wounds.

**2. Remind employees to wash their hands.** This is especially important after using the restroom and after handling raw meat, seafood and poultry. Once employees have washed their hands, ensure they use a single-use paper towel or hand dryer, rather than any part of their uniform, to dry.

**3. Use separate equipment.** Each type of food should be prepped and handled with a separate piece of equipment. For example, use one set of cutting boards, utensils and containers for raw poultry. Use another set for raw meat, and use a third set for produce. Some operations use colored cut-

ting boards and utensil handles to help keep equipment separate. If this system is not possible at your restaurant, prep food at different times.

**4. Clean and sanitize all work surfaces.** All work surfaces, equipment and utensils should be cleaned and sanitized after each task. Simply rinsing equipment is not enough to eliminate pathogens that can contaminate food.

**Purchase prepared food.** You can prevent cross-contamination by purchasing food that doesn't require much prepping. This minimizes handling and can reduce the transfer of pathogens from one surface or food to another.

## Tips for Conducting an Injury/Illness Investigation

NOTE: Every employer in California is required to **immediately report (within 8 hours) any serious injury** or illness, or death of an employee which occurs in a place of employment or in connection with any employment to the nearest Cal/OSHA office (California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 342).

Reportable serious injuries or illnesses include inpatient hospitalization for a period in excess of 24 hours for other than medical observation or in which an employee suffers a loss of any member of the body or suffers any serious degree of permanent disfigurement.

The **purpose** of an investigation is to find the root cause of the injury or illness so the hazard or practice can be rectified to **prevent further occurrences**. It is **not to create blame**.

Visit the scene as soon as possible following an injury or illness. You will be able to obtain facts while they are fresh, interview witnesses before they forget important details, and provide calm and order following the situation.

Interview the injured worker, if possible. "Walk" the injured through a mock re-enactment. This will give you his/her perspective of the factors that led to the injury or illness.

Talk with everyone who has knowledge of the injury or illness, even if they didn't witness it. Interview everyone privately, one at a time (people's recollection can be influenced and/or

changed by other witnesses' accounts). Whenever facts seem unclear, or there is an element of controversy surrounding the accident, consider taking signed statements.

Document details graphically. Take videos, photos, diagram or sketch the scene, and take measurements when appropriate. When a third party appears to be involved, retain evidence. Get the names of involved individuals, addresses, phone numbers, license and insurance information.

Focus on the root causes. Don't jump to conclusions. Try to answer the following questions:

What happened?

How did it happen?

How it could have been prevented?

Was there an unsafe act?

Determine what caused the incident itself, not just the injury.

Had proper training been given or controls in place on that topic?

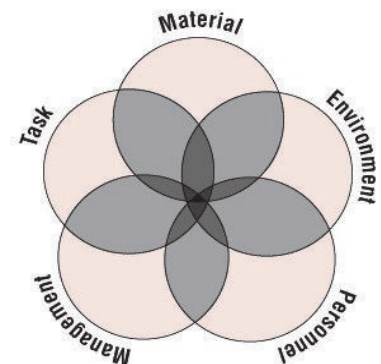
Discuss ideas for prevention with management and interested persons. Two types of controls include:

**Administrative controls:** Examples are job rotation, enforced rest breaks, stretch breaks, additional training, re-writing policy, enforcing current policy, transfer to another position, restricting work activities.

**Physical Controls:** Examples are

using slip-resistant shoes, installing guards around equipment (mixers, slicers, etc.), installing better flooring and/or mats, providing carts and hand trucks for material handling, etc.

Follow up with corrective action. Make it visible so everyone is aware of the outcome. This demonstrates your commitment and enhances moral when corrective action is done to improve safety for everyone.



## Fryer Safety - Discarding Used Cooking Oil

Rita, the 27-year-old Shift Manager, had worked at the restaurant for three years. She liked her work and tried to do the best possible job. She arrived at 5 a.m. to find out that two of her employees had called in sick; she would have to operate her shift short-handed again. The fryer oil had to be changed, and Rita knew the company procedure for doing it. She attached the drain extension and allowed the hot oil to dispense into the collection pot, which was also used to cook beans. She waited about an hour for the oil to cool, but she wanted to get the job done sooner. While trying to carry the 50-pound pot outside, she slipped, and the 360-degree oil spilled over her body, causing severe burns.

As with most accidents, this one has numerous root causes. Some involved procedures, some equipment and some conditions. Discarding used cooking oil can, of course, be done safely, but management must emphasize to employees that this is a very hazardous activity and that they must follow proper procedures exactly.

Some considerations for discarding used cooking oil are presented below.

**Consider replacing older deep fat fryer models** with newer models that have exhaust vents in closer proximity to the fryer, built-in grease filters, improved grease-disposal systems, automatic food-lowering devices, and vat covers.

**Use the appropriate quality oil** for your fryer. Some employers have found that using higher quality oils reduces the amount of splashing during deep frying.

**Provide the proper collection equipment** and ensure it will hold the entire contents. It is better to use a shuttle device with wheels designed for this operation. If you use a pot or a pan, it should be an appropriate height so that it fits under the drain extension without having to be tipped when removed and sits flat on the floor. A pot or pan should also have four handles so that each of the two employees carrying it will have two points of contact to improve stability during transportation and pouring. An enclosure lid should be secured to the pot/pan to prevent splashes and spills during transportation.

**Provide a cart that is in good condition.** The drain pot/pan should be securely transported on a low-profile cart equipped with a

raised handle so that the employee's contact with it is at waist level. Using a cart eliminates much of the manual handling of the drain pan.

**Provide and require use of appropriate personal protective equipment.** Employees should wear impervious gloves, an impervious apron and a full face shield during all phases of the transfer process.

**Let it cool.** The oil should be allowed to cool for at least 12 hours in the drain pan before it is transported.

**The transportation process should be a team effort** and requires two employees.

**Clear the way.** Inspect the entire transportation route to be sure that there are no obstacles to hinder the operation.

**Consider alternate disposal methods.** Check with your cooking oil disposal company for alternative disposal methods such as a closed, direct pump system that will eliminate the need for any manual handling of used oil.



Place under drain  
and Empty Fryer



Walk Shuttle



Push up against the  
barrel or dumpster



Hook on barrel or  
dumpster



Squat and lift...



Empty Shuttle.



**Your Restaurant is our Passion**

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**For more information  
about your workers com-  
pensation safety needs, vis-  
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rals! If you're pleased with  
us, Please spread the word.**



**WORKERS COMPENSATION SAFETY NEWSLETTER**

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