



Food Safety - Definitions

Safety and Environmental Management System

SEMS 4-7

Being professionals in the food service business, there are terms we should know and understand:

- ◆ **Bacterium:** a living single-celled organism. They are found everywhere and the harmful ones cause foodborne illness.
- ◆ **Biological hazard:** refers to the danger of food contamination by disease carrying microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, parasites, or fungi), or certain plants and fish that carry toxins (poisons).
- ◆ **Chemical hazard:** refers to the danger of food contamination by items such as cleaning chemicals and pesticides.
- ◆ **Clean:** it means free of visible soil and food waste.
- ◆ **Contamination:** the unintended presence of harmful substances or disease-causing microorganisms in food.
- ◆ **Cross-contamination:** the transfer of harmful substances (harmful bacteria) from one item to another. EXAMPLE: Transferring disease from hands to food, or to food-contact surfaces; cleaning cloths that touch raw food, are not cleaned and then touch ready to eat food. It can also occur when contaminated foods, stored raw food touches, or drips fluids on cooked or ready-to-eat food.
- ◆ **First in-First out:** a method of stock rotation, in which new supplies are shelved behind old supplies, so the old are used first. All inventory is marked with the expiration date or the date it was received, or when stored after preparation.
- ◆ **Foodborne illness:** a disease carried or transmitted to people by food.
- ◆ **Food-contact surface:** any equipment or utensil which normally comes in contact with food or which may drip, drain or splash in food or on surfaces normally in contact with food.
- ◆ **Fungi:** a group of microorganisms that include molds and yeast.
- ◆ **Pathogenic:** refers to bacteria that are infectious and disease causing.
- ◆ **Physical hazard:** refers to danger posed to food safety by foreign matter, such as dirt, hair, nails, staples, metal fragments and broken glass, that get accidentally into food.
- ◆ **Potentially hazardous foods:** they are moist, high protein food on which bacteria can grow more easily.
- ◆ **Risk:** is the chance that a condition or set of conditions will lead to a hazard.
- ◆ **Sanitary:** refers to being free of harmful levels of contamination
- ◆ **Slacking:** a process used during the thawing process that allows food to gradually warm from frozen to unfrozen so that it cooks more evenly.
- ◆ **Temperature danger zone:** is 40 degrees F. to 140 degrees F. The range in which harmful bacteria grow. They grow greatest at 98.6, the normal temperature of the human body.
- ◆ **Toxins:** poisons that are reproduced by microorganisms.
- ◆ **Vehicle:** an item such as wind, water, human hands, or dirty utensils, which carry or transport disease-carrying microorganisms.
- ◆ **Virus:** the smallest and most simple life form known.
- ◆ **Yeast:** fungi that require sugar and moisture to survive. They spoil food, such as jellies and honey in which they eat the food.