

Food Safety

Food Sanitation

Providing a healthy environment for employees should include preventing food borne illness from poor food sanitation practices. A policy for food sanitation should be developed and put into practice.

Each work group should create a regular cleaning and monitoring program for break rooms, equipment, refrigerators, and other appliances. Thermometers should be installed to ensure equipment is running properly.

Office Refrigerator

Temperatures:

- Install thermometers in both the refrigerator and the freezer at eye level;
- Maintain the refrigerator at a temperature of 34 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit (F), and the freezer at 0 to -20 degrees F;
- Provide enough room in the refrigerator so cool air can circulate to maintain proper temperature; avoid having the refrigerator too full;
- Establish rules and establish a no tolerance policy on refrigerator overcrowding using language that states no stacking of food containers on top of each other; and
- Establish a designated food safety monitor clearance to be allowed to throw out items that violate this policy.

Assignments:

- Employees should be assigned to check temperature daily with appliance thermometer;
- Provide some type of marking pen/tape in the break room for people to label their food with their name and date; and
- Form a rotating schedule for cleaning out the refrigerator once a week; rotating this responsibility will help to convince everyone to follow the policies.

Cleaning:

- All refrigerators should be cleaned regularly using warm soapy water to wash the interior walls and shelves, the exterior walls, door handles, and gasket;

- Use a clean cloth or paper towels with hot water and a mild detergent like dish soap;
- Work from top to bottom to prevent dripping on surfaces that are already clean;
- Add 2 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 quart of warm water to wash inside; and
- Rinse everything with warm water. Determine sanitizer to use for final cleaning.

Policy:

- Designate a day and time each week that food in the refrigerator is thrown away;
- Empower staff to determine a policy and post in the break room;
- Provide food safety signs in the kitchenettes to educate employees on the proper storage and handling of leftovers, hand washing, and cleaning up of spills; and
- Include employees in the policy making process to foster a sense of shared responsibility and respect.

Implementing a Kitchenette Sanitation Program:

- Establish a regular cleaning and monitoring schedule on a master calendar;
- Assign teams of employees (by division or randomly) to cleaning and monitoring duties and record on the master calendar;
- Post the master calendar in a visible location of the kitchenette and email it to all employees;
- Offer incentives to teams for performing cleaning duties such as contests; and
- Develop a chart that provides information on how to clean each piece of equipment in the kitchenette to post in an easily accessible place.

