

Proper Design of Food Shields

Wisconsin Food Code Fact Sheet # 30

All unwrapped foods on display tables must be effectively protected to intercept cough and sneeze contamination

Determine the average mouth height

The average mouth height of adult customers using food displays in food establishments shall be used in determining the effectiveness of food protection devices.

- The average mouth height for adult customers is considered to be the vertical distance measured from the floor in front of the food display to a height of 4.6 ft to 5.0 ft.
- In determining the average customer's mouth height the distance the customer stands from the food display shall also be considered. This distance shall be measured from the outer edge of the tray slide, or if no tray slide is available a distance of 6 inches from the outside edge of the food display is to be used.
- The point to be used as the average customer's mouth height shall be located above the floor on a line drawn vertically up from the floor along side the outside edge of the slide tray, or a distance of 6 inches (whichever is greater) from the front edge of the display table.

Displays for schools

Special consideration should be given to the average mouth height and protective device angle in educational and other special installations. Unless otherwise indicated, the following average mouth heights should be used in designing food display protective devices:

Age Group (average)	Mouth Height
Elementary	3.0 ft – 4.8 ft
Middle School	3.5 ft – 5.0 ft
High School	4.0 ft – 5.0 ft

Construction of the Display Unit

- The supporting framework for food protection shields must be constructed with safe materials, be corrosion resistant, nonabsorbent, smooth, easily cleanable and durable.
- The food protection shield shall be clear, transparent and shatter resistant material.
- Where edges of glass or other sharp/rough materials are exposed, edges are to be trimmed with a smooth protective edge.
- In general, food displays requiring customers to reach beyond two rows of containers should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that food contamination will not result.
- Where uncovered foods are displayed on buffet ends, a suitable counter protection device or solid vertical panel effectively protecting displayed food on the ends shall be provided.

Reference:

Wisconsin Food Code Appendix A, 3-306.11
Guidelines for Construction and Operation of Food Display or Dispensing Units