

Allergen Safety: Tips for Retail Food Inspectors

Washing & Sanitizing

Confirm that retail food facility staff:

- ✓ Wash hands and change gloves after contacting allergens
- ✓ Wash, rinse, and sanitize thermometer between temping foods with different allergens to avoid cross contact

Cross Contact & Storage

Cross contact can occur from improper thermometer use, dirty equipment, or confusion caused by bulk, unlabeled food ingredients. Confirm that staff:

- ✓ Check hard-to-clean equipment
- ✓ Wash, rinse, and sanitize procedure is followed, including for thermometers
- ✓ Properly label, store, and separate allergens and allergen containing foods

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include hives, itchy rashes, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting and/or diarrhea, wheezing, shortness of breath, swelling and in severe cases, anaphylaxis and death.

Ingredient Substitution

- ✓ There is a process to identify and handle allergens at receiving and in storage when an approved vendor substitutes an ingredient

Allergen Knowledge

Confirm that retail food facility staff:

- ✓ Can identify the top 9 allergens.
- ✓ Are able to identify symptoms of an allergic reaction
- ✓ Know how allergens are identified when foods have been removed from their original container
- ✓ Have access to posters and resources about allergens

90% of allergic reactions are caused by eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame, crustacean shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat.

Customer Orders

Assess the process for taking an order and making an allergen safe meal for a customer with an allergy. Confirm that:

- ✓ There is a process for customers to identify their food allergies
- ✓ Allergen information is collected from customers
 - Order is identified during preparation
- ✓ Shared equipment like frying pans, cook tops, utensils are cleaned, stored, and handled separately to prevent allergen cross contact
- ✓ Cross contact is prevented with hand washing and glove usage
- ✓ Food is plated and provided to the customer



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