

Follow these guidelines to help reduce food safety risks at self-serve operations such as buffets and salad bars.

- Appoint staff to monitor the sanitary conditions of the self-serve areas and to immediately remove any contaminated food and utensils.
- Watch consumers to maintain food safety: food is touched with clean serving utensils only and not put back into the container after handling; no coughing, spitting or sneezing on the food; no foreign objects are put in the food; plates are used only once.
- Restrict staff who is sick or has been sick with symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea in the last 48 hours from working with food.
- Cover or wrap food properly when bringing containers from the kitchen to the self-serve areas.
- Monitor and record food temperatures on a routine basis. Keep cold food temperatures at 41°F or below and hot food temperatures at 135°F or above.
- Replace entire containers of food. Do not mix old food with new foods.
- Remove and discard potentially contaminated food.
- Use sneeze guards or other barriers to reduce contamination.
- Make sure the serving utensils are stored on a clean and sanitized surface or in food containers. Keep the handles out of food.
- Provide convenient and suitable serving and eating utensils, such as deli tissue, forks, knives, tongs, spoons or scoops, for consumers to use.
- Place unwrapped eating utensils in a container with the handles sticking up.
- Train staff to help consumers who are unable to properly use serving utensils.
- Put up signs to promote safe self-serve practices among consumers (e.g. no bare hands, use utensils, cover coughs and sneezes, use clean plate, etc.).
- Provide hand sanitizer near the self-serve table to encourage consumers to stop the spread of illness.

Questions?

Contact the Food and Lodging Program

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