

GENERAL SOP FOR FOOD SAFETY

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As per provisions entailed in the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, the following Standard Operating Procedures may be implemented by the University.

Nature and Scope of Standard Operating Procedure

Food Safety Definition

Food safety means the way food is handled, prepared, and stored to prevent subsequent food-borne illnesses and product contamination. Food-borne diseases result from a lack of food safety in health care. Outbreaks because of issues related to food safety in healthcare institutions like hospitals are just unpleasant, and in the worst case, they are life-threatening. Food safety includes practices that ensure that the food provided is consumed safely.

Importance of Food Safety

Due to the nature of the hospital, it is a powerful source of all types of infectious diseases. Infection control protocols should be essentially in place to prevent the spread of harmful bacteria among patients, visitors, caretakers, and staff. A very significant part of the healing process is eating nutritious foods. Another important reason to maintain healthy food facilities is to provide nutritious meals for employees working under stressful conditions to promote optimal performance.

Responsibility of Catering Staff

Hospital catering staff must understand why they have to perform food safety tasks and why they need food safety tasks. For example, workers in the food service industry know that cooking food at a particular temperature kills bacteria and can understand why it is essential to check the final temperature of the food before serving it to the patient.

Food safety is a second property of physical objects, bacteria, parasites, viruses, chemicals, and humans to understand how food can be contaminated. Until then, not only initial training but also re-education courses are required.

Food safety challenges in Hospitals

1. Lack of food safety and outbreaks arising from it can cause serious illness, waste of costly medical care, the transmission of infection to visitors and other patients, preventable death, and employees' interruption of services.
2. Food safety is relevant to everyone, but vulnerable people are more likely to be affected by low-level pathogens and, therefore, more likely to be infected. This puts even greater

responsibility on medical institutions to do everything possible to ensure that safe food is always prepared and served.

- 3. Most hospitals outsource food services. However, this does not exempt patients and staff from their responsibility to provide safe food. Hospital managers need to apply appropriate standards to food safety management systems and comply with legal requirements. It should be defined as part of the selection protocol and a continuous evaluation of the service provider.
- 4. Regular internal audits need to be authenticated by hospitals. Food safety issues in food cooking facility health and food safety management systems are as crucial as other infection control reviews.

Prevention of food poisoning in hospitals

The hospital itself is the source of infection. Without rigorous procedures, dangerous microorganisms like pathogens, viruses, etc., can disseminate among patients, administrative staff, nursing staff, and visitors.

The most common transmission routes are:

- Contaminated food
- Person-to-person communication
- Contaminated surface or object

Hospitals usually do an excellent job of preventing food poisoning using three critical strategies:

- 1. Implement a robust food safety program
- 2. Daily monitoring and recording
- 3. Food Safety Training and Certification Implementing

Implementation of an effective food safety program

1. Effective Food Safety Programs

Food cooked in hospital kitchens is outsourced from external suppliers. Ideally, hospitals can expect these food suppliers to meet strict hygiene standards and follow effective food safety protocols and best practices to prevent food contamination. Unfortunately, this is not true. In most hospital food poisoning, the cause of the infection can be traced back to procurement.

- Food or raw materials can be contaminated when delivered. Therefore, all incoming foods should be tested for physical, chemical, biological, and allergic risks.
- Failure to adhere to this critical control can have disastrous consequences.
- In the worst case, hospitals must consider thorough criticism and testing.

2. Food safety program based on the HACCP principles.

Food safety programs help establish, implement, and manage the management policies and procedures necessary to maintain food safety and provide patients with safe and healthy food. In addition, hospitals can schedule regular inspections by local and state regulators.

- Managers, catering staff, and supervisors must perform daily inspections of the kitchen and all food processing areas.
- Food service supervisors should also check food tray accuracy, temperature, and distribution. It is imperative to use valuable feedback stated by patient satisfaction surveys to identify areas for improvement.

Daily monitoring and recording

Keeping cold food is a matter of life or death in the hospital, as viruses, bacteria, etc., usually, survive and multiply within a set temperature range.

Temperature monitoring is a common and essential method in hospital and includes monitoring.

- Refrigerator temperature
- Final cooking temperature
- Food temperature before and after serving
- Dishwasher temperature

Accurate records should be maintained and archived using a daily checklist. For example:

- Temperature log
- Report on patient meals accuracy
- Quality audit by an external company

Food safety training and certification

Most hospitals require catering staff at all hospitals to complete nationally recognized food safety training courses, with at least one food safety officer on staff at all times. Therefore, all people associated with delivering, providing, or procuring food within the hospitals need to be educated on safe food handling practices, various types of food contamination, personal hygiene, food-borne diseases, and HACCP principles. In addition, management staff should also receive basic training on safe food handling practices.

The Food Safety Training Workshop should be mandatory for all hospital staff before operating in the kitchen or servicing patients. The workshop should include:

- Proper cooling, freezing, thawing, and reheating of food
- Effective cleaning and disinfection practices
- Symptoms of food poisoning and how they occur
- The most commonly associated pathogens of food poisoning
- High-risk foods and associated risks

Health and hygiene of procurement stores

Grocery Handlers in all hospitals (and Grocery Handlers in all industries) need to understand that a high level of personal hygiene is essential. General rules for hospital food workers include, but are not limited to: Grocery Handlers should wear clean jackets and hair restraints such as hats, hairnets, and beard restraints.

- Grocery Handlers need to shorten fingernails and frequently clean the underside of the nails with soap and water.
- Food handlers must use gloves, parchment paper, or food-handling equipment to handle the finished food.
- Wherever possible, Grocery Handlers should use touch-free or hands-free paper towel dispensers and faucets to reduce the risk of mutual contamination.
- Grocery Handlers with symptoms such as diarrhea, sore throat, vomiting, and fever should quit their jobs immediately and report to the line manager and the hospital's occupational health department.
- Grocery Handlers should cover cuts, wounds, or open wounds with high-quality waterproof bandages on their hands and arms.

Advantages of Implementation of Food Safety Protocol

1. Disease and Death Prevention

Outbreaks in hospitals are more severe due to the high population density of people at risk. As a result, attacks can lead to future disability and death that could have been avoided. In addition, diseases of the most common food-infected organisms can quickly spread unless special attention is paid to food safety.

2. Avoiding food hygiene-related inconveniences and confusion

can also have severe consequences and harm to patients, primarily if an outbreak occurs and many employees are ill, ultimately becoming a significant problem in continuing to provide hospital services.

3. Optimal performance and resilience

In severe cases, the closure of the ward or the hospital burdens the clinical team and those who have to deal with extra work from their neighbors. In addition, it may take several months for service to return to normal, significantly if specialized facilities are affected.

4. Protecting the reputation of the facility

Protecting your credibility and increasing patient confidence in the hospital's potential to care for them.

5. Avoiding Expensive Treatment and Waste of Other Resources

By avoiding food poisoning, healthcare providers can avoid unnecessary costs. For example, if an unnecessarily infected patient or employee occupies a bed, this eliminates the need for additional treatment. In addition, the number of working days lost due to staff illness or additional bedtime due to patient disease can be significantly accumulated.

Summary

Hospital food safety and hygiene require undivided, strict, and special attention to robust precautions to minimize the risk of foodborne diseases. A high concentration of vulnerable patients can provide a highly favorable environment for spreading pathogens, viruses, and bacteria from sources like contaminated diets. Therefore, the importance of food handlers and cleanliness related to food hygiene is consistently emphasized.

General SOP to be followed in Hospital

GENERAL PROVISIONS AS TO ARTICLES OF FOOD

1. Use of food additives or processing aid

No article of food shall contain any food additive or processing aid unless it is by the provisions of this Act and regulations made thereunder.

Explanation. – For the purposes of this section, “processing aid” means any substance or material, not including apparatus or utensils, and not consumed as a food ingredient by itself, used in the processing of raw materials, foods, or its ingredients to fulfill a specific technological purpose during treatment or processing and which may result in the non-intentional but unavoidable presence of residues or derivatives in the final product.

2. Contaminants, naturally occurring toxic substances, heavy metals, etc.

No article of food shall contain any contaminant, naturally occurring toxic substances or toxins or hormones, or heavy metals over such quantities as may be specified by regulations.

3. Pesticides, veterinary drugs residues, antibiotic residues, and microbiological counts

(1) No article of food shall contain insecticides or pesticide residues, veterinary drugs residues, antibiotic residues, solvent residues, pharmacologically active substances, and microbiological counts over such tolerance limit as may be specified by regulations.

(2) No insecticide shall be used directly on an article of food except fumigants registered and approved under the Insecticides Act, 1968 (46 of 1968).

Explanation. – For this section, –

(1) “Pesticide residue” means any specified substance in food resulting from the use of a pesticide and includes any derivatives of a pesticide, such as conversion products, metabolites, reaction products, and impurities considered to be of toxicological significance and also includes such residues coming into food from the environment;

(2) “Residues of veterinary drugs” include the parent compounds or their metabolites or both in any edible portion of any animal product and include residues of associated impurities of the veterinary drugs concerned.

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOOD SAFETY

Responsibilities of the Canteen Contractor.

(1) Every Canteen Contractor shall ensure that the articles of food satisfy the requirements of this Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder at all stages of production, processing, import, distribution, and sale within the businesses under his control.

(2) No Canteen Contractor shall himself or by any person on his behalf manufacture, store, sell or distribute any article of food –

(i) Which is unsafe; or

(ii) Which is misbranded or sub-standard or contains extraneous matter; or

(iii) For which a license is required, except by the conditions of the license; or

(iv) which is for the time being prohibited by the Food Authority or the Central Government or the State Government in the interest of public health; or

(v) In contravention of any other provision of this Act or of any rule or regulation made thereunder.

(3) No Canteen Contractor shall employ any person who is suffering from an infectious, contagious, or loathsome disease.

(4) No Canteen Contractor shall sell or offer for sale any article of food to any vendor unless he also gives a guarantee in writing in the form specified by regulations about the nature and quality of such article to the vendor:

Provided that a bill, cash memo, or invoice in respect of the sale of any article of food given by a Canteen Contractor to the vendor shall be deemed to be a guarantee under this section, even if a guarantee in the specified form is not included in the bill, cash memo or invoice.

(5) Where any unsafe food is part of a batch, lot, or consignment of food of the same class or description, it shall be presumed that all the food in that batch, lot, or consignment is also unsafe

unless the following a detailed assessment within a specified time, it is found that there is no evidence that the rest of the batch, lot or consignment is unsafe:

Provided that any conformity of food with specific provisions applicable to that food shall be without prejudice to the competent authorities taking appropriate measures to impose restrictions on that food being placed on the market or to require its withdrawal from the market for the reasons to be recorded in writing where such authorities suspect that, despite the conformity, the food is unsafe.

Food recall procedures.

(1) If a Canteen Contractor considers or has reasons to believe that a food that he has processed, manufactured, or distributed is not in compliance with this Act, or the rules or regulations, made thereunder, he shall immediately initiate procedures to withdraw the food in question from the market and Patients indicating reasons for its withdrawal and inform the competent authorities thereof.

(2) A Canteen Contractor shall immediately inform the competent authorities and cooperate with them if he considers or has reasons to believe that a food that he has placed on the market may be unsafe for the Patients.

(3) The Canteen Contractor shall inform the competent authorities of the action taken to prevent risks to the Patient and shall not prevent or discourage any person from cooperating, by this Act, with the competent authorities, where this may prevent, reduce or eliminate a risk arising from food.

(4) Every Canteen Contractor shall follow such conditions and guidelines relating to food recall procedures as the Food Authority may specify by regulations.

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