By the Numbers – Food Safety

Food safety

DID YOU KNOW?

The quality and safety of the food we eat is in the hands of millions of dedicated and skilled workers at food and beverage companies across the world. The key to maintaining that food quality and safety is ensuring workers have the training, tools and support they need to feel and perform work safely.

To give workers this support, food and beverage companies need to understand the attitudes, motivations and workplace perceptions of their workers.

Below are some interesting statistics that food and beverage companies can use to guide their strategies for food safety:

- 24% of food workershave been injured at their current job, and 17% of workers were injured in their first
- 42% of workersrarely or never receive coaching from their manager or supervisor, and 20% said they received too little training before starting their job.
- 37% of workers and 43% of supervisorsagree that training is sometimes too complicated or difficult to understand.
- 75% of employeessay that feeling personally safe and secure in the workplace is important to them. 72% also say they're largely unaware of their company's EHS function.
- 89% of illness outbreaksat restaurants are caused by food contamination by workers.
- Studies show that for every $1 spent on safety programs, $5 is saved in accident avoidance and other related savings.
- Food manufacturing workers have a 60% higher rate of occupational injuryand illness than workers in other industries. The risk of occupational death is 5 times higher for food industry workers than in non-food jobs.

- Severe injuries that required time off work are more than twice as frequent among food manufacturing workers.
- Researchers found that injuries from slips, trips and falls were highest in food processing, storage and retail, possibly because of high use of refrigeration.

KEEP IN MIND

Food safety is used as a scientific discipline describing handling, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent food-borne illness. The occurrence of two or more cases of a similar illness resulting from the ingestion of a common food is known as a food-borne disease outbreak. This includes a number of routines that should be followed to avoid potential health hazards. In this way, food safety often overlaps with food defense to prevent harm to consumers. The tracks within this line of thought are safety between the industry and the market and then between the market and the consumer. In considering industry to market practices, food safety considerations include the origins of food including the practices relating to food labeling, food hygiene, food additives and pesticide residues, as well as policies on biotechnology and food and guidelines for the management of governmental import and export inspection and certification systems for foods. In considering market to consumer practices, the usual thought is that food ought to be safe in the market and the concern is safe delivery and preparation of the food for the consumer.

Foodservice professionals face a unique level of pressure to successfully run their business. Whether it’s help with restaurant marketing, menu development, distribution or staying ahead of industry trends, you need specific expertise.

FACT or FICTION?

Foodborne diseases are the illnesses contracted from eating contaminated food or beverages. Illnesses include foodborne intoxications and infections, **which are often incorrectly referred to as food poisoning**. There are many different foodborne diseases

that are caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, toxins, metals, and prions. Symptoms of foodborne illness range from mild gastroenteritis to life-threatening neurologic, hepatic, and renal syndromes.

The answer is clear – fact

These diseases may be occupationally related if they affect the food processors (e.g., poultry processing workers), food preparers and servers (e.g., cooks, waiters), or workers who are provided food at the workplace.

Control

Control of foodborne diseases is based on avoidance of contaminated food, destruction of contaminants, and prevention of further spread of contaminants. Prevention is dependent upon proper cooking and storing practices, and personal hygiene of food handlers. The following references provide information on control and prevention for foodborne disease.

- **Abatement Requirements**. OSHA, (April 8, 1999). Identifies abatement requirements following inspections resulting from the March 1999 food poisoning outbreak which occurred among garment workers who had eaten at the company cafeteria. OSHA has identified health programs to minimize the risk of outbreaks.
- **Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases (DFWED)**. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). DFWED focuses on the control and prevention of disease, disability, and death caused by foodborne, waterborne, and environmentally transmitted infections.
- **Enteric Diseases Epidemiology Branch**. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Innovative public health investigative and consultative groups that identify causes, sources and solutions for bacterial foodborne and diarrheal infections to prevent the disability and death those diseases cause.
- **National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) for Enteric Bacteria**. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC), (November 2004). NARMS monitors antimicrobial resistance of human enteric bacteria, such as *Campylobacter, Salmonella, E. coli*, and

- **Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet)**. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Consists of active surveillance for foodborne diseases and related epidemiologic studies designed to help public health officials better understand the epidemiology of foodborne diseases in the United States.
- **Foodborne Outbreaks**. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Provides outbreak reports and publications, outbreak reporting and report forms, and a outbreak investigation tool kit.
- **Food Irradiation: What You Need to Know**. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Provides answers to common questions about food irradiation, including a basic description of the process, foodborne diseases prevented with irradiation, effects on food/packaging, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA)/U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) approval.
- **FDA Food Code**. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Guides retail outlets, such as restaurants and grocery stores, and institutions, such as nursing homes, in preventing foodborne illness.
- **Food Safety from Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative**. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), (May 1997). Provides recommendations for the public and private sectors to minimize the occurrence and consequences of foodborne disease incidents.