

Sustainable Food Safety 201



PEAK SHIFT

60-Minute Exam Review

**The rules, the reasons, and
the restaurant decisions**

Teaching: 2026 FDA model Code. Scored practice and Companion: corrected 2022 + Dec. 2024 Supplement.

[Exam Prep Edition Guide](#): compare answer-changing updates before practice. Local law and provider adoption are separate.



The hazard determines the control

Hazard

What you control

Biological

Ill employees, contamination, and microbial growth

Chemical, including allergens

Ingredients, residues, labeling, and unintended transfer

Physical

Foreign objects such as glass or metal

Food can be unsafe without looking or smelling different.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 3-101.11; 3-701.11; 3-403.11

TCS and ready-to-eat describe different things

TCS

Needs time and temperature control to limit pathogen growth or toxin formation

Cooked rice, milk, cut melon, cut leafy greens, many animal foods

Ready-to-eat

Edible without additional preparation for food safety

Washed salad, bread, properly cooked chicken

FAT TOM: Food | Acidity | Time | Temperature | Oxygen | Moisture

A food can be both TCS and ready-to-eat.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 3-403.11

Acidity and available moisture

pH

Lower number = more acidic; 7 = neutral

pH 3 is more acidic than pH 6

Water activity

0 to 1 scale; closer to 1 = more available water

Available water supports growth, not simply visible wetness

The Code uses pH, water activity, processing, and packaging together.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 3-502.11

Report illness before working

Report

Manager action

Vomiting or diarrhea

Exclude unless caused by a noninfectious condition

Jaundice; sore throat with fever

Apply the symptom-specific rule

Open, draining infected wound

Restrict unless properly covered

Diagnosis or specified exposure

Report even without symptoms

2026 adds a written illness policy. Scored 2022+2024: verifiable reporting. Exclusion removes; restriction limits work.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 2-201.11; 2-201.12; 2-501.11

The six reportable diagnoses

Reportable diagnosis

Norovirus

Reportable diagnosis

Hepatitis A virus

Shigella species

Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC)

Typhoid fever: Salmonella Typhi

Nontyphoidal Salmonella

Employees report to the manager; the manager notifies the regulatory authority.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-201.11; 2-201.12; 2-201.13

HSP means people plus setting

People

Preschool-age children

Older adults

Immunocompromised people

Qualifying service setting

Custodial care, such as child day care

Nursing home, assisted living, or senior-center nutrition services

Health care, such as a hospital or dialysis center

Qualifying exposure without symptoms: restrict HSP food employees; not every casual contact qualifies.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 2-201.11; 2-201.12; 2-201.13; 3-801.11; 3-301.11

The setting changes the action

Condition	Non-HSP	HSP
Diagnosed Norovirus; never symptomatic	Restrict	Exclude
Diagnosed Shigella or STEC; never symptomatic	Restrict	Exclude
Diagnosed nontyphoidal Salmonella; never symptomatic	Restrict	Restrict
Acute sore throat with fever	Restrict	Exclude

Use the diagnosis, symptoms, and setting together.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-201.12; 2-201.13

Restricted work is not full clearance

Situation

Full-duty conditions: FDA model Code

Vomiting/diarrhea; no listed diagnosis

At least 24 hours symptom-free, or written medical documentation of a noninfectious cause

Diagnosed Norovirus; symptoms resolved

Regulatory approval AND (more than 48 hours symptom-free OR qualifying written medical clearance)

Diagnosed Norovirus; never symptomatic

Regulatory approval AND (more than 48 hours since diagnosis OR qualifying written medical clearance)

Diagnosed Shigella or STEC

Regulatory approval AND (pathogen-specific time criteria OR qualifying written medical clearance)

Restricted duties do not mean clearance for food handling.

Jaundice: notify without waiting

Finding	Action
Jaundice reported	Notify the regulatory authority
Onset within the last 7 calendar days	Exclude, unless qualifying medical documentation establishes the exception
Previously excluded employee	Regulatory approval and applicable reinstatement condition required

Seven days is an onset condition, not permission to delay notification.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-201.11; 2-201.12; 2-201.13

Keep guidance and Code rules distinct

Authority	Action
CDC symptom clues, not diagnosis	Norovirus: vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain; HepA: fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, dark urine, jaundice
CDC Norovirus guidance	Stay home while sick and at least 48 hours after symptoms stop
FDA model Code	Apply diagnosis, symptom history, setting, and clearance conditions
FDA model Code: bodily-fluid contamination	Disinfect when available sanitizers do not control the pathogen of concern

CDC prevention advice does not replace the model Code's conditional return rules.

CDC symptom guidance; 2026 FDA model Food Code 2-201.11; 2-502.11; Part 4-10

Cover the wound for its location

Open or draining infected wound

Required protection

Hand, finger, or wrist

Impermeable cover plus a single-use glove

Exposed arm

Impermeable cover

Elsewhere on the body

Dry, durable, tight-fitting bandage

An uncovered draining infected wound means restriction until properly protected.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-201.11; 2-201.12; 2-201.13; 2-401.13

Twenty seconds for the full wash

Step	Standard
Wet and apply soap	Use the handwashing sink
Rub vigorously	10-15 seconds; fingertips, nails, between fingers, exposed arms
Rinse and dry	At least 20 seconds for the complete procedure
Check sink water delivery	At least 85 F; equipment requirement, not a germ-kill temperature

Soap, friction, rinsing, and drying work together.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-301.12; 2-301.14; 2-301.15; 2-301.16; 5-202.12

Protect ready-to-eat food

Control

Apply it

Ready-to-eat food

Use tongs, deli tissue, utensils, or single-use gloves. Clean gloves can become contaminated as quickly as bare hands.

Single-use gloves

Ordinary gloves: one task; discard damaged/soiled. The 2026 inner-glove exception requires authority approval and all safeguards.

Personal hygiene

Clean clothing, effective hair restraints, cleanable nails

Hands and wrists

Scored 2022+2024: plain ring. 2026 adds a qualifying medically necessary device.

Scored 2022+2024: discard at interruptions. 2026: discard if contaminated during interruptions. Wash when required.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-301.11; 3-304.15; 2-301.14; 2-302.11; 2-303.11; 2-304.11; 2-402.11

Know all nine major allergens

01 Milk

02 Eggs

03 Fish

04 Crustacean shellfish

05 Tree nuts

06 Peanuts

07 Wheat

08 Soybeans

09 Sesame

Verify the actual ingredients; do not answer from memory.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 2-103.11; 3-602.12

Cross-contact is allergen transfer

Hazard	Restaurant example	Correction
Cross-contamination	Raw chicken juices reach salad	Prevent pathogen transfer
Allergen cross-contact	Cheese residue reaches a milk-allergy order	Prevent unintended allergen transfer
Contaminated work area	Shared tools or food residue	Clean fully; use protected ingredients and clean tools

Removing a visible ingredient does not remove transferred allergen protein.

A severe reaction is an emergency

Recognize

Breathing trouble, throat swelling, faintness

Emergency guidance

Call 911 immediately; alert the manager

Suspected severe allergic reaction

Stop eating; support the person's emergency plan

Prescribed epinephrine available

Prompt use according to the person's plan; do not delay emergency care

Get emergency help promptly; assistance stays within training and local rules.

FDA / NIH allergy-emergency guidance; follow individual emergency plans and applicable local requirements

Receiving starts with an approved source

Check	Decision evidence
Supplier and identity	Lawful, approved source and required traceability
Condition	Sound packaging; no contamination or temperature-abuse evidence
Temperature	Measure the food or air specified by the rule
Disposition	Accept only when the shipment meets its requirements

A good temperature cannot rescue an unapproved source or contaminated food.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-201.11; 3-202.11; 3-202.15

Receiving temperatures and their exceptions

Product or condition

Receiving limit

Ordinary refrigerated TCS food

41 F or below

Cooked TCS food received hot

135 F or above

Raw shell eggs

Refrigerated equipment air at 45 F or below

Milk or shellfish exception

Only the temperature permitted by applicable distribution law

Frozen shipments arrive frozen and without evidence of prior temperature abuse.

Shellfish identity and fish hazards

Clue	Control
Molluscan shellfish	Keep source identification; record the last sale or service date
Traceability records	Retain for 90 days from that recorded date
Histamine or natural marine toxins	Approved source and prevention; cooking does not reliably remove them
Fish parasites	Required parasite-destruction process unless a specified exception applies

Toxins and parasites require different controls.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-203.12; 3-402.11-.12

The thermometer must match the job

Device or probe

Useful measurement

Small-diameter probe

Internal temperature of thin food

Bimetal stem

Adequately thick food covering its sensing area

Infrared thermometer

Surface temperature only

Ambient-air thermometer

Equipment air; does not replace food measurements

Wait for a stable reading and follow the device instructions.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-302.12; 4-502.11; 4-602.11; 4-703.11

Accuracy tolerance does not change the food limit

Food thermometer

Fahrenheit-only scale: accurate within 2 F

Measures the food

Ambient air or water thermometer

Fahrenheit-only scale: accurate within 3 F

Measures its environment

41 F is still the ordinary cold limit; it does not become 43 F.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-203.11; 4-203.12; 4-502.11

Storage protects food from the next transfer

Location or food

Protection

Ready-to-eat food

Separate from raw animal food and unwashed produce

Different raw animal foods

Separate; a shelf plan can follow final cooking requirements

Food storage area

Clean, dry, protected from splash and other contamination

Ordinary food storage

At least 6 inches above the floor; limited exceptions exist

A lid helps, but it does not make an unsuitable location safe.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-302.11; 3-305.11-.12; 3-701.11; 3-305.12

The seven-day clock includes the first day

Condition

Date-marking rule

Refrigerated, ready-to-eat TCS food held over 24 hours

Ordinary maximum: 7 days at 41 F or below

Prepared or opened Monday

Monday is day 1; Sunday is day 7

Older ingredient added to a new batch

The earliest applicable date controls

Frozen during its usable life

Freezing pauses the refrigerated count; it does not reset it

Safety-based manufacturer dates and specific exceptions still matter.

Identity, labels, and chemical separation

Item

What matters

Working food container

Common name unless the food is unmistakably recognized

Packaged food for sale

Applicable identity, ingredient, allergen, and other labeling

Chemical working container

Common name and separation from food and food-contact items

Medicine in a food refrigerator

Package inside identified, covered, leakproof outer container;
inaccessible to children

A date answers when; a common name answers what.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-302.12; 3-602.11; 7-102.11; 7-201.11; 7-203.11; 7-207.11-.12

Separate Before You Start

Moment	Control
Set up	Separate raw animal food from ready-to-eat food and unwashed produce.
Change tasks	Wash hands; clean and sanitize food-contact equipment.
Finish	Protect ready-to-eat food with clean utensils or suitable barriers.

A correct cooking temperature does not protect food contaminated afterward.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-301.14; 3-301.11; 3-302.11; 3-304.15; 4-602.11; 4-702.11

Wash Produce Before Cutting

Step	Action
Separate	Keep unwashed produce away from ready-to-eat ingredients.
Wash	Thoroughly wash raw produce in water before preparation or ready-to-eat service.
Prepare	Use clean, sanitized food-contact equipment.
Control	Cold-hold cut melons, cut tomatoes, and cut leafy greens at 41 F or below.

Washing comes before cutting; temperature control depends on the prepared food.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-302.11; 3-302.15; 7-204.12; 1-201.10; 3-501.16; 4-602.11; 4-702.11

Choose a Controlled Thaw

Method

Controlling Condition

Refrigeration

Food stays at 41 F or below.

Running water

Fully submerged; water 70 F or below; flowing overflow; food limits still apply.

Microwave thawing

Immediately transfer to conventional cooking with no interruption.

During cooking

Cook from frozen using the required complete cooking process.

Choose the method together with its next step.

Water Thawing Has Two Limits

Food

Required Control

Ready-to-eat

Thawed portions cannot rise above 41 F.

Raw animal food for cooking

Thawed portions above 41 F: four hours maximum, including preparation or recooling time.

Keep-frozen ROP fish: refrigerator

Remove from reduced-oxygen packaging before thawing.

Keep-frozen ROP fish: running water

Remove before thawing or immediately when thawing finishes.

The water's temperature is not the food's temperature.

165 F: Identify the Food First

165 F

Food group

Poultry, including ground poultry

Stuffed fish, meat, pasta, poultry, or ratites

INSTANTANEOUS

Stuffing containing fish, meat, poultry, or ratites

Baluts and specified wild game

Ground chicken follows the poultry rule, not the ground-beef rule.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-401.11; 4-302.12; 4-602.11; 4-702.11; 1-201.10

155 F Needs Seventeen Seconds

155 F

FOR 17 SECONDS

Food group

Non-intact meat: ground, injected, or mechanically tenderized

Comminuted fish and specified comminuted commercially raised or inspected game

Ratites

Raw eggs not prepared for immediate individual service

The temperature and its holding time are one requirement.

145 F: Fifteen Seconds, With Conditions

Eligible Food

Fish: 145 F for 15 seconds

Intact meat: 145 F for 15 seconds

Raw eggs: 145 F for 15 seconds

What Changes the Rule?

Comminuted, stuffed, or microwave-cooked food follows a different process.

Non-intact meat and whole roasts have different requirements.

Broken for an individual order and served immediately; batch eggs differ.

Same ingredient, different preparation, different endpoint.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-401.11; 3-401.12; 1-201.10

Whole Roasts Need a Complete Process

Oven

Roast Under 10 Pounds

Roast 10 Pounds or More

Still dry

Preheat and maintain at least 350 F

Preheat and maintain at least 250 F

Convection

Preheat and maintain at least 325 F

Preheat and maintain at least 250 F

Verified high humidity

250 F or less; humidity conditions required

250 F or less; humidity conditions required

145 F for four minutes is a roast endpoint, not a stand-alone oven recipe.

Microwave Cooking and Plant Foods Differ

Process	Endpoint	Additional Control
Microwave: raw animal food	165 F throughout	Rotate or stir; cover; stand covered two minutes afterward.
Plant food cooked for hot holding	135 F generally	Packaged-food cooking instructions may apply; see next slide.

The equipment and the intended holding step can change the requirement.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-401.12; 3-401.13; 3-401.11; 3-403.11; 3-401.15

Read the Package; Protect the Ice

Food or Use	Cooking / Protection Control
USDA-required safe-handling label / other cooking instructions	2026: USDA directions or Code cooking rule. Other directions: SHOULD cook unless uncooked use is allowed.
Manufacturer discloses uncontrolled pathogens	Cook to the time and temperature needed for the hazard. Frozen does not mean ready-to-eat.
Ingredient ice	Made from drinking water; protected as food.
Ice already used as exterior coolant	Never reuse in drinks or recipes. Clear-looking ice can still be contaminated.
Scored 2022+2024: SHALL follow commercial-package cooking directions before ready-to-eat use or unpackaged service, unless uncooked use is allowed.	

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-401.15; 3-202.16; 3-303.11; 3-307.11; 3-501.14; 3-501.15

Partial Cooking Requires Prior Approval

Stage	Required Control
Before use	Written procedures approved in advance by the regulatory authority.
Initial heating	No longer than 60 minutes; immediately begin required cooling.
Storage	Hold frozen or at 41 F or below; identify unfinished food and separate from ready-to-eat food.
Finish	Complete required cooking before service; control subsequent holding or cooling.

Partial cooking is a planned, approved process, not an improvised pause.

Two Checkpoints, One Total Clock

135 F

START

Ordinary measured cooling of cooked TCS food begins.

70 F

WITHIN 2 HOURS

Reach the first checkpoint.

41 F

WITHIN 6 HOURS TOTAL

The first stage is already included.

Six hours includes the first two; both checkpoints must be met.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-501.14; 3-501.15(C)

Give Heat a Way Out



Effective cooling

Smaller portions or shallow pans

Rapid cooling, an ice-water bath with stirring, or suitable containers

Loosely cover; uncover only when protected from overhead contamination

Measure warm areas against elapsed time

A refrigerator alone proves nothing; the separate 3-501.15(C) route requires prior approval.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-501.15; 3-501.14

Act at the Two-Hour Checkpoint

Finding

Above 70 F at two hours or less

Above 70 F after two hours

Above 41 F after six hours

Uncertain history

Decision

Annex guidance supports reheating and restarting with a different method when applicable.

Annex guidance: discard immediately.

Annex guidance: discard immediately.

Stop service; use approved disposition procedures, not an invented reset.

Ordinary measured-cooling guidance; an approved alternative is not a late rescue.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-501.14; 3-701.11

Ambient Ingredients Use Four Hours

Starting Process

Cooling Requirement

Cooked hot TCS food

135 F to 70 F within two hours; 41 F within six hours total.

TCS food prepared from ambient ingredients

Cool to 41 F or below within four hours.

Prepared ready-to-eat food cooling too slowly

Accelerate cooling before the deadline; do not borrow the cooked-food schedule.

Pick the cooling rule from how the food was prepared.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-501.14; 3-501.15

Reheat for Holding, Then Hold

Stage

Requirement

Previously cooked and cooled in the operation

Reheat to 165 F for 15 seconds throughout.

Time limit

No more than two hours between 41 F and the required reheating temperature.

After reheating

Maintain ordinary hot holding at 135 F or above.

135 F is the ordinary holding minimum, not the usual leftover reheating endpoint.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-403.11; 3-501.16

Check the Product and the Equipment

Reheating for Hot Holding	Endpoint	Conditions
Microwave: ordinary cooked-and-cooled food	165 F throughout	Rotate or stir; cover; stand covered two minutes.
Commercially processed, packaged ready-to-eat TCS food	135 F	Must come from an inspected food-processing plant.
Both routes	Maximum two-hour reheating interval	Count time from 41 F to the required endpoint.

Commercial ready-to-eat food has a specific exception; a box alone proves nothing.

One Order Is Not a Holding Batch

Destination

Applicable Decision

Immediate service for an individual order

Properly cooked, cooled, and refrigerated food may be served at any temperature.

Batch waiting for later orders

Use the reheating-for-hot-holding rules.

Remaining unsliced portion of a qualifying roast

A specific roast reheating option uses the complete roast oven and endpoint requirements.

Immediate individual service is a narrow exception, not a shortcut for batch holding.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-403.10; 3-403.11; 3-401.11; 3-501.14; 3-501.16; 3-701.11

Hold the Food, Not Just the Air

Holding Route

Food Temperature

Ordinary cold holding

41 F or below

Ordinary hot holding

135 F or above

Qualifying roast exception

130 F or above only after the specified roast cooking or reheating process.

The 130 F roast exception never becomes the general hot-holding rule.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-501.16; 3-401.11; 3-403.11; 3-501.19; 3-701.11; 4-302.12

Four Hours Requires a Plan and a Mark

Stage	Four-Hour Route
Plan	Written procedures prepared beforehand and available to the regulatory authority.
Start	Ordinarily 41 F or below, or 135 F or above.
Mark	Identify the four-hour deadline; special newly-TCS foods start when cut or opened.
Finish	Serve, cook and serve, or discard within the limit; discard unmarked or over-limit-marked food.

Time control is chosen before service, not after a temperature failure.

Six Hours Is Cold-Start Only

Condition	Six-Hour Route
Start	Food at 41 F or below; advance written procedure.
Mark	Identify removal time and the six-hour deadline.
Monitor	Warmest food never above 70 F; controlled ambient conditions may establish this.
Finish	Serve, cook and serve, or discard by deadline; discard above 70 F or with invalid marks.

Six hours is conditional, not extra time for any buffet food.

Protect the Last Contact

Situation

Control

Ready-to-eat service

Use suitable utensils or barriers; protect displayed food and monitor self-service.

Utensil pauses in food

Keep handles above the food and container.

Food returned by a guest

Do not re-serve, except qualifying non-TCS containers or unopened packages.

Narrow re-service exceptions

Protected dispensing container closed between uses; or sound, unopened original package; isolation restrictions still apply.

Food can be correctly heated and still become contaminated during service.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-301.11; 3-304.11; 3-304.12; 3-306.11; 3-306.13; 3-306.14; 3-801.11

Send the Controls With the Food

Handoff

What Travels

Transport

Protected food, maintained temperatures, and any active time-control deadline.

Packaged for sale

Required identity, ingredients, allergens, quantity, business information, and applicable nutrition information.

Unpackaged service

Written notification of major allergens present as ingredients.

Allergen request

Verify ingredients and preparation; prevent cross-contact; do not guess.

Changing locations does not restart the food's clock.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-302.11; 3-307.11; 3-501.16; 3-501.19; 3-602.11; 3-602.12; 1-201.10; 2-103.11; 4-602.11

An Advisory Does Not Override a Prohibition

Setting

Highly susceptible population

Additional safeguards

Permitted undercooked selection elsewhere

Children's menu ground meat

Boundary

No raw or partially cooked animal foods or raw seed sprouts served ready to eat.

Juice treatment; pasteurized eggs where required; no time-only control for raw eggs.

Required written disclosure and reminder; specific exceptions need verification.

An advisory does not authorize undercooking.

First establish that the food is permitted; then apply the required advisory.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 3-801.11; 3-501.19; 3-401.11; 3-201.11; 3-603.11; 3-701.11

Clean First, Then Sanitize

Action	Purpose	Common Mistake
Clean	Remove food, grease, and allergen residue	Spraying over visible soil
Sanitize	Reduce microorganisms on a clean surface	Treating sanitizer as allergen removal
Disinfect when required	Address pathogens not controlled by available sanitizers	Using an ordinary bucket for every contamination event

Sanitizer does not replace cleaning or remove an allergen by itself.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-601.11; 4-603.14; 4-603.16; 4-702.11; 4-901.11

Four Hours Is Not Permission to Wait

Situation	Cleaning Decision
Continuous use with TCS food	At least every 4 hours, unless a specific exception applies
Raw food to ready-to-eat food	Clean and sanitize before the switch
Contamination may have occurred	Clean and sanitize now
Qualifying refrigerated preparation area	Use the documented temperature-based schedule

Use the time limit and the task-change trigger; whichever requires action sooner controls.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-602.11; 4-702.11

Run the Sink in Order

01

Prepare and wash

Scrape first; wash at 110 F minimum or cleaning-agent label temperature

02

Rinse

Remove loosened soil and detergent

03

Sanitize

Use compliant chemical solution or 171 F minimum immersion for at least 30 seconds

04

Air-dry

Drain on a clean surface; do not towel-dry

Wash, rinse, sanitize, air-dry. Keep each solution clean.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-204.116; 4-501.18; 4-501.19; 4-501.111; 4-603.12; 4-603.14; 4-603.16; 4-703.11; 4-901.11

Read the Machine, Test the Surface

Hot-Water Machine Check	Minimum	Measurement Location
Most machine types	180 F	Fresh sanitizing rinse entering manifold
Stationary-rack, single-temperature type	165 F	Fresh sanitizing rinse entering manifold
Utensil surface	160 F	Irreversible registering temperature indicator

The rinse-water gauge and the utensil-surface test answer different questions.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-501.15; 4-501.112; 4-703.11

Chlorine: Keep the Conditions Together

Code Combination	Minimum Contact	Label Still Applies
100 ppm; at least 55 F; pH 10 or less	10 seconds	Longer label contact time controls
50 ppm; at least 100 F; pH 10 or less	7 seconds	Use all stated conditions
50 ppm; at least 75 F; pH 8 or less	7 seconds	Do not swap temperature or pH

Concentration, temperature, pH, and contact time are a matched set, not interchangeable numbers.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-501.114; 4-703.11

Iodine and Quat Are Not Chlorine

Condition	Iodine	Quaternary Ammonium
Concentration	12.5-25 ppm	Manufacturer's labeled concentration
Minimum temperature	68 F	75 F
Other condition	pH 5 or less, or manufacturer's effective pH	Water hardness 500 ppm or less, or label allowance
Contact time	Generally at least 30 seconds; follow label	Generally at least 30 seconds; follow label

Other sanitizers, not chlorine/iodine/quat: at least 75 F unless the EPA label states otherwise.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-501.114(B)-(F); 4-703.11

Test the Bucket, Manage the Cloth

Check	Correct Action
Test device	Match the chemical and concentration range; follow device instructions
Solution	Check strength; replace dirty solution; verify temperature and required contact time
Wet wiping cloth	Hold in compliant sanitizer between uses; launder daily
Separation	Keep raw-animal-food cloths separate; store buckets off the floor

Smell and color do not measure sanitizer strength.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-304.14; 4-802.11; 4-302.14; 4-501.116

Find the Hidden Food-Contact Surface

Equipment	Look Here	Decision
Can opener	Piercing and cutting parts	Clean food-contact parts; repair dull or damaged components
Ice machine	Bin and enclosed food-contact components	Follow manufacturer frequency; otherwise prevent soil or mold buildup
Cutting board	Deep grooves and damage	Resurface or replace if effective cleaning and sanitizing are impossible

A clean-looking outside does not prove the food-contact parts are clean.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-501.11; 4-501.12; 4-601.11; 4-602.11; 4-702.11

Make the Building Cleanable

Location	General Requirement
Floors and walls	Smooth, easily cleanable, maintained in repair
Floor-wall junction	Coved; closed or sealed as the cleaning method requires
Fixed floor equipment	Seal to floor or generally provide at least 6 inches clearance
Fixed counter equipment	Seal to counter or generally provide at least 4 inches clearance

Access and intact surfaces make effective cleaning possible.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 4-402.11; 4-402.12; 6-201.11; 6-201.13; 6-501.11

Protect Handwashing and Drinking Water

Handwashing Sink

Accessible and used only for handwashing

Soap and an approved hand-drying method

Water at least 85 F under this baseline

Backflow Protection

No unprotected cross-connections

Use an appropriate air gap or approved prevention device

Air gap: twice inlet diameter, never less than 1 inch

An air gap is measured above the flood-level rim, not the current water level.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 5-202.12; 5-202.13; 5-202.14; 5-203.14; 5-205.11; 5-205.12; 6-301.11; 6-301.12

Match Light to the Work

Minimum	Examples	Where Measured
10 foot-candles	Walk-ins, dry storage, other rooms during cleaning	30 inches above floor
20 foot-candles	Buffets; reach-ins; handwashing, warewashing, toilet areas	Food surface, inside equipment, or 30 inches above floor, respectively
50 foot-candles	Food work or hazardous utensil and equipment tasks	Work surface

Remember 10, 20, 50, then match the location and measuring point.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 6-303.11; 6-202.11

Deny Pests Food, Water, and Shelter

Control

Restaurant Action

Deny entry

Inspect deliveries; maintain door seals and protected openings

Deny resources

Remove waste; fix leaks; clean residue and clutter

Control moisture

Maintain ventilation; prevent excessive steam and condensation

Respond

Protect food; document evidence; use a qualified, appropriately licensed pest-control operator

Pest control starts with the building and daily work, not a spray can.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 6-501.111; 6-202.15; 7-202.12; 6-304.11; 6-202.12; 5-501.113; 5-502.11

Three Roles, Different Responsibilities

Person in Charge	Permit Holder	Regulatory Authority
Directs daily food-safety work; meets required manager qualification	Accountable for permit compliance	Administers adopted requirements
Monitors staff and corrects unsafe practices	Provides or designates the person in charge	Inspects and takes enforcement action
Checks that procedures are followed	Ensures required plans and reporting	Grants required variances and reopening approval

The inspector checks compliance; the operation owns daily control.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 2-101.11; 2-103.11; 8-103.10; 8-304.11; 8-404.12; 2-102.11; 2-102.12; 2-102.20

Know Which Agency Does What

Agency	Core Role
FDA	Regulates most foods; publishes the model Food Code
USDA-FSIS	Regulates most meat, poultry, processed egg products, and Siluriformes fish
CDC	Tracks illness, detects outbreaks, supports investigations
State, local, tribal, or territorial regulator	Typically permits and inspects restaurants under adopted rules

Start restaurant compliance and suspected-outbreak reporting with the responsible local or state authority.

FDA, USDA-FSIS and CDC agency-role guidance; 2026 FDA model Code, Preface

Read the Finding, Own the Correction

Category	Purpose	Example
Priority	Directly controls foodborne illness or injury hazards	Required cooking endpoint
Priority Foundation	Enables or supports a Priority control	Required handwashing soap
Core	Other requirements, often general sanitation or maintenance	Routine floor cleaning

Core is not optional. The permit holder corrects; the authority controls extensions.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 3-401.11; 6-301.11; 6-501.12; 8-405.11; 8-406.11; 8-404.11

Observe, Correct, Then Verify

01**Train**

Demonstrate the task;
watch the employee
perform it

02**Monitor**

Make the planned
observation or
measurement

03**Correct**

Fix the process and
address affected food
or utensils

04**Verify**

Check records,
technique, and whether
the control actually
works

A signed checklist is not proof that the work was done correctly.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 1-201.10; 2-103.11

Seven HACCP Principles, One Chicken Batch

Principles

Chicken Example

1 Analyze hazards; 2 Identify critical control points

Pathogens in raw chicken; cooking controls survival

3 Set critical limits; 4 Establish monitoring

165 F instantaneous; measure thickest portions of selected pieces

5 Establish corrective actions; 6 Establish verification

Continue cooking when short; check thermometer accuracy and records

7 Establish records and documentation

Record batch results, corrections, and verification

A critical limit is the measurable boundary, not simply 'cook thoroughly.'

Special Processes Need a Permission Check

Process

Controlling Clue

Smoking

Preservation requires a variance; flavor enhancement alone does not trigger that provision

Adding acid or other components

Preservation or making food non-TCS requires a variance

Reduced-oxygen packaging of TCS food

Variance unless all applicable no-variance criteria are met

HACCP documentation

Variance-required special processes need a HACCP plan submitted for approval before starting

A vacuum sealer, vinegar, or smoke does not create automatic approval.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 3-502.11; 3-502.12; 8-103.10; 8-103.11; 8-201.13

Recognize a Possible Outbreak

Signal

Manager Response

Two or more similar illnesses linked to a common food

Report promptly; public health evaluates the connection

Even one suspected foodborne botulism case

Treat as urgent; do not wait for a second person

Complaint details and remaining food

Preserve facts, records, and potential evidence safely

You report and protect people; public health determines the outbreak and cause.

Stop, Notify, Correct, Get Approval

01

Stop affected operations

An imminent health hazard may exist

02

Notify the regulator

Do not wait until the next inspection

03

Correct and document

Restore safe conditions; address affected food and equipment

04

Obtain approval

Regulatory approval is required before resuming discontinued operations

Power returning or sewage clearing does not itself authorize reopening.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 8-404.11; 8-404.12

Hold Recalled Food; Secure Suspected Tampering

Recall

Match product, lot, and notice

Segregate and identify: DO NOT USE

Follow authorized return or disposal instructions

Keep disposition records

Suspected Intentional Contamination

Stop use; keep people away from the hazard

Notify PIC, public health, and law enforcement as appropriate

Secure food, packaging, and records without unnecessary handling

Preserve evidence; follow investigators' instructions

Do not serve, taste, donate, or casually discard held product.

2026 FDA model Food Code: 6-404.11; 8-404.11; 1-201.10; 2-103.11

A stronger answer starts with the conditions

01

Food and setting

Raw or ready-to-eat;
ordinary service or a
qualifying HSP setting

02

Stage and purpose

Receiving, cooking,
cooling, reheating,
holding, or immediate
service

03

Complete rule

Temperature, time,
clock start, and any
required approval

04

Corrective action

Protect affected food
and people, then verify
the correction

Use the practice exams to find the topics that need another pass.