

Sustainable Food Safety 201



PEAK SHIFT

CHAPTER 1

Keeping Food Safe Starts Before the Mistake

Teaching-First Study Edition

Understand the rule before practicing.

FDA Food Code 2026, Chapters 1-2 and Annex 3

BASIS: TEACHING FRAMEWORK



How This Lesson Works

01 Learn

Understand the terms and the control.

02 See it applied

Follow a worked restaurant example.

03 Explain it

Pause briefly and put the rule into your own words.

04 Practice separately

Use the chapter assessment after the teaching.

The slides teach the subject. The separate assessment checks understanding.

Foodborne Illness

What it means

Illness caused by consuming contaminated food or drink.

What a manager can observe

Reported symptoms, food history, handling conditions and affected people.

A manager responds to risk. A manager does not diagnose the guest.

Symptoms and Their Limits

Common food-poisoning symptoms

Diarrhea, stomach pain or cramps, nausea, vomiting and fever.

Timing varies

Symptoms may start hours or days after an exposure; some illnesses take longer.

A symptom is not a diagnosis

Similar symptoms can have different causes.

Employee-health rules are separate

Report the listed symptoms and diagnoses; the PIC applies the required action.

Do not identify a pathogen from one symptom or from timing alone.

FDA Food Code 2026: 2-201.11 through 2-201.13

BASIS: PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE + CODE

Hazards Need Different Controls

Biological

Pathogens such as bacteria and viruses; controls depend on the organism and process.

Chemical

Cleaner residues, toxic substances and naturally occurring toxins.

Physical

Foreign objects such as glass or metal fragments.

Allergen cross-contact

An allergenic protein reaches a food where it is not intended.

Allergens fit the FDA chemical-hazard framework, but deserve their own practical control.

Appearance Does Not Prove Safety

What the senses can reveal

Spoilage, visible dirt, damaged packages or an unusual odor.

What the senses cannot establish

Whether food is pathogen-free or has a safe handling history.

Never taste questionable food to decide whether it is safe.

Illness Reports and Outbreaks

Foodborne disease outbreak

Two or more cases of similar illness resulting from a common food.

Confirmed disease outbreak

Laboratory identification of the agent plus epidemiological evidence implicating the food.

Two similar complaints suggest a possible outbreak; they do not prove the restaurant or food caused it.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10, Foodborne Disease Outbreak and Confirmed Disease Outbreak

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE

Responding to an Illness Report

01 Receive the facts

Record the report accurately without diagnosing or arguing.

02 Escalate

Notify the PIC and follow the reporting procedure.

03 Protect evidence

Preserve relevant records and follow authority instructions for suspected food.

04 Control the risk

Stop exposure where needed; cooperate with the investigation.

This sequence is a restaurant response example, not a universal FDA phone script.

FDA Food Code 2026: 2-201.11; 8-404.11; Annex 7

BASIS: RESTAURANT RESPONSE EXAMPLE + CODE

Five Major Foodborne-Illness Risk Factors

Unsafe sources

Food comes from a source that does not comply with the law.

Inadequate cooking

A required cooking endpoint is not met.

Improper holding

Food is held under unsafe time-and-temperature conditions.

Contaminated equipment

Equipment or utensils transfer contamination to food.

Poor personal hygiene

Employee practices allow contamination to reach food.

These are the five major risk factors identified in the Food Code preface.

FDA Food Code 2026: Preface, Foodborne Illness Estimates, Risk Factors, and Interventions

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE

Approved Sources

The delivery

The refrigerated food arrives at a safe temperature, but the seller cannot establish an approved source.

The decision

Do not use the food until the source is verified as complying with the law. Temperature alone is not enough.

Source approval and receiving temperature answer different questions.

Cooking and Holding Are Different

Cooking

A required temperature-and-time combination reduces specified pathogens.

Holding

Temperature control limits growth or toxin formation while food waits for service.

Correct cooking does not cancel later holding requirements.

FDA Food Code 2026: 3-401.11; 3-501.16

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE

Contamination Can Return After Cooking

The transfer

A utensil used with raw food touches food that is ready to eat.

The missing control

Separation and properly cleaned and sanitized food-contact equipment.



The last safe cooking step cannot protect food from a later contamination event.

FDA Food Code 2026: 3-302.11; 4-602.11; 4-703.11

BASIS: CODE RULE + WORKED EXAMPLE

Hands and Employee Health

Hands

Wash after restroom use and before donning gloves for food work. Gloves do not replace handwashing.

Health

Report symptoms and diagnoses. The PIC applies exclusion or restriction rules.

An ill employee wearing gloves can still create a food-safety risk.

FDA Food Code 2026: 2-201.11 through 2-201.13; 2-301.14

BASIS: CODE RULE + WORKED EXAMPLE

Allergen Cross-Contact

What happened

A shared spoon transfers sesame-containing sauce into a dish intended for a sesame-allergic guest.

What protects the guest

Stop service of that plate, verify ingredients, and prevent exposure to sesame.

Removing the visible sauce does not establish that the meal is safe.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10; 2-103.11; 3-101.11; Annex 4

BASIS: FDA FRAMEWORK + RESTAURANT RESPONSE

Time/Temperature Control for Safety

TCS

Time/temperature control for safety.

What the classification means

The food needs time-and-temperature control to limit pathogen growth or toxin formation.

What it does not mean

Non-TCS food is not automatically free of contamination or allergens.

TCS describes a control need, not whether food looks fresh.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10, Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE

Common TCS Foods

Animal foods

Raw or heat-treated animal foods, subject to the Code definition and exceptions.

Heat-treated plant foods

Cooked rice, beans and potatoes are common examples.

Specific plant foods

Raw seed sprouts; cut melons; cut leafy greens; cut tomatoes or qualifying mixtures.

Other examples

Garlic-in-oil mixtures unless modified to prevent pathogen growth or toxin formation.

Product formulation and the Code definition matter; food category shortcuts have limits.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10, Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE

One Potato, Two Different Conditions

Whole raw potato

Ordinarily not TCS in its intact, raw form.

Baked potato

A heat-treated plant food: ordinarily TCS, with holding controls after cooking.

The food name stayed the same. The process changed the control need.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10; 3-501.14; 3-501.16

BASIS: CODE RULE + WORKED EXAMPLE

Ready-to-Eat Food

Ready-to-eat

Food in a form edible without additional preparation to achieve food safety.

Examples

Washed produce ready for service, bread, or fully cooked food ready to eat.

Important distinction

Ready-to-eat does not mean shelf-stable or exempt from temperature control.

RTE asks whether another safety preparation step is needed before eating.

TCS and Ready-to-Eat Can Overlap

Food and condition	TCS?	Ready-to-eat?
Cooked rice ready for service	TCS: yes	RTE: yes
Raw chicken	TCS: yes	RTE: no
Plain commercially prepared cracker	TCS: generally no	RTE: yes

TCS = growth control. RTE = no further safety preparation before eating.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10; 3-501.17

BASIS: CODE DEFINITIONS + WORKED EXAMPLES

Higher-Risk Guests and HSP

Broader public-health risk

CDC identifies young children, older adults, pregnant people and people with weakened immune systems as higher-risk groups.

Food Code HSP

A listed susceptible group AND qualifying care, health-care, assisted-living, or nutritional/socialization services.

HSP means highly susceptible population. It is a defined population-and-setting test.

FDA Food Code 2026: 1-201.10, Highly Susceptible Population

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE + CDC GUIDANCE

HSP Changes the Food Decision

The setting

An assisted-living dining room serves older residents an uncooked egg-based dressing.

The required ingredient protection

Use pasteurized eggs or pasteurized egg products for this preparation.

What does not replace it

Supplier approval, shell washing or cold holding.

This example is uncooked egg dressing, not a claim that every egg preparation has the same rule.

FDA Food Code 2026: 3-801.11(B)(1)

BASIS: CODE RULE + WORKED EXAMPLE

The Person in Charge

PIC

The person in charge is responsible for the operation when it is operating.

What that means in practice

Verify employee knowledge and key controls, address failures, and apply the required food-safety duties.

For an ordinary restaurant, a trained PIC must be present during operating hours; narrow Code exceptions exist.

FDA Food Code 2026: 2-101.11; 2-102.11; 2-103.11

BASIS: FDA FOOD CODE

Responsibility Does Not Disappear When Delegated

Permit holder / owner

Meets permit-holder duties and ensures the required PIC arrangement.

Person in charge

Oversees required controls and responds to food-safety failures.

Food employee

Performs safe tasks and reports required health information.

Regulatory authority

Applies adopted requirements and conducts regulatory oversight.

Funding tools, arranging backups and assigning logs are implementation choices, not new FDA job titles.

FDA Food Code 2026: 2-101.11; 2-103.11; 2-201.11; 8-304.11

BASIS: CODE DUTIES + IMPLEMENTATION DISTINCTION

A Reading Must Answer the Right Question

Unit display

Describes the equipment condition measured by its sensor.

Food measurement

Checks the food itself with the appropriate thermometer and method.

A normal unit display does not prove every pan is at a safe food temperature.

FDA Food Code 2026: 2-103.11; 3-501.16; 4-302.12

BASIS: CODE RULE + RESTAURANT EXAMPLE

Worked Example: A Busy Lunch Shift

Unknown delivery source	Keep the food out of use until source compliance is verified.
Cooked rice waiting for service	Apply TCS holding controls even though the rice is ready-to-eat.
Vomiting employee	Without an established noninfectious cause, apply exclusion; gloves do not replace it.
Sesame-containing sauce for a sesame-allergic guest	Stop service of the plate and prevent the exposure.

Identify the controlling fact, then use the control that addresses it.

FDA Food Code 2026: 3-201.11; 3-501.16; 2-201.12; 3-101.11

Chapter 1: What You Should Understand

Hazards and illness

Hazards need different controls; symptoms do not establish a diagnosis.

Outbreak recognition

A possible pattern requires action; confirmation requires evidence.

Food classification

TCS and ready-to-eat answer different questions and can overlap.

Guest protection

HSP is a population-and-setting definition; allergen exposure needs its own control.

Responsibility

Employees perform safe tasks; the PIC provides required oversight.

Explain the reason for the control, not just the vocabulary.

Next: Independent Practice

Lesson complete

Revisit any definition or worked example you cannot yet explain.

Separate practice assessment

Choose an answer, review its explanation, and return to the relevant lesson when needed.

Next chapter: pathogens, growth conditions and the controls that interrupt them.