

# FOOD SAFETY TOPIC: FOOD SAFETY CULTURE

Food safety culture is the manner in which an organization demonstrates its approach to food safety by its shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behaviour. Everyone at an organization with a direct influence on ingredient, packaging, manufacturing, storage and transport is responsible for food safety. Fostering good strong safety culture requires continued diligence.

Foodborne illness cases, as well as recalls, are often the result of breakdowns in the food safety culture of an organization.

## Strong food safety culture can result in:

- Reduced consumer complaints, recalls, rework and waste.
- Reduced employee turnover.
- Protecting brand and reduces legal liability.
- Access to new markets.
- Increased quality of product and consumer confidence.
- Increased efficiency.

Various ways to promote a positive food safety culture.

## MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

- The management team at an organization must lead by example to demonstrate their commitment to food safety.
- Ensure a policy stating the organization's commitment to continuously improve the site's food safety and quality culture is signed by management and posted for easy access for all staff to read.

## COMMUNICATION

- The management team must encourage employees to report unsafe food practices to their leaders.
- Have messaging tools readily available to all staff to communicate food safety messages (e.g., bulletin board, digital message board, company email or website).
- Conduct surveys, questionnaires, townhalls, tailgate meetings and question & answer forums to receive employee feedback and questions.
- Integrate food safety components into annual employee reviews to allow employees to have their thoughts and concerns heard.
- Provide the employees with the option for confidential reporting to communicate concerns anonymously.

## RESOURCES

- Prioritize food safety training at all levels, including employees and management; for example, managers receive third-party food safety training, and then the managers train all employees on food safety.
- Trend food safety Key Performance Indicators and non-conformances to determine how the organization can improve. Make improvements to positively impact food safety culture.

## RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

- Provide recognition and awards to encourage and reward employees/departments who demonstrate a commitment to a strong food safety culture.

**Discussion point** – Talk about your organization's food safety culture. Specifically, what your organization is doing well and where to focus your efforts to foster a positive food safety culture.

## References

Powell, Douglas A., Casey J. Jacob, and Benjamin J. Chapman. "Enhancing food safety culture to reduce rates of foodborne illness." *Food control* 22.6 (2011): 817-822.

Global Food Safety Initiative. "A Culture of Food Safety: A Position Paper from the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)." Global food safety initiative. 2018.



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