

Hygiene Guidelines on Production of On-site Prepared Ready-to-drink Beverages

Objective:

On-site prepared ready-to-drink beverages which are usually handmade from a variety of food ingredients are subject to high risks of microbiological contamination. These guidelines are intended to remind the food sector about the food hygiene and safety issues to be aware in the production process.

Scope of Applicability:

The Guidelines applies to establishments engaged in the production of on-site prepared ready-to-drink beverages, such as Taiwanese-style beverage takeaway shops, fruit beverage takeaway shops, food premises and fast food shops.

Definition:

On-site prepared ready-to-drink beverages: beverages prepared in the establishments for immediate consumption. They are either prepared in advance or mixed with other ingredients on site. They can be served hot or cold in containers covered with lids or heat seal plastic film.

Content:

1. Smart Purchase and Receipt

- Purchase hygienic and good quality food ingredients from reputable suppliers;
- Upon receipt, check the information on the invoices to see if it is consistent with the goods received;
- Check whether the food ingredients are stored at proper temperatures. Make sure they are uncontaminated, undamaged and in good condition;
- Reject food ingredients which are spoiled, expired or from unknown sources;
- If necessary, request the suppliers to provide relevant documents, such as health certificates, certificates of origins and laboratory reports of food products;
- Retain receipts of the goods received for source tracing.

2. Careful Preparation

- Use water or ice cubes from safe sources;
- Use separate utensils to handle ready-to-eat food and non-ready-to-eat food;
- Use clean and non-transparent utensils, such as tongs and spoons, when handling ready-to-eat food and ice. Keep them separately from food and ice.
- When washing fruits and vegetables¹, pay attention to the following:
 - Discard any spoiled or rotten fruits and vegetables before washing;
 - Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water. Scrub fruits and vegetables with hard surfaces (e.g. melons and cucumbers) with a designated clean soft brush to remove dirt from the surface;
 - Wash ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables thoroughly in a designated sink or container. Rinse them again with drinking water after washing.
- Cook or boil food ingredients thoroughly;
- Avoid preparing excessive amount of food ingredients or drink mixes or preparing too far in advance;
- If drinks or ingredients need to be cooled, speed up the cooling process by placing them in wide and shallow containers or reducing the size of the portions.

3. Proper Storage

1) Food ingredients

- Keep food ingredients that need to be stored at room temperature in a cool and well-ventilated place to avoid exposure to direct sunlight;
- Properly wrap and store fresh and perishable food ingredients in the refrigerator (refrigeration temperature below 5 °C and freezing temperature at or below -18 °C);
- Keep ready-to-eat food and non-ready-to-eat food in separate containers with lids. Store them in different refrigerators, or with ready-to-eat food placed on the shelf above non-ready-to-eat food;

¹ If detergents or disinfectants are used in the preparation of fruits and vegetables, choose appropriate detergents and disinfectants and follow the manufacturer's instructions for correct application and quantities specified to avoid chemical residues.

- Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle and use the food ingredients with earlier expiry dates first. Do not use expired food ingredients.

2) Prepared drinks or ingredients

- Keep prepared drinks or ingredients in containers with lids at below 5 °C (label the date and time of storage). Follow the “first-in, first-out” principle in selling or using prepared drinks or ingredients;
- During storage, keep ready-to-eat food and non-ready-to-eat food on different shelves in the same refrigerator or store them in different refrigerators.

4. Time Control

- During food production and operation, shorten the duration that some types of food ingredients such as cooked pearl tapioca, fresh milk and sliced fruits are left in the temperature danger zone (between 5 °C and 60 °C) as far as possible as they are potentially hazardous. When inevitable, follow the 2 hour/4 hour rule²:
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for less than 2 hours should be stored in the refrigerator or used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for 2 to 4 hours should be used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

5. Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food;
- Wear clean and light-coloured outer clothing or protective overalls;
- Do not wear rings, bracelets, watches or other accessories;
- Do not wear nail polish or false nails;
- Use waterproof dressings to cover open wounds properly;
- Do not handle money while handling food;
- Do not taste food with fingers;
- Suspend from handling food when suffering from symptoms of illness such as flu, diarrhoea, vomiting and fever.

² Reference: GL 001 DSA 2019 "Hygiene Guidelines on Time and Temperature Control"

6. Utensils, Equipment and Environmental Hygiene

- All work surfaces should be made of impermeable and easy to clean materials, and kept well above the ground;
- All utensils and equipment that come into contact with food should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use;
- Regularly check and clean water filter and replace filter cartridge;
- Regularly check the temperature in the refrigerator to make sure that the food is stored at the appropriate temperature;
- Keep drinking straws in dust-proof containers;
- Replace damaged or cracked utensils;
- Use lidded rubbish bins, and empty and disinfect them regularly;
- Do not keep pets in the establishments.

Updated in June 2020