

TASSELS AND TUMULT: THE GRADUATION GAFFE

MOCK INSPECTION



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QUESTIONS PARTICIPANTS MAY ASK DURING THE “MOCK INSPECTION” OF THE RETAIL GROCERY

Note: The speaker may provide additional information not included in this Q&A, including but not limited to logistics, the manager's name, store location, years in this position, and other information.

Training

1. Is there someone on staff who has completed formal food safety training?
 - Yes, I got the [SafeMark certification](#) four years ago, and the prepared foods manager completed the [food handler training](#) when she was hired three months ago.
2. Who is considered the “person in charge”?
 - Either me, or the manager of the prepared food, is in charge.
3. Are other employees trained in food safety? How?
 - Yes, when each employee is hired, we bring all the new hires together every two weeks and give them some training. There are forms they fill out to verify that they understand our food safety policies.

Handwashing

1. Are employees required to wash their hands at appropriate times?
 - Yes.
2. How many handwashing stations are there in the food preparation/catering area?
 - We have at least one per main area. We have our own sink where we cook the meats (compared with other areas) since we don’t want employees crossing into areas that are not where they work. We want to make it easy for people to wash their hands.
3. What is the temperature of the water?
 - The sinks have hot- and cold-water taps.
 - What is the hot water temperature?

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- We haven't measured it, but it's pretty hot.
- 4. Does each station have appropriate soap and paper towels?
 - Yes, each sink has single-use paper towels and soap.
- 5. Do employees wear gloves?
 - Yes, when handling RTE foods, employees wear gloves. They also wear gloves when touching raw meats or other things that might be uncomfortable.

Employee Illness and Absenteeism/Staffing

1. Is there an employee health manual and an employee health/sick worker policy?
 - Yes – ill workers are not allowed to handle food.
2. Have there been any reports of illness from any of your staff?
 - No, nothing I am aware of. Everyone has been healthy.
3. Have any of your staff left work early or called in for any reason during the time point in question?
 - Yes, a lot. We have a lot of high school students and they're not always reliable, especially around this time of year when they have "senior week" and proms and graduations.
4. With the number of employees out, who has filled in?
 - We haven't been able to fill all positions – sometimes we are short-staffed. The good thing is that older kids are coming home from college looking for work, so we've been able to hire a lot of new people in the past few weeks.
5. If staff members left early, why did they leave?
 - Graduation activities – for themselves or family members.
6. Have any events occurred in public areas such as vomiting?
 - No, I don't think so. Nothing out of the ordinary except it's graduate week and that is always busy.
7. Are employees required to stay home if they are not feeling well?
 - Yes

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8. Are employees required to alert supervisors if they get ill while at work?
 - Yes, especially if they have the symptoms that are on the poster, such as vomiting, infected sores, diarrhea, jaundice, sore throat with fever.
9. Are employees required to report if someone in their family is ill?
 - No
10. Are employees required to provide a doctor's note if they are ill, or to return to work?
 - Only if they have had *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, or the others that are on the poster. I know hepatitis is on there because we had that issue a couple of months ago – a guy applied for a job, but we couldn't bring him on until he was cleared (or healthy).

Complaints and Recalls

1. Are you aware of any active recalls affecting products carried in the store?
 - Of course, there are recalls almost every day! The front desk has a list we get from corporate.
2. Are there any recalls for ingredients used in the deli area?
 - No, not that I'm aware of.
3. In addition to the complaint we are investigating, have there been any additional complaints from other customers?
 - A few customers have called about the timeliness of orders, but this is likely due to staffing issues. It is challenging with a senior week ... or really, they should call it senior month.
 - One person did call, they got a catering order from us earlier in the week, and they said people got sick. My employees said they were really upset, and I've been meaning to call them back, but it has been so busy.
4. Can you share the caller's information with us?
 - Sure, let me go find it and I can pass it along to you. OK, here it is. Turns out two people called to complain, but my employees only took the contact info down for one person – like I said, new employees. It's a learning curve.
5. Do you know what the person who made the complaint ordered? You mentioned they had a take-out catering order.

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- Yes, looks like they picked up the following food products from us: sliced watermelon, fruit salad, leafy green salad, deli-prepared fried chicken, roast beef sandwiches, commercially prepared potato salad, and pretzels.

Receiving, Storage, and General Handling of TCS Foods

1. Do you check the temperatures of TCS foods upon receiving them?
 - Yes, but we only log violations, and there haven't been any in the past month.
2. What is the temperature of your walk-in cooler?
 - It's set for 35°F. and alarms at 41°F.
3. Can you show me the temperature logs for the refrigerators and freezers?
 - They are auto-monitored and if there is a deviation, there are a few of us who get a text. This happens once in a while, but it's pretty rare. If the problem isn't corrected in 15 minutes, then there is an automatic escalation process to the district manager and the food safety coordinator for the area, and they'll call and follow up.

Questions About the Temperature-controlled for Safety (TCS) Foods and Other Foods?

For each of these foods, hands are washed, and gloves are worn. *See hygiene questions/answers.

- Potato salad: Commercially prepared and kept in a single container in the walk-in cooler for catering orders. The container was opened new for this order.
- Sliced watermelon: Whole watermelons are received by the bin from our distribution center. Corporate would know the commercial grower. Watermelon was cut in the fresh-cut fruit area. The fresh-cut fruit area follows specific protocols like dipping the watermelon in a water bath to clean it, sanitizing knives, and such for cutting watermelon and other fruit. The cut watermelon for the party event was prepared at the same time another batch was for the rest of the store – no complaints that I know of for sliced watermelon that was sold in the produce section of the grocery store. Once cut, watermelon slices are refrigerated (dated) and sealed in a single-use, new plastic container.
- Fried chicken: Chicken was fried and prepared according to standard protocols in the deli area. We get all our poultry, both branded and private labels, from a brand-name national supplier. Raw chicken, including the chicken that's breaded for frying, is put away immediately and always within 2 hours. Cleaning and sanitation of surfaces are stressed in our raw poultry and meat areas to prevent cross-contamination. Cooked meats are always kept separate from raw products.

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- Fruit salad: Prepared in the same area as the sliced watermelon. See fresh-cut watermelon section for handling and storage questions/answers. Ingredients include grapes, cantaloupe, honeydew, strawberries, kiwi, and blueberries.
- Leafy greens: Pre-packaged leafy green salad mix from a national supplier. Stored at refrigeration temperature in a walk-in cooler.
- Ranch dressing: Provide bottles of the private label dressing (off the shelf).

Roast beef-specific questions because the Epi is pointing to roast beef. Roast beef is a complex preparation process; the EHS inspector will likely dive into understanding and seeing as much of each process as possible.

Roast Beef Source and Receiving Process

1. From where is the beef that is used in the beef sandwiches?
 - We can get the meat for our roasts from a local butcher.
2. Is the beef supplier a USDA-inspected establishment?
 - Yes.
3. How often is beef delivered from this supplier?
 - We get shipments twice a week.
4. How is inventory managed?
 - We have a date labeling system and mark the date of receipt on the boxes. We use the oldest product first, but this time of year we go through beef quickly.
5. How long does food like beef sit before it is refrigerated?
 - We require cold foods to be put away immediately, and always within 2 hours.

Roast Beef Cooking Process

1. Was the beef received raw or cooked?
 - Received raw, and cooked onsite.
2. When was the prime rib cooked for the event?
 - The prime rib was cooked the day before, on June 5 (Tuesday). Smoke flavor is added to the prime rib and it is roasted in the oven.

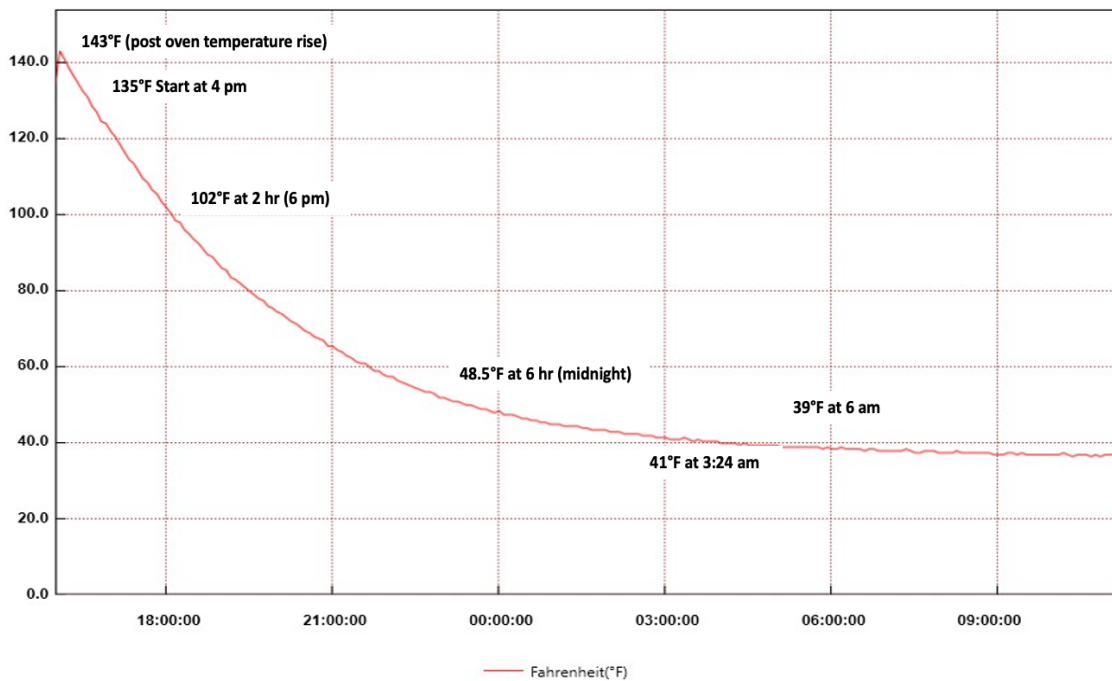
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3. What's the typical method for cooking prime rib? Is it open-air or covered?
 - Cooked in an oven, covered in foil.
4. How long was the cooking process for the prime rib?
 - We started at 11 a.m. and took the roast out at about 4 p.m. We cooked five prime rib roasts (each 15 lbs.) that day in two ovens.
5. What temperature was the prime rib cooked at and what was the internal temperature?
 - Cooked at 225°F. for about 5 hours; the cooling probe shows that it started in the cooler at 143°F., but I don't have the probe data after cooking.
6. How was the internal temperature monitored?
 - The temperature probe was checked to ensure the temperature was reached.
7. Can you provide documentation on cooking times and temperatures?
 - The employee noted it hit the required temperature, but we don't know for how long. I do not see the probe monitoring data for cooking, but I have it for cooling.
8. Are your thermometers calibrated?
 - I think so. Normally they are, but we've had a lot of new people lately.

Roast Beef Cooling Process

1. Was the prime rib properly cooled to reach a safe end-product temperature?
 - The prime rib came out of the oven (around 4 p.m.) and was placed in the walk-in cooler. It took about 11 hours for the prime rib roasts to cool to 41°F. The output from the probe is below for cooling. (**Note - there is a slide with this chart.**)

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2. How long did the prime rib stay in the cooler after cooking?
 - Until the morning of June 6, when the prime rib was removed from the walk-in cooler to be prepared for the party (e.g., slicing, reheating).
3. Was the cooling process monitored, and was the temperature checked during cooling?
 - See the print-out of the probe for temperature monitoring. This print-out serves as our log for cooling the prime rib.
4. Who wrapped the prime rib after cooking, and was it done in a sanitized environment?
 - The prime rib was covered with foil in the oven. Once out of the oven, one of the employees wrapped the prime rib roast in clear cellophane plastic wrap and placed it on a tray for the walk-in cooler.

Roast Beef Slicing, Reheating, and Holding Process

1. You cooked five roasts. How many were used for this catering order? What happened to the others?
 - On Wednesday we sliced three roasts for three catering orders. They weren't all equal, though. One was a big party that needed 1.5 roasts – a few trays of meat. The other parties were smaller – just one tray.

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- We used one other roast throughout the week in our deli case. It was on special and we thought people would buy more, but we still have about one roast left.
2. How was the prime rib sliced and reheated, and what temperature was it reheated to?
 - Prime rib roasts were sliced first cold using a slicer and then reheated in the warmer. The electric slicer is cleaned and sanitized daily; logs are kept.
 - There's no environmental monitoring microdata for the slicer, although once a week the regional food safety coordinator will do an ATP swab after cleaning.
 3. Was the reheating process monitored for temperature?
 - It was not monitored; I don't see any logs.
 4. How was the prime rib held after reheating, and for how long?
 - The sliced roast beef was placed in a warmer cabinet until the customer picked it up. It would have been sliced by 9 a.m. We try to have orders prepared 30 minutes before pick-up.
 5. What type of warmer or holding equipment was used to keep the prime rib warm?
 - Warmer cabinet – Alto Shaam at 125°F.
 6. Was the temperature of the prime rib monitored during the holding?
 - No, the temperature was not monitored.
 - The probe was removed from each prime rib roast upon slicing. No temperature monitoring other than checking temperatures of equipment (e.g., warmer).

Roast Beef Customer Pickup

1. What measures were taken to maintain temperature control and prevent cross-contamination during food preparation?
 - Wash hands, gloves, clean and sanitize the workstation
 - Use new and clean containers
2. What time did the customer pick up the prime rib?
 - Appears it was ready at 11 a.m. on June 6, and the customer picked up the food after – we do not have a time recorded on our sheet. (Participants should remember from Module 1, the host said pick-up was at 1 p.m.).
3. Was the prime rib re-containerized before pickup, or was it kept in its original container?

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- The prime rib roasts were wrapped on trays. Prime rib roasts were sliced cold, and the slices of roast beef were placed in a container that the customer would take home or pick up food orders in.
4. How are foods stored between the time they're prepared and picked up?
- It depends on how busy we are. There were a lot of graduations happening. Normally we try to keep cold things in the walk-in and keep hot things warm, but sometimes we run out of space. On Wednesday it was really busy, so I know the warming case was full.

Leftover Food Products/Disposition

1. Is there any beef left over for sampling?
 - Yes, there is one roast left in the refrigerator.
2. Did you eat any of the roast beef yourself?
 - No
3. Inspectors may consider questions asked by the 'store': Can they re-cook the product? Feed it to their pets?

Other Questions

1. How do you manage and rotate stock to prevent expired products from being sold?
 - Each evening the area manager is supposed to walk through the coolers and look at the dates, and anything that is set to expire within the next two days is flagged for immediate use, and anything that is expired either gets dumped or donated, depending on the item.

Cleaning/Sanitation

1. How are equipment and tools, including knives, cutting boards, pans, etc., cleaned and sanitized between use?
 - Three-compartment sink
 - Oops, our Quat strips are expired by 1 month.
2. How is cross-contamination between raw and cooked meats prevented?
 - We have color coding for tools (cutting boards, etc.) for raw meats versus cooked meats. They are also stored in different areas – if space is tight, RTE foods are always stored above anything raw.