Recommended Practices for Food Facility Operators

The following practices are recommended to food facility operators to ensure the food they are receiving is safe and from an approved food source:

1. Confirm that suppliers have a food safety and security plan in place.
2. Check-in the deliveries, do not allow an unattended delivery.
3. Keep a list of where food products are purchased and maintain copies of invoices/bills of lading for tracking all purchases.
4. Have written procedures for receiving of foods.
5. Be aware of delivery conditions and product quality. Check for tampering, discoloration, pinholes, unusual packages, contamination, and whether potentially hazardous foods are transported at safe temperatures.
6. Use approved food sources only. All raw produce should be washed before using.

Guidelines for Determining Approved Food Sources

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An important part of ensuring that food served or sold by retail food facilities is safe and wholesome, is by verifying that all foods come from “approved” sources. “Approved” means that the facility where the food is produced, prepared, or processed meets or exceeds the standards of the responsible regulatory agency. Approved sources are critical because foodborne illness investigations have shown that the cause of foodborne illness outbreaks is often traced back to foods from unapproved sources.

Each food facility must be able to demonstrate that the processor or supplier they are using is “approved”. It is important to recommend that food facility operators maintain copies of invoices or bills of lading for tracking all purchases. Additionally, inspectors should educate food facility operators to ask for some verification of approval from processors and/or suppliers for their own protection and that of their customers.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Foods Regulated</th>
<th>Federal Agency</th>
<th>State Agency (California Wholesale Distributors and Processors)</th>
<th>Local Agency (City or County Wholesale Distributors and Processors)</th>
<th>Methods of Verification</th>
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| Domestic and Imported food (including produce, bottled water, and other foods) but not meat and poultry | FDA                                   | CDPH/FDB                                                         | San Diego County DEH                                            | • Evidence of regulatory oversight: copy of suppliers local enforcement agency permit, state or federal registration or license, or a copy of the last inspection report.  
• Third party audit results [many vendors now provide third party guarantees, including NSF International or American Institute of Baking (AIB)].  
• Microbiological or chemical analysis/testing results.  
• Man-in-the-plant verification (e.g. chain food facilities may have their own inspector monitor food they buy).  
• Self-certification (guarantee) by a wholesale processor based on HACCP.  
• For raw agricultural commodities such as produce, certification of Good Agricultural Practices or membership in a trade association such as the Western Growers Association or United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association.  
• A copy of a wholesale distributor or processor’s agreement with its suppliers of food safety compliance. |
| Domestic and Imported Meat and Poultry and related products such as stews, pizzas, and frozen foods containing meat or poultry | U.S. Customs Service (Imported Foods) | CDPFA (eggs, game animals, and dairy products)                  | San Diego County DEH                                            | • Registration of importers with the USDA.  
• USDA Mark on meat or poultry products.  
• “USDC approved list of fish establishments and products” located at seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov                                                                                                                              |
| Drinking Water (non-bottled water)                   | USEPA                                 | CDPH                                                             | San Diego County DEH (Small water systems)                       | • A recent certified laboratory report demonstrating compliance with drinking water standards.  
• A copy of the last inspection report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Fish and Fish Products                               | US Dept. of Commerce Seafood Inspection Program (USDC) | CDPH/FDB                                                         | CA Fish and Game                                                | • Evidence of regulatory oversight: copy of suppliers’ local enforcement agency permit, state or federal registration or license, or a copy of the last inspection report.  
• Third party audit results  
• Man-in-the-plant verification  
• Self-certification (guarantee) by a wholesale processor based on HACCP.  
• A copy of a wholesale distributor or processor’s agreement with its suppliers of HACCP compliance.  
• “USDC approved list of fish establishments and products” located at seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov                                                                                                                                 |
| Shellfish (bivalve mollusks)                         | USDC                                  | CDPH/FDB                                                         |                                                                 | • Shellfish Tags  
• Listing in current Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers Publication (updated monthly and available at www.ISSC.org)  
• Listing in current California Shellfish Shippers Publication (updated monthly and available on www.dhs.ca.gov/fdb)  
• Gulf oyster treatment process verification if sold between April 1-October 31 (Nov 1-March 31 certification may be used in lieu of warning signs)  
• “USDC approved list of fish establishments and products” located at seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov                                                                                                                                 |
| Alcoholic Beverages                                  | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms | CDPH/FDB                                                         |                                                                 | • Evidence of regulatory oversight: copy of suppliers local enforcement agency permit, state or federal registration or license, or a copy of the last inspection report.  
• Third party audit results  
• Man-in-the-plant verification  
• Self-certification (guarantee) by a wholesale processor based on HACCP.  
• A copy of a wholesale distributor or processor’s agreement with its suppliers of food safety compliance.                                                                                                                                 |