



Food Defense and Emergency Response Security Guidelines

Keep America's Food Safe

Note: This text version is provided to ensure accessibility. A fully illustrated, [PDF](#) version is also available.

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 forever changed our world. They proved to us that the unthinkable could become reality, and that biological, chemical, and radiological threats to our Nation's food supply are plausible. Since the terrorist attacks on America, critical infrastructure protection-including food security-has been of the highest priority at both the Federal and State levels.

Ensuring safe food from production on the farm, within the processing plant, in transportation, storage and distribution, and at the store is a vital function to protect public health.

This guidance is designed to assist transporters, warehouses, distributors, retailers and restaurants with enhancing their security programs to further protect the food supply from contamination due to criminal or terrorist acts. We recognize that not all guidelines will be appropriate or practical for every entity.

General Guidelines Plan

- Identify a food protection management team.
- Develop a comprehensive transportation and storage security plan.
- Assess and identify vulnerable points of contamination. A flow diagram from your point-of-origin to final destination, including all shipping modes/routes, can be a helpful tool in your assessment.
- Define and implement controls to prevent product adulteration or contamination during transportation and storage.
- Have a system in place to identify and track your product during transportation or distribution (e.g., use of tamper-resistant seals corresponding to specific shipments and their documentation, Global Positioning System).
- Verify that contracted transporters (e.g., air, ground, maritime, rail) and storage/warehouse facilities have a security program in effect.





Consider including specific security measures in purchasing and transport contracts and verify that measures are being met.

- Your security plan should include:
 - Procedures for the immediate recall of adulterated products.
 - Procedures for handling threats to and actual cases of product tampering, as well as an evacuation plan.
 - Safe handling, separation, and disposal of contaminated products.
 - Methods to check and document condition of product and packaging upon receipt at destination.
 - Policy and procedures for rejection of packages and products.
 - Procedures for off-hour deliveries.
 - Updated list of contacts for local, State, Federal, Homeland Security, and public health officials.
 - Procedures to notify appropriate authorities if an event occurs.
 - All entry and exit points available to emergency personnel.
 - Strategy for communicating with the media (e.g., spokesperson, press statements).
- Train each team member in all provisions of the plan.
- Conduct drills regularly to test and verify the effectiveness of the plan. Review plan policies and procedures on an on-going basis.

Screen and Educate

- Conduct appropriate background and criminal checks and verify references on all potential employees (including contract, temporary, custodial, security, and seasonal workers).
- Any personnel without background checks should be under constant supervision and their access to sensitive areas of the facility should be restricted.
- Provide training for employees on food protection practices and vigilance: how to prevent, detect, and respond to threats or terrorist actions.
- Promote ongoing security consciousness and the importance of security procedures.
- Train appropriate personnel in security procedures for incoming mail, supplies, and equipment deliveries.
- Encourage employees to report any suspicious activities, such as signs of possible product tampering or breaks in the food security system.
- Ensure that employees know emergency procedures and contact information.





Secure

- Require a positive ID system for employees and escort visitors at all times in your facility.
- Collect company-issued IDs and keys and change lock combinations when a staff member is no longer employed by the company.
- Secure and restrict access to facilities, transportation vehicles, locker rooms and all storage areas (e.g., with alarms, cameras, locks and fences).
- Designate specific entry and exit points for people and vehicles.
- Secure all access and exit doors, vent openings, windows, outside refrigeration and storage units, trailer bodies, and bulk storage tanks.
- Secure and restrict access to water supply and airflow systems.
- Ensure adequate light in the perimeter areas.
- Handle incoming mail in an area of the facility separate from food handling, storage or preparation areas.

Monitor

- Monitor employees for unusual behavior (e.g., staying unusually late, arriving unusually early, taking pictures of the establishment, or removing company documents from the facility).
- Purchase all food ingredients, food products, and packaging materials only from known, reputable suppliers. Require letters of guaranty, if possible.
- Require advance notification from suppliers for all incoming deliveries, including shipment details, driver's name and seal numbers.
- Require locked or sealed vehicles for deliveries.
- Do not accept products known or suspected of being adulterated.
- Hold unscheduled deliveries outside the premises pending verification of shipper and cargo.
- Require a supervisor or other agent of the owner to break seals and sign off in the trucker's logbook, noting on the bill of lading any problems with the condition of the product.
- Document the broker, seal numbers, and truck or trailer number.
- Have a system in place to ensure integrity of product when seal will need to be broken prior to delivery due to multiple deliveries or for inspection by government officials.
- Supervise off-loading of incoming products, ingredients, packaging, labels, and product returns.



- Verify inbound trucks for seal integrity, seal number, and shipping location.
- Examine incoming products and their containers for evidence of tampering or adulteration.
- Develop a procedural checklist for incoming and outgoing shipments.
- Check food for unusual odor or appearance.
- Seal all outgoing shipments with tamper-evident, numbered seals and list on shipping documents.

Report

- Be aware of and report any suspicious activity to appropriate authorities (e.g., unscheduled maintenance, deliveries, or visitors should be considered suspicious).
 - Trace Forward-Shippers (including operators of federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg processing establishments) and carriers should have systems in place for quickly and effectively locating products that have been distributed to wholesalers and retailers.
 - Trace Backward-Retailers, wholesalers, carriers and others who have received products from federally inspected meat, poultry, or egg processing establishments should be able to identify the source of the products quickly and efficiently.
- Investigate threats or reports of suspicious activity swiftly.
- In the event of a food security emergency, contact your local law enforcement agency first.

Transporters

- Establish procedures to check product load periodically during transit to ensure its integrity has not been compromised. For example, use weigh station stops as an opportunity to check condition of products.
- Establish action plans for emergencies such as breakdowns or being followed, and to report criminal activity.
- Educate drivers to take appropriate precautions while en route (e.g., do not pick up hitchhikers, do not discuss the nature of cargo at stops, be aware of surroundings, and lock vehicle when unattended).
- Require drivers to secure vehicles while en route during breaks, meal stops, overnight stays, etc.
- Hold drivers accountable for ensuring that security measures are taken to prevent contamination of food products.
- Use rail boxcars, trailers, and containers dedicated for food products.





- Secure trucks, trailers, and containers being stored in train yard for any length of time.
- Inspect locks/seals on boxcars at pull and place.

Retailers & Restaurants

- Prevent unauthorized access to food preparation and storage areas.
- Monitor self-serve areas for evidence of tampering.
- Restrict access to compressor rooms.
- Check public areas where an intruder could remain unseen after work hours.
- Require delivery personnel to sign in a logbook and present positive photo ID.
- Restrict access to chemical storage areas.
- Install backflow devices for water systems.
- Identify alternate sources for power and potable water during emergencies where these systems have been compromised.
- Ensure that trash dumpster lids are locked during non-working hours.
- Restrict access to air circulation systems.
- Keep roof hatches and receiving dock doors locked from the inside.
- Instruct employees on how to handle and report suspicious or threatening telephone calls or customer behavior.

Contacts

- FSIS Technical Service Center: 1-800-233-3935
- FSIS Office of Food Security & Emergency Preparedness: 202-720-5643
- National Office of Inspector General 24-hour Hotline: 1-800-424-9121
- FSIS Program Evaluation, Enforcement and Review Contact:
- Local Police:
- Sheriff:
- Local FBI: Local Fire Department:
- Local Health Officials:

For additional information on food security go to:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Defense_&_Emergency_Response/

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For more information please visit the following websites:

If you import food, please visit:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Model_FoodSec_Plan_Import.pdf

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid7.html>

If you transport food, please visit:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Transportation_Security_Guidelines.pdf

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/secguid6.html>

If you are interested in completing a self-assessment of your current security level, please visit:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Self_Assessment_Checklist_Food_Security.pdf

For training materials regarding food defense and terrorism, please visit:

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/defterr.html>

