



FOOD PROTECTION CONNECTION

TALES OF FOOD SAFETY BLUNDERS

BY KRISTIN KLINEFELTER, MS, RDN, LDN

HAVE YOU EVER SAID, “We can’t make this stuff up,” meaning you can’t believe what you’re witnessing when it comes to food safety? Since Certified Food Protection Professional (CFPP) is literally part of the credential after your name, you prioritize food safety. However, food protection and safety practices are not as innate for all people.

Learn from the following food safety blunders while you brainstorm how you can prevent them, or unfortunately, handle them if they occur in your operation.

UFF DA, THE LUTFESK STINKS!

Ole and Lena are the breakfast crew at Hygge House Assisted Living. They take pride in serving authentic Scandinavian meals for their retired farmers from the Midwest. Tonight is lefse and lutefisk night! Ole knows that many staff members have an aversion to the smell of lutefisk, as it is not for the faint of heart. He decided to store and prepare the aromatic fish in the recreation department, where they teach community cooking classes. The stovetop in the teaching kitchen should work just fine. Well, Lars—the resident dog—feels the same as the retired farmers about lutefisk, so he took the opportunity to sniff out and sample the simmering fish. He was successful, as no one caught him.

Q: Can you identify Ole’s food safety violations?

A: See Answers section.

FLAT STANLEY IS WATCHING YOU

On Jo’s nursing home consulting day at Adventures Assisted Living, she brought along a mini Flat Stanley for a friend’s son. Jo asked a new foodservice employee if the traveling cut-out character could “watch” him mix up the pasta salad for lunch. He said yes, so Jo left Stanley propped up on

the counter while she went to get her camera for a photo of Stanley and the new employee. When Jo returned, the employee was elbow deep in the salad, mixing and scooping with his bare hands/arms (the new employee was a large man with hairy arms). Stanley was not impressed and neither was Jo! The employee had come from the restaurant industry and told Jo he had been trained to mix large salads that way. Jo was so shocked she forgot to take the photo, which she regrets. It would have long served as a teaching example of what *not* to do!


Q: What is the correct next step for Jo and Stanley to take?

A: See Answers section.

OLÉ! THE BURRITOS TASTE DELICIOUS!

Jose is the new cook at Sierra Sunset Upscale Senior Living Home. He has a long history of preparing tasty cultural meals with his secret family recipes. Jose is excited to share his skills with the clients at Sierra Sunset. His specialty is jalapeno chicken burritos. Jose’s manager said she will add the burritos to the menu and that if Jose would kindly share the recipe, she can expand it and create a standardized recipe and HACCP plan for the department. Jose wasn’t so sure about sharing his famous recipe, so he gave the manager a recipe he found on Pinterest.

The manager created the standardized recipe, HACCP plan, and order guide for the recipe. On Tuesday, Jose came in ready to share his amazing burritos with the world! Of course, he couldn’t prepare the Pinterest recipe so he took the crumpled recipe card out of his pocket to begin the magic. He was disappointed to see that a few ingredients were missing in the cooler, so he quickly drove home to pick some peppers out of his garden (he has a small hobby farm with cows and chickens) while the chicken thawed and



Many of these stories actually happened in a foodservice operation. The names and locations have been changed to protect the offenders. Except for Flat Stanley; he is real and in therapy for the violation he witnessed. You may have read the story of Flat Stanley, the flat person who can easily travel the world. Many school students create their own Stanley to mail to friends and family in different locations. They soon receive photos of his adventures.

marinated on the counter in the break room. While at home, he picked and chopped the peppers on his outdoor gardening stand and grabbed a sprig of cilantro on the way to his car. He got back to the kitchen at work with just enough time to cook and shred the chicken. He was proud of himself that he remembered to take the temp of the chicken and was 90 percent certain that the temperature needed to be 145°F, so on he went to create his masterpiece.

Q: How many food safety mistakes did Jose make along the flow of the food in his recipe?

A: See Answers section.

THE SAD PAD THAI

Thai Terrific's sales have hit an all-time high this month. They can barely keep up with their large orders and deliveries. Ben, their new delivery driver, forgot the large thermal delivery bags at home today, but has some bins



If you have earned the Certified Dietary Manager, Certified Food Protection Professional (CDM, CFPP) credential,

**YOU PRIORITIZE
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However, food protection and safety practices are not as innate for all people.

in his car that should work just fine. They have a big catering order at noon, along with several workplace deliveries to make. When Ben returned to the back alley of the restaurant to get the next round of deliveries, he was happy to see that the cooks had the meals ready to grab from the top of the dumpster. He didn't even have to get out of his car! When he pulled away from the alley, he saw the adorable cat that hangs out there, waiting for some scraps. Ben had a fleeting thought that maybe he should go back to have the cooks remake the order, but he just couldn't do that to his team. The next day, Thai Terrific received eight calls about foodborne illness symptoms including severe diarrhea, abdominal pain, and vomiting.

Q: What possible violations and illness will the health inspector suspect?

A: See Answers section.



RESOURCES

Scan QR code to view the list of resources for this article.

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CAN'T ALWAYS BE FRIENDS

Cal entered the walk-in cooler at a hospital to find the lab's body fluid samples in a bin on a shelf along with everything else...fruits, vegetables, meats. The lab fridge was having fluctuating temps, so the lab manager and the foodservice director moved the blood and urine samples into the foodservice department fridge.

Q: Does Cal have to dispose of the food products?

A: See Answers section.

THE (UN)LUCKY LEPRECHAUN

The clients at Clover Lane Long-Term Care are lucky, as the dining services department puts on a festive spread for holidays. The truck is arriving at 12:45 pm on March 16 with their corned beef, cabbage, and cream for tomorrow's noon meal. Ciara, the dining services department manager, is having a rough day. She has had three call-ins, so she found herself cooking and serving the noon meal before she rushed off to care conferences. When Ciara was finally done with her day at 8 pm, she discovered a forgotten case of corned beef by the back door. Not knowing what time the delivery was made, she quickly grabbed the case, plugged in the commercial-grade slow cooker, and seared the beef in the oven at a high temperature. Finally, she placed the corned beef in the slow cooker, ignoring the crispy outer layer. She had to go to her son's basketball game and get to bed, so she could wake up early and get to work for another chaotic day. That night, she received a notification that Clover Lane had a power outage with a generator malfunction during the night. By the time she got to work at 6:30 am, the slow cooker was on and it seemed like the corned beef made it through the night just fine. She decided to cut off the crispy outer layer (which was 155°F) as it would be difficult for her clients to chew.

Q: What three Critical Control Points for the corned beef were not so lucky?

A: See Answers section.

THE CHICKENS THAT GOT AWAY

It was the day before a large catering event at Cluck Lane Senior Living. The menu included 150 servings of house-made fried chicken with all the fixins'. Penny, the lead cook, decided to save time for the next day and begin prepping the chicken by par-cooking it to 100°F, battering it, and putting it in the cooler to be cooked to 165°F the following day for service. She left that evening, feeling proud that she saved herself a lot of time the next day. The next morning the manager, Mr. Little, came in to discover the par-cooked chicken and waited for Penny to arrive to discuss a new plan.

Q: What should Mr. Little's and Penny's plan be?

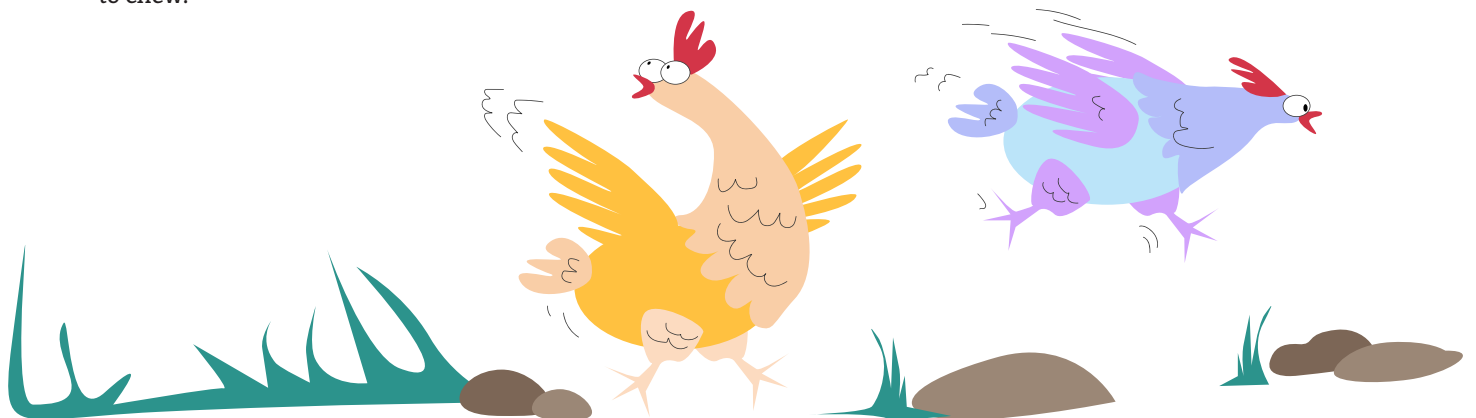
A: See Answers section.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN THE STORIES

Uff Da!

Can you identify Ole's food safety violations?

1. He used a kitchen that was meant for education only. All food that is served by foodservice staff must be prepared in a commercial kitchen that is approved by the local health department.
2. He left lutefisk in a kitchen that a household pet could access. The dog may have transmitted brucellosis, campylobacteriosis, or salmonella—to name a few.



Flat Stanley


What is the correct next step for Jo and Stanley to take?

Jo and Stanley must dispose of the salad and start over. They also should work shoulder-to-shoulder with the new employee to help him unlearn his old, unsanitary habits.

Olé

How many food safety mistakes did Jose make along the flow of the food in his recipe?

1. Not following a standardized recipe with a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan. HACCP plans help staff identify Critical Control Points along the steps of the recipe. They should be developed and followed in your operation.
2. Using homegrown produce in a commercial kitchen (possibly). You may be able to coordinate a farm-to-table effort with a proper food safety policy. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in long-term care requires a policy and procedure for food brought in from the outside, as well as a facility garden policy and procedure. ANFP has templates for both (see resources provided in QR code).
3. Marinating the chicken at room temperature. Potentially hazardous food (PHF) must be thawed and marinated using proper methods. Thawing and marinating the chicken in the cooler, covered and on the bottom shelf, would have been acceptable.



CONSTANT FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION, monitoring, correcting mistakes, and follow-up can be a full-time job and get exhausting. Use your resources and objective problem-solving skills to make your job easier.

4. Chicken not reaching the proper temperature. According to the FDA Food Code: Poultry is required to be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F (<1 second, instantaneous) due to its considerably higher anticipated microbial load.

Sad Pad Thai

What possible violations and illness will the health inspector suspect?

If you follow the flow of the food, it was not properly held at safe temperatures. There also might be animal feces on the food, which could transmit salmonella, toxoplasmosis, campylobacter, giardia, or cryptosporidium. Ish! But wait—there's more! What we didn't know in the original story is that the lead cook, John, was reported to have entered the restroom, taken off one glove, stuffed it in his pocket, used the restroom, and walked out of the stall, holding

his gloved hand in the air while attempting to wash the ungloved hand. He then put the glove from his pocket back on and exited the restroom.

Most likely, the customers were experiencing E. coli symptoms because of John's insufficient hand-washing and poor cleanliness. Again, ish!

IDT Sharing Cooler

Does Cal have to dispose of the food products?

Yes. This is a simple one and goes back to "when in doubt, throw it out." We cannot mix bodily fluids with food, even if the fluids were kept in sealed containers. The staff that disposes of everything needs to wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and thoroughly clean and sanitize the cooler. What a waste of time and money!

Unlucky Leprechaun

What three Critical Control Points for the corned beef were not so lucky?

1. The corned beef was *not properly stored*. It should have been stored in a cooler, on the bottom shelf that is at least 6-inches off the ground.
2. The corned beef was *not properly cooked or held* at a safe temperature. The internal temperature should have reached 145°F. When Ciara seared the beef, she may have prevented the inside from reaching a proper temperature. According to the Food Code, "heating a large roast too quickly with a high oven temperature may char or dry the outside, creating a layer of insulation that shields the inside from efficient heat penetration."

3. The corned beef was probably sitting in the slow-cooker at an *unsafe temperature* of 58°F, the temperature of the kitchen during the night when they lost power. To kill all pathogens, cooking must bring all parts of the food up to the required temperatures for the correct length of time.


Chickens That Got Away

What should Mr. Little's and Penny's plan be?

Unfortunately, the par cooked chicken needs to be thrown out, and they will have to scramble to purchase more chicken and start over for their catering event happening in just a few hours. Par cooking poultry to an unsafe temperature

and then recooling it is not a safe food practice. The time it takes chicken to get from 100°F to 39°F is prime time to grow salmonella and Clostridium perfringens.

EPILOGUE

While these stories are a bit humorous, they could result in serious health consequences. Constant food safety education, monitoring, correcting mistakes, and follow-up can be a full-time job and get exhausting. Using your resources and objective problem-solving skills makes your job easier. To healthy and safe food preparation for all! 



KRISTIN KLINEFELTER, MS, RDN, LDN | ✉ eatsmart@paulbunyan.net

Kristin Klinefelter has been practicing in the field for 25 years. She works in health care, community, and education. One favorite topic among her community college students is food safety, where they learn that their family has been practicing unsafe cooking procedures all of their life! They are determined not to carry on the food safety blunders.



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CE QUESTIONS | FOOD PROTECTION CONNECTION



This **Level II** article assumes that the reader has a thorough knowledge of the topic. The desired outcome is to facilitate application of knowledge into practice by drawing connections among ideas and using information in new situations.



Reading *Tales of Food Safety Blunders* and successfully completing these questions online in the ANFP Marketplace has been approved for 1 hour of SAN continuing education for CDM, CFPPs. To earn 1 SAN CE hour, visit www.ANFPonline.org/market and select **Edge CE Articles** within the Publications section. Purchase the article and complete the quiz.

1. What were Ole's food safety violations with the lutefisk?
 - A. Buying lutefisk in the first place; that stuff is disgusting
 - B. Preparing the lutefisk in the recreation department and in an area that a pet can access
 - C. Cooking the lutefisk on a stove-top
2. What temperature should Jose's cooked chicken reach?
 - A. 145°F
 - B. 155°F
 - C. 165°F
3. Was it OK for Ciara to cook the corned beef in a slow-cooker?
 - A. No, slow cookers cannot be used in food service
 - B. Yes, if the corned beef was cooked to an internal temperature of 145°F
 - C. No, because it probably tripped the breaker, resulting in the power loss
4. Even if you forget all food safety rules, what is a good rule of thumb to teach your employees?
 - A. When in doubt, throw it out
 - B. If you think food is unsafe for residents to eat, try it yourself to see if you get sick
 - C. If it looks good, it is good
5. Once your staff is certified in food handler safety, they do not need supervision to keep food safe.
 - A. True
 - B. False
6. The CCP part of HACCP stands for:
 - A. Cool and Cook Produce
 - B. Critical Control Point
 - C. Cook Chicken Properly
7. How many hours of sanitation and safety continuing education (CE) does this article provide for your 3-year CE credentialing requirement?
 - A. 2 of 4 Sanitation and Safety CE hours
 - B. 1 of 6 Sanitation and Safety CE hours
 - C. 1 of 9 Sanitation and Safety CE hours



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