

Food Safety Excellence

A Differentiator in Uncertain Times

FOOD PROTECTION CONNECTION



How to promote your sanitation and safety practices to increase consumer confidence

Food safety is paramount to overall operational success. In the current new-world COVID-19 environment where we all live and operate businesses, making guests feel safe should be a primary focus. Actively promoting your sanitation and safety practices will increase consumer confidence in returning to places to shop, stay, play, and eat.

Food safety has always been a top priority for the foodservice industry, and that has only intensified since COVID-19. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code serves as the foundation for developing operating procedures related to safe food handling. The Food Code provides guidance rooted in science to ultimately reduce and prevent the incidence of foodborne illness. One of the most important sections of the Food Code outlines the requirements related to sanitation and

personal hygiene. State and local regulators use the FDA Food Code as a model to develop or update their own food safety standards and rules.

Public health departments regularly inspect foodservice operations to ensure safe food handling procedures are being followed. This includes checking that safeguards are in place to protect food from contamination by food handlers, cross-contact, and contamination from other sources in the restaurant. The inspection reports that are generated can be requested from the health department, and many local health departments have online registries of inspections available to the public. Additionally, in certain localities, newspapers publish the results in a sort of “wall of shame” edition. Regardless of the type of access, the data from inspection



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findings assists consumers in making informed and educated choices on dining establishments.

Another way to access scores in some states are graded health inspections where the foodservice operation is given either a numerical percentage score or a color-coded card that is green, yellow, or red, symbolizing how well it performed during its last inspection. Establishments in these jurisdictions are required to post this scorecard in close proximity to the entrance for the public to view.

Publicly posted hygiene grade cards first appeared in the early 1920s when the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) created a Model Milk Code which provided guidance on the production and sale of safe milk products in the U.S. Each state could decide whether

foodservice operations to improve food safety because no one wants an “F” posted at their door.

However, as the saying goes, the devil is in the details, and it’s the details that can help your foodservice operation stand out from the crowd as a shining example of industry safety protocols.

CERTIFICATION ADDS ANOTHER LEVEL OF PROTECTION FOR CONSUMERS

Certification has long been a way for individuals and organizations to demonstrate a high level of commitment and competency in their profession or field. Let’s explore

GRADING SYSTEMS are supported by food safety advocates...grades are an incentive for foodservice operations to improve food safety because no one wants an “F” posted at their door.



or not to adopt this code. The code included a letter grading system for milk—A, B, C, etc.—which was to be placed on the bottles. Many states derived their current food safety grading systems from the basic elements of the Model Milk Code.

Grading systems are supported by food safety advocates because they are much more easily understood by members of the general public who do not possess the knowledge to comprehend a technical food safety report, but can easily read a grade or color-coded scorecard. Additionally, grades are an incentive for

certification and other programs that focus on food safety and sanitation principles, and are responding to the challenge of COVID-19.

Certified Dietary Manager®, Certified Food Protection Professional® Credentialing Program

Most people who are reading this article are very familiar with the CDM®, CFPP® credential. Nearly 13,000 individuals hold this certification as of May 2020. The Certified Dietary Manager, Certified Food Protection

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Professional credentialing program has been offered by the Certifying Board for Dietary Managers (CBDM) since 1985. A CDM, CFPP has the training and experience to competently perform the responsibilities of a dietary manager, and has proven this by passing a nationally-recognized credentialing exam and fulfilling the requirements needed to maintain their certification, including continuing education hours.

The comprehensive section of the credentialing exam which covers science-based food safety and sanitation principles was added in 1996 in direct response to a growing number of state and local governments requiring that foodservice managers obtain certification in this critical practice area. The CDM, CFPP credential positions the individual as a leader in protecting public health through sound foodservice sanitation practices. (See sidebar for more about the exam content areas focusing on sanitation and safety.) CDM, CFPPs primarily work in non-commercial food services, including long-term care, acute care, schools, and other settings.

A variety of general and continuing education (CE) options specifically focusing on COVID-19 have been developed and are being offered to CDM, CFPPs to enhance their understanding of coronavirus and reinforce effective infection control practices. The Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) has a dedicated web page where CDM, CFPPs and others can access general COVID-19 resources; nursing home and long-term care facility guidance; sanitation and safety tools; and crisis and emergency preparedness resources.

Specific offerings from ANFP include a pandemic micro webinar series, a COVID-19 Response Q&A webinar series, and targeted Edge CE articles.

Now more than ever, it's important for your clients, their families, and other stakeholders

to know that a trained professional is working hard to ensure that safe food practices and infection control principles are top priorities in your organization.

FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

While the CDM, CFPP credential is specifically targeted to individuals, other organizations provide food safety training and certificates more geared to dining establishments. And some have developed new programs in direct response to coronavirus.

Two nationally-recognized certificates have recently been developed for the foodservice industry to drive consumer awareness around enhanced cleaning and sanitizing, employee health and hygiene, and other safety protocols in the midst of COVID-19 to hopefully ease consumer fears surrounding dining in public. Below are highlights of each of these new programs.

ServSafe™ Dining Commitment

You're probably familiar with the ServSafe™ food handler and manager program; however, the ServSafe™ Dining Commitment is a newly-developed program whose foundation is based on the National Restaurant Association's (NRA) Reopening Guidance and FDA Best Practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their branded logo is meant to provide a public declaration of its dedication to training staff in safe food handling as well as establishing new guidelines for safe dining to provide assurance to guests that the establishment shares their commitment to health and safety.

Restaurants and other establishments that sign on to the Commitment program should follow NRA Reopening Guidelines and/or Corporate Guidelines based on FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) best practices relating to these focus areas: food safety; cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting; monitoring employee health and personal

THE CDM, CFPP CREDENTIALING EXAM

focuses on four overarching subject areas relating to sanitation and safety:

1. Manage Personnel to Ensure Compliance with Safety and Sanitation Regulations
2. Manage Purchasing, Receiving, Storage, and Distribution of Food and Supplies Following Established Sanitation and Quality Standard
3. Protect Food in All Phases of Preparation Using HACCP Guidelines
4. Manage Physical Facilities to Ensure Compliance With Safety and Sanitation Guidelines

hygiene; and social distancing. Each focus area is fully outlined on the program's website.

Ecolab® Science Certified™—Advancing Cleaner, Safer Practices™

The Ecolab® Science Certified™ program and seal is a comprehensive science-based public health and food safety program that assists foodservice operations to advance cleaner, safer practices and is complementary to practices already in place at your facility.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Lisa Robinson, Vice President, Global Food Safety and Public Health at Ecolab, to get an insider perspective on this new initiative. According to Robinson, the key differentiators of Ecolab® Science Certified™ are the products, training, and verification, combined with the fact that its development is backed by consumer research, culminating in a comprehensive safety program. The idea behind the Science Certified™ seal was to create something that increases confidence for guests and employees. To that end, the company recently introduced an advertising campaign to drive consumer awareness around the seal and what it represents.

To be part of the program and earn the Ecolab Science Certified™ seal, operations must meet specific and rigorous criteria, as detailed on their website.

SUMMING IT UP

These programs are just some of the examples I chose to highlight of the offerings available to you as an operator that can give you a competitive advantage. There are certainly others out there to meet your specific operational needs. Your goal as a foodservice manager is to distinguish yourself within the industry by showcasing your operational food safety excellence. A professional certification or a “seal of approval” can do just that. So much of what we do in food service is based on customer perception, and right now, what the customer wants to see—*needs* to see—is a proactive approach and over-the-top attention to sanitation and safety. By demonstrating your commitment to their safety, the safety of your employees, and the safety of your food, consumers will embrace your foodservice operation as an industry safety leader. ■

ARTICLE REFERENCES

- www.CBDOnline.org
- <https://www.servsafedining.org/>
- www.ANFPOnline.org/COVID-19
- <https://sciencecertified.ecolab.com/>

SAN CE Questions | FOOD PROTECTION CONNECTION



This Level II article assumes that the reader has a foundation of basic concepts of the topic. The desired outcome is to enhance knowledge and facilitate application of knowledge to practice.

CBDM ● ● ● ●
continuing competence
where education advances performance

Reading *Food Safety Excellence: A Differentiator in Uncertain Times* and successfully completing these questions online has been approved for 1 hour of Sanitation continuing education for CDM, CFPPs. CE credit is available ONLINE ONLY. To earn 1 SAN CE hour, access the online CE quiz in the ANFP Marketplace. Visit **www.ANFPOnline.org/market** and select “**Edge CE Articles**” within the Publications Section. If you don’t see your article title on the first page, then search the title, “*Food Safety Excellence: A Differentiator in Uncertain Times*.” Once on the article title page, purchase the article and complete the CE quiz.

- The primary way to increase consumer confidence in foodservice operations is by _____.
 - Installing plexiglass barriers
 - Making consumers feel safe
 - Changing your menu
- Individuals who have earned the CDM, CFPP credential have the training and experience to competently perform the responsibilities of a dietary manager and have demonstrated this by:
 - Passing a nationally-recognized certification exam
 - Fulfilling the continuing education requirement
 - Both A and B
- Your goal as a foodservice manager is to distinguish yourself within the industry by showcasing your operation as a leader in food safety excellence.
 - True
 - False
- Public health departments inspect foodservice operations to ensure safe food handling procedures are being followed, including protecting food from contamination by:
 - Food handlers and other sources
 - Cross-contact
 - Both A and B
- Operational Excellence includes food quality, customer service, and food safety.
 - True
 - False
- Grading systems are supported by food safety advocates because:
 - They are easily understood by the general public
 - Grades are an incentive for organizations to improve food safety
 - Both A and B
- Publicly posted grading cards related to food safety first appeared in the United States in the _____.
 - 1920s
 - 1930s
 - 1950s

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ATTENTION CDM, CFPPs! Purchase your online CE products in the ANFP Marketplace and your completed CE hours will be automatically reported in your continuing education record. This includes all ANFP online courses, archived webinars, and online CE articles.