

# SPAZA SHOP

## HEALTH & SAFETY

## HANDBOOK

### MODULE 1

### TOWNSHIP SUPERMARKET



# Food Safety and Health Standards

## Overview

This module is designed to educate spaza shop owners on essential food safety practices to prevent contamination, ensure health standards, and comply with South African regulations. These practices aim to protect customers' health and build a strong, trustworthy reputation for the business.

# Understanding Foodborne Illness

## Definition and Impact

### **What is Foodborne Illness?**

Foodborne illnesses are infections or intoxications caused by consuming contaminated food or beverages.

They can be caused by bacteria (e.g., Salmonella), viruses (e.g., Norovirus), parasites, or harmful chemicals.

Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain, which can lead to severe health issues, especially in children and elderly customers.

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## **Causes of Foodborne Illness**

- Cross-contamination (when raw foods touch cooked foods or utensils are not cleaned properly).
- Poor personal hygiene of food handlers (not washing hands, wearing dirty clothes).
- Inadequate storage temperatures, which allow bacteria to grow

## **Case Study**

Real-World Example: In recent cases in Gauteng, foodborne illnesses linked to contaminated snacks from spaza shops have resulted in hospitalizations and fatalities. These incidents impacted public trust, leading to stricter health regulations and calls for better compliance in township shops. The case illustrates how foodborne illness incidents harm both community health and business sustainability.

# Food Handling and Hygiene

## Cleanliness Standards

### 1. Personal Hygiene for Food Handlers

**Handwashing:** Handwashing is crucial to prevent bacteria transfer. Wash hands thoroughly with soap for at least 20 seconds, particularly after using the restroom, handling raw foods, or touching garbage.

**Protective Gear:** All food handlers should wear clean clothes, aprons, and hairnets. Gloves should be worn when handling ready-to-eat foods, but they should be changed frequently to avoid contamination.

**Nails and Jewelry:** Keep nails short, avoid artificial nails, and remove jewelry, as these can harbor bacteria.

# Storage Practices

## 1. Correct Temperature for Storing Foods

**Cold Foods:** Keep perishable foods (dairy, meat, seafood) in the refrigerator at or below 5°C. Use a thermometer to monitor fridge temperatures daily.

**Hot Foods:** Maintain cooked foods at or above 60°C if they are being kept warm for service. If foods cool below this temperature, bacteria can grow.

**Labeling:** Clearly label storage containers with contents and dates to ensure older products are used first.

## 2. Segregation of Food Types

Separate Raw and Cooked Foods: Always store raw foods (like uncooked meat) below cooked or ready-to-eat foods to prevent juices from dripping onto cooked items.

Designated Storage Areas: Assign specific shelves or containers for different types of foods (e.g., meat, dairy, vegetables).

# Food Inspection and Quality Control

## Identifying Unsafe Food

### 1. Signs of Spoilage

**Visual Indicators:** Look for changes in color (e.g., green or brown spots), texture (e.g., slime), and consistency.

**Odor:** Spoiled food often has a sour or unpleasant smell.

**Texture:** For products like meat, an unusual slimy texture can indicate spoilage.

### 2. Expiration Date Awareness

**Check Dates Daily:** Monitor expiration dates on all perishable goods and remove expired items from shelves.

**Sell-By and Use-By:** Understand these labels to ensure you're not offering products past their recommended date.



# Daily Quality Checks

## Routine Inspections

**Daily Checks:** Inspect all food items daily to check for signs of spoilage, especially in fresh produce and perishable items.

**Temperature Logs:** Record refrigerator and freezer temperatures each day to confirm they are within safe ranges.

## Supplier Verification

### 1. Choosing Reputable Suppliers

**Certifications:** Purchase products from suppliers with verified safety certifications.

**Reviewing Supplier Practices:** Visit supplier facilities if possible, or request information about their food safety measures.

## Exercise: Food Storage Temperature Log

**Daily Temperature Recording:** Keep a log to record temperatures for refrigerators and freezers. Check and record these twice a day (morning and evening) to ensure consistency.

# Compliance with Local Health Regulations

Regulation 638 of 2018: Food Safety Standards

## Overview:

Regulation 638 enforces the health and safety requirements for food sold in South Africa. It mandates that all food business operators adhere to hygiene and safety protocols and obtain a COA.

## Core Requirements:

**Safe Handling and Storage:** Food must be handled and stored per safe temperature and hygiene standards.

**Health Checks:** Food handlers must be free from infectious diseases and practice good hygiene.

# Certificate of Acceptability (COA)

## 1. Steps to Obtain the COA

**Contact Local Health Department:** Visit the local Environmental Health office or municipal office to obtain the application form.

**Application Form Completion:** Provide details about your business, such as address, type of food sold, and the food preparation area.

**Inspection Appointment:** Schedule a health inspection with the Environmental Health Officer (EHO). They will check for compliance with hygiene, cleanliness, and safety standards.

**Pass Inspection:** If all standards are met, the COA will be issued. If issues are found, they must be corrected, and a re-inspection scheduled.

**Displaying the COA:** Once obtained, display the COA prominently in the shop to show customers that your business is compliant.

## 2. Maintaining Compliance Post-COA

**Ongoing Cleanliness:** Regularly clean and sanitize all food handling and storage areas.

**Routine Inspections:** Expect periodic unannounced inspections from health officials to ensure ongoing compliance.

**Stay Updated:** Keep up with regulatory changes and renew your COA when required

# Practical Exercises

## 1. Hygiene Self-Assessment

Develop a checklist for daily hygiene practices, including handwashing frequency, cleanliness of uniforms, and proper use of gloves and aprons.

Conduct weekly reviews to ensure all team members follow hygiene protocols consistently.

## 2. Food Storage Temperature Log

Use a temperature log template to monitor fridge and freezer temperatures twice daily.

If temperatures fall outside safe ranges, document corrective actions, such as adjusting the thermostat or relocating food to a working unit.



## Module 1 Checklist

**Handwashing Facilities and Supplies:** Ensure handwashing stations are equipped with soap, clean towels, or hand dryers.

**Daily Food Inspection:** Inspect all stock for spoilage, especially perishables, and check expiration dates.

**Separate Utensils and Storage:** Use separate utensils for raw and cooked foods, and assign storage areas accordingly.

**Obtain and Display Certificate of Acceptability:** Complete the COA application, pass the inspection, and display the certificate in a visible location.

This module provides spaza shop owners with actionable steps for food safety and compliance, ensuring that the essentials are in place before and after obtaining the COA. Through maintaining these standards, owners will foster a safer and more reputable environment for their customers.



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