

JOINT INTRODUCTION to the 2009 FOOD CODE

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are pleased to release the 2009 edition of the Food Code. The Food Code is a model code and reference document for state, city, county and tribal agencies that regulate restaurants, retail food stores, vending operations and foodservice operations in institutions such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes and child care centers.

The Food Code establishes practical, science-based guidance and enforceable provisions for mitigating risk factors known to cause foodborne illness. Food safety is a priority for HHS and USDA, and we strongly encourage the adoption and implementation of the 2009 Food Code at all levels of government.

Among the key findings of the Food Safety Working Group created by President Obama was the need to modernize statutes that require effective sanitation and preventive controls in food establishments. An increasingly globalized food supply chain, the aging of our population, increases in the number of immunocompromised and immunosuppressed individuals, and the trend toward greater consumption of foods prepared outside the home demand sustained vigilance by industry and the regulatory community to promote food safety in retail and foodservice establishments.

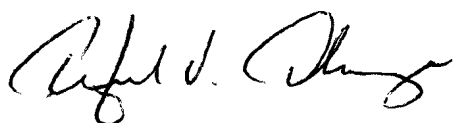
Implementation of the Food Code also supports many of the food safety objectives of Healthy People 2010, the comprehensive, nationwide set of health promotion and disease prevention objectives designed to serve as a 10-year strategy for improving health in the United States. Healthy People 2010 objectives include reducing infections caused by foodborne pathogens, reducing outbreaks of foodborne illness, and improving food employee behaviors and food preparation practices that directly relate to foodborne illness in retail food establishments. Similar objectives are planned for the next generation of the initiative, Healthy People 2020.

Food Code adoption and implementation is important for achieving uniform national food safety standards and for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our nation's food safety system. As of January 2009, 49 of 50 states and 3 of 6 territories of the United States report having retail codes patterned after prior editions of the Food Code. Many federal agencies and tribal governments have adopted the Code as well. We commend these jurisdictions and agencies and urge all to update their existing codes and initiate rule-making that is consistent with the 2009 Food Code.

The federal government is committed to enhanced coordination of food safety efforts with state, local, and tribal agencies, and the food industry to protect our food supply. Establishing uniform and enforceable standards of food safety in retail and foodservice establishments is an important part of strengthening our nation's food protection system. HHS and USDA will continue to take progressive steps to partner with all who have a stake in food safety and are committed to reducing the incidence of foodborne illness in the United States.



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