

# GRAB AND GO LESSON

## Self-Inspections for Food Safety

Health and Safety

**Purpose:** This handout provides a self-inspection checklist to assess food safety practices in child care settings.

Did you know that completing self-inspections or self-audits can reduce (or eliminate) health code violations during a routine inspection? Self-inspections are essential tools for monitoring practices and procedures related to food handling, sanitation, and facility maintenance. They allow facility managers to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas that require improvement.

Regular self-inspections are a priceless tool for ensuring continued cleanliness and safe food handling in the child care setting. Facilities that conduct routine self-inspections typically score higher on health inspections than those that do not. Self-inspections promote product quality and the production of safe food. They further prevent foodborne illness. Most importantly, conducting regular self-inspections will ensure compliance with current foodservice safety practices, as well as the safety of foodservice workers, children, and child care staff.

### Self-Inspection Checklist

The following sample checklist can be used to determine areas requiring corrective action. Each week, use this checklist to assess your facility. Date each checklist, record corrective actions taken, and keep completed records in a file for future reference.

Personal Dress and Hygiene	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hair restraint is worn	<input type="checkbox"/> Fingernails are short, unpolished, and clean
<input type="checkbox"/> Hands are washed thoroughly using proper handwashing procedures at critical points	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoking is observed only in a designated area away from preparation, service, storage, and ware-washing areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry is limited to watch, simple earrings, and plain ring	<input type="checkbox"/> Eating, drinking, or chewing gum are observed only in designated areas away from work areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Hands are washed and gloves are changed at critical points	<input type="checkbox"/> Employees take appropriate action when coughing or sneezing
<input type="checkbox"/> Open sores, cuts, or splints and bandages on hands are completely covered while handling food	<input type="checkbox"/> Disposable tissues are used and disposed of when coughing/blowing nose
Food Storage and Dry Storage	
<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature is between 50 °F and 70 °F	<input type="checkbox"/> Food is protected from contamination
<input type="checkbox"/> All food and paper supplies are 6 to 8 inches off the floor	<input type="checkbox"/> There are no bulging or leaking canned goods in storage

# GRAB AND GO LESSON

## Self-Inspections for Food Safety

Health and Safety

Food Storage and Dry Storage	
<input type="checkbox"/> All food is labeled with name and delivery date	<input type="checkbox"/> All surfaces and floors are clean
<input type="checkbox"/> The FIFO (First-In, First-Out) method of inventory is used	<input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals are stored away from food and other food-related supplies
Large Equipment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Food slicer is clean to the sight and touch	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust hood and filters are clean
<input type="checkbox"/> Food slicer is sanitized between uses when used with potentially hazardous foods	<input type="checkbox"/> All other pieces of equipment are clean to the sight and touch: equipment on serving lines, storage shelves, cabinets, ovens, ranges, fryers, and steam equipment
Refrigerator, Freezer, and Milk Cooler	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer is visible and accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> All food is properly wrapped, labeled, and dated
<input type="checkbox"/> Temperature is accurate for a piece of equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> The FIFO (First-In, First-Out) method of inventory is being practiced
<input type="checkbox"/> Food is stored 6-inches off the floor in walk-ins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit is clean
Food Handling	
<input type="checkbox"/> Frozen food is thawed under refrigeration or in cold running water	<input type="checkbox"/> Food is not allowed to become cross-contaminated
<input type="checkbox"/> Food is not allowed to be in the "temperature danger zone" for more than 4 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Food is handled with utensils, clean gloved hands, or clean hands
<input type="checkbox"/> Food is tasted using the proper method	<input type="checkbox"/> Reusable towels are used only for sanitizing equipment surfaces and not for drying hands, utensils, floors, etc.
Utensils and Equipment	
<input type="checkbox"/> All small equipment and utensils, including cutting boards, are sanitized between uses	<input type="checkbox"/> Thermometers are washed and sanitized between each use
<input type="checkbox"/> Small equipment and utensils are air-dried	<input type="checkbox"/> Can opener is clean to sight and touch
<input type="checkbox"/> Work surfaces are clean to sight and touch	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawers and racks are clean
<input type="checkbox"/> Work surfaces are washed and sanitized between uses	<input type="checkbox"/> Small equipment is inverted, covered, or otherwise protected from dust or contamination when stored
Hot Holding	
<input type="checkbox"/> Food is heated to 165 °F before placing in hot holding	<input type="checkbox"/> Food is protected from contamination
<input type="checkbox"/> The temperature of the food being held is about 140 °F	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit is clean

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Cleaning and Sanitizing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Three-compartment sink is used	<input type="checkbox"/> Chemical sanitizer is properly diluted
<input type="checkbox"/> Three-compartment sink is properly set up for ware-washing (wash, rinse, sanitize)	<input type="checkbox"/> The water is clean and free of grease and food particles
<input type="checkbox"/> A chlorine test kit or thermometer is used to check sanitizing rinse	<input type="checkbox"/> The utensils are allowed to dry
<input type="checkbox"/> The water temperatures are accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> Wiping cloths are stored in sanitizing solution while in use
<input type="checkbox"/> If heat sanitizing, the utensils are allowed to remain immersed in 170 °F water for 30-seconds	
Garbage Storage and Disposal	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen garbage cans are clean	<input type="checkbox"/> Loading dock and area around dumpster are clean
<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage cans are emptied as necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Dumpster is closed
<input type="checkbox"/> Boxes and containers are removed from the site	
Pest Control	
<input type="checkbox"/> Screens are on open windows and doors are in good repair	<input type="checkbox"/> No evidence of pests is present
Other (This is a great place to document any item that you want to keep a record of for that particular day.)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adapted Source: Department of Health, South Dakota, <a href="http://www.doh.sd.gov/documents/Food/Checklist.pdf">www.doh.sd.gov/documents/Food/Checklist.pdf</a>	

### References

County of Los Angeles Public Health. (2016). *Food safety tools for success, food operator's guide*. [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)

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