

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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REGIONAL CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR STREET- VENDED FOODS IN ASIA

CXC 76R-2017

Adopted in 2017.

INTRODUCTION

“Street-vended foods” or its equivalent “street foods” are defined as foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time without further processing or preparation¹. Rapid urbanization and population growth, are expected to continue and street-vended foods, which are largely but not exclusively an urban phenomenon, will expand accordingly.

Street-vended foods are appreciated not only for their wide variety, unique taste, easy availability but also for food security for the low cost. It provides a livelihood for a large number of workers. They preserve the local culinary traditions of a region/place.

SECTION 1 - OBJECTIVES

This Code addresses essential hygienic conditions that should be taken into consideration when setting street food control measures.

SECTION 2 - SCOPE, USAGE AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Scope

This Code defines the general hygienic practices required to be followed to make the street foods safe. It will be useful for all the three major stakeholders (vendors / food handlers, consumers and the relevant authorities) who need to be involved to make street foods hygienic.

2.2 Use

This Code has been intended for use by the Asian countries to ensure the overall safety and hygiene of street vended foods.

2.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, the terms used herein have the following definitions:

- **Equipment²**

The whole or part of any apparatus, vessels, containers, utensils, machines, instruments or appliances for use in preparing, storing, handling, cleaning, selling or supply/delivery of food.

- **Clean**

Free from dirt, dust, grease, waste, food residues as well as all other foreign materials and objectionable odour.

- **Clean Water²**

Water that does not compromise food safety in the circumstance of its use.

- **Contaminant³**

Any substance not intentionally added to food or feed for food producing animals, which is present in such food or feed as a result of the production (including operations carried out in crop husbandry, animal husbandry and veterinary medicine), manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food or feed, or as a result of environmental contamination. The term does not include insect fragments, rodent hairs and other extraneous matter.

- **Crockery/ Cutlery**

All tools used for food preparation, serving and consumption (whether non-disposable or disposable), and they include glasses, plates, dishes, cups, saucers, spoons, forks, ladles, chopsticks etc.

- **Cross-contamination**

Transfer of micro-organisms or other harmful substances from one food (usually raw) to another food either by direct contact or by food handlers or through contact surfaces or through air. Cross contamination can also occur when raw food touches or drips on to cooked or ready-to-eat foods.

¹ *Essential safety requirements for street vended foods, WHO-1996.*

² *Regional Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods (Near East) (CXC 71R-2013)*

³ *Codex Alimentarius Commission, Procedural Manual, latest Edition*

- **Customer/ Consumer**

A person or group of people who buy the food to eat.

- **Disposable articles**

Any appliances, containers, implements, utensils, napkins, gloves or wrappers that are intended for one time use in the preparation, storage, display, serving or sale of food.

- **Food contact surfaces**

Any surface that may come in contact with food during its preparation, cooking, holding and serving.

- **Food handler⁴**

Every person handling or coming into contact with food, or with any equipment or utensil used in food handling

- **Food hygiene³**

Conditions and measures necessary for the production, processing, storage and distribution of food designed to ensure a safe, sound, wholesome product fit for human consumption.

- **Food Safety⁵**

Assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use.

- **Microorganisms²**

Any microscopic living organism that can cause disease or food spoilage.

- **Perishable food**

Food which is subject to rapid decay, spoilage and or growth of microorganisms with or without the production of toxins or metabolites when not kept under the required storage conditions (e.g. milk and milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, etc.).

- **Pests⁴**

Insects, birds, rodents and any other animal capable of directly or indirectly contaminating food.

- **Potable/Drinking Water²**

Treated water, which shall comply with the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality.

(Latest version of the document applies.)

- **Raw Food**

Food that is not cooked.

- **Ready-to-eat**

Any food (including beverages) which is ready for immediate consumption (could be raw or cooked, hot or chilled) without further processing at the point of sale.

- **Sealed Container**

Food grade containers such as:

- a) Hermetically sealed containers;
- b) Sealed jars, with anchor and crown type closures;
- c) Milk bottles sealed with aluminium caps;
- d) Glass or plastic jars and bottles with screw caps; and
- e) Sealed Cans.

⁴ Code of Hygienic Practice for precooked and cooked foods in Mass Catering (CXC 39-1993)

⁵ Regional Guidelines for the Design of Control measures for Street Vended Foods (Africa) (CXG 22R-1997)

- **Street Foods**

Foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time.

- **Street Food Centre²**

Any public place or establishment designated by the relevant authority for the preparation, display and sale of street foods by multiple vendors.

- **Street Food Stall**

A place where street food is prepared, displayed, served or sold to the public. It includes carts, tables, benches, baskets, chairs, vehicles etc. with or without wheels and any other structure on it or in it.

- **Street food vendor**

Individual selling street foods in street food stalls, kiosks, carts or centers.

- **Waste Water**

Sullage water arising as a result of the activity of vendors.

SECTION 3 - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Rules and Regulations

Appropriate rules and regulations should be drafted in order to be implemented easily with the possibility of controlling the street foods sector as an integral part of the food preparation process. Such rules and regulations can either be elaborated separately or incorporated into existing food regulations.

3.2 Registration / Licensing of Street Food Vendors

Where required by the national legislation, street food vendor should have registration/ licensing from relevant authority before starting their business. The registration/identification proof issued by the relevant authority should be displayed on the cart/ kiosk etc.

Relevant authority should issue or renew the registration of any street food vendor who complies with all the requirements of the code of hygienic practice established by the relevant authority.

SECTION 4 - STAKEHOLDERS IN STREET FOOD VENDING

This section deals with the essential roles and responsibilities of the three important stakeholders.

4.1 Street Food Vendors

All those involved in street food vending during conduct of business should observe the following:

- **Personal hygiene:** Should wear clean clothes, hair net etc. When the use of gloves is necessary, they should be disposable and clean. Should keep finger nails short and clean at all times, and avoid wearing jewellery, ornaments etc. during food preparation. Non-infected cuts and wound should be completely protected by a waterproof dressing that is firmly secured and routinely changed.
- **Hygienic behaviour:** Should avoid eating, chewing, smoking and nose while handling food. Should refrain from any unhygienic practices such as spitting, cleaning nose, ears or any other body orifice, touching any body part, touching mobile phone, currency etc. while handling food. Should not sneeze or cough over or onto the food. Should wash hands thoroughly with soap and clean water before and after handling food, after using the toilets, after activity like sneezing, touching any surface.
- **Health status:** Should not show any of the following signs: jaundice, diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, sore throat, discharge from ear, eye and nose, frequent and rapid coughing, visibly infected skin lesions (boils, cuts, etc.).

The above can be ensured through awareness generation, motivation and trainings.

4.2 Consumers

Consumers should avoid eating or chewing, smoking, spitting and touching near the displayed food.

Consumers should not litter the area, should not sneeze or cough near the food.

Consumers should always throw left overs in the waste bin.

Consumers should report to the concerned authorities about unhygienic behaviour of any vendor, if noted.

4.3 Authorities⁶

To ensure proper management of street foods, a multi-sectoral approach involving all concerned authorities viz food safety personnel, local body or municipality, urban development department, police etc. is required.

The authorities should :

- Monitor the hygienic status of street foods being sold.
- Monitor the environmental condition, water safety, garbage disposal, etc.
- Generate awareness, motivate and train food vendors and also customers regularly.
- Involve suitable and experienced experts and voluntary agencies in managing awareness generation, motivation and training of vendors and customers.

SECTION 5 - LOCATION, DESIGN, STRUCTURE AND APPLIANCES

5.1 Street Food Stalls / Carts / Kiosks

The structure of the stalls / carts / kiosks should preferably be approved by the competent authority. Street food stalls should be located in clean, ventilated and non-polluted areas. There should be free accessibility and enough space between kiosks.

Stalls / carts / kiosks should be covered to prevent contamination of food.

All cooking ranges, washing equipment, working tables, shelves and cupboards on which food is placed should be at the sufficient height above the ground to prevent contamination.

Stalls / carts / kiosks should be made of safe material which can be easily cleaned and disinfected.

Waste bins should be covered and made of material which could be easily cleaned and disinfected.

Stalls / carts should have separate storage spaces for raw and cooked food.

Sanitation facilities with water should be provided for vendors and customers at safe distance away from the food handling area at the stalls.

There should be appropriate hand washing facilities with clean water, soap and other cleaning agents and the facilities provided should be kept clean and hygienic.

5.2 Street Food Centres

The design of the street food centre should:

- Be reviewed by relevant authority.
- Provide sufficient and adequate space for orderly placement of vendor stalls for food handling, preparation, storing and serving.
- Allow for orderly flow of materials and goods in and out of the centres as this will help to avoid possible sources of food contamination.
- Allow for the proper placement of client facilities such as toilets, hand washing and eating facilities and be located or arranged in a manner that prevents sources of food contamination.
- Provide suitable, sufficient areas for solid waste storage and crockery and appliance cleaning, washing and sanitizing. These should be appropriately placed so as not to contaminate food.
- Have smooth cement, glazed tile, equipped with properly placed floor drains for the purpose of removing surface water and to facilitate cleaning and sanitizing.
- Have sufficient lighting, properly placed to facilitate food preparations, handling, storage and serving.
- Have smoke hoods above cooking ranges to enable the removal of fuel and cooking gases, smoke and fumes from the centre into the open air.
- Have available ample supply of clean water with adequate facilities for its storage.
- Have appropriate drainage system for waste disposal.

⁶ Based on information/observations contained in 'Food, Nutrition and Agriculture, FAO/ANA, 17/18, 1996 (pp 30-37, Street foods of Calcutta, I.Chakravorty et al)

- Include suitable racks or cases for multi-use containers or bottles with seals.

SECTION 6 - MAINTENANCE AND SANITATION

6.1 Maintenance

The stalls and work surfaces should be kept in an adequate state of repair so as not to contaminate the food as a result of chipping surfaces, loose nails or breakages.

6.2 Water supply and quality

Vendors should have access to clean water.

Quality of water should be monitored at three points regularly: at source, after collection in containers and at usage points.

Vendors should be made aware of hygienic use and storage of water and ice.

6.3 Pest control

Every vendor should at all times take appropriate measures to keep his/her stall free from pest to prevent contamination of the food.

Any contaminated food should be appropriately disposed of. Contamination of food with pest control materials such as pesticides and with fuel, detergents etc. should be prevented.

6.4 Solid and liquid waste handling.

All solid waste should be properly disposed of in suitable containers that are secured with tight fitting lids or placed in waste bins. Collection of garbage by municipalities on a regular basis should be done.

Liquid waste like waste water should be drained immediately into drains or sewers and not allowed to accumulate.

SECTION 7 - EQUIPMENT

All equipment, including containers, should be made of materials that do not transmit toxic substances, odour or taste, are not absorbent and will not result in food contamination, are resistant to corrosion and capable of withstanding repeated cleaning and disinfection.

All equipment, appliances and food cutting surfaces should be kept clean and should be cleaned before and after daily operations and immediately after being used to handle raw food. Only food safe cleaning agents, detergents etc. should be used.

The utensils, cutlery, crockery, equipment etc. should be made of food grade material, should be cleaned regularly and should be kept in good condition. Where feasible, disposable material should be used.

SECTION 8 - FOOD PREPERATION, HANDLING, DISPLAY AND STORAGE.

8.1 Raw Materials/Ingredients and Packaging

All raw materials and ingredients and packaging should conform to applicable standards.

Ice should be made of potable water. Where appropriate, ice that does not come in direct contact with food may be made from clean water.

Packaged food ingredients should be used within expiry dates/ best before date.

Only permitted food additives should be used and in amount not exceeding the levels specified in the relevant regulations.

Food should be wrapped in clean and suitable packaging that can prevent contamination.

8.2 Preparation/ Cooking

Only safe raw food should be used in the preparation of street food.

Raw food should be thoroughly washed in clean water before cooking. When washing raw meat/poultry, caution should be taken to prevent cross contamination of other foods.

Frozen food should be thawed only once and used for food preparation immediately after thawing.

To avoid cross-contamination, raw and cooked food should be handled separately. For this, separate sets of knives and cutting boards should be used. If this is not possible, knives and cutting boards should be washed after every use.

Food should be sufficiently cooked or processed in a manner that renders it safe for consumption (time/temperature).

Cooked food should be re-heated only once before serving.

Cooking oil should regularly be checked for odour, taste and colour, and if necessary, changed.

Where a food is to be served hot, it should be maintained at a temperature above 60°C⁷, keep hot food hot and cold food cold.

Cooked food should be kept in a hygienic place and if not consumed within 2 hours⁷, should be thoroughly heated before serving.

8.3 Handling and Storage

All food should be covered and protected against dust and dirt.

Clean and hygienic crockery, cutlery, utensils etc. should be used.

Disposable plates, covers, glasses, straws, paper towels, cups, spoons, gloves etc. should be used only once.

Ready to eat raw food should be handled most carefully, kept covered and displayed within a cabinet/ case.

Leftovers and unsold perishable food should be disposed of hygienically and not used.

Raw and cooked food should be handled and stored separately.

Seasoning and sauce should be stored at appropriate temperature.

Individual containers or packages should be used for serving of food.

Refrigerate promptly all cooked and perishable food, preferably below 5°C⁸.

Fuel, detergents, soap etc. should be stored in dedicated containers away from the food handling zone.

Transportation, storage of food should be carried out in a hygienic manner and should be consumed within specified shelf life.

After handling such items, hands should be thoroughly washed before handling food.

SECTION 9 - EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Every street food vendor, helper or food handler should undergo basic food hygiene training. Viewed from a general perspective, most foodborne hazards may be prevented by thorough cooking, hot handling, rapid cooling, cold storage, avoidance of cross-contamination or combination of these. Training is to be conducted by the relevant authority or other institutions recognized or approved by the relevant authorities. Street Food Vendors should also be made aware of their responsibility to consumers.

The training material can be pictorial with less of texts. The key messages should be reinforced in short and crisp messages and also delivered in local language. The training material may be water proof so that they can refer to it/ keep it/hang it on their food vending cart/stall too. Information Education and Communication (IEC) material can be developed based on scientific knowledge, preferably developed by experts having past hands on experience, with help of competent authority, agency, Government or experienced Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Consumers should be informed of their responsibility of not contaminating street food vending areas.

⁷ *Five keys to Safer Food Safety Manual -World Health Organization, 2006.*

⁸ *INFOSAN Information Note No. 3/2010 - Safety of street-vended food, 2010*