

DELI & PREPARED FOODS SAFETY CHECKLIST

(Opening / Pre-Shift)

Opening / Pre-Shift Tasks

from to

TASK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Wash hands thoroughly (20 seconds, soap, warm water) before handling any food or equipment.							
Check and record temperatures of all deli display cases, cold-holding units, and hot-holding units. Cold: 41°F or below. Hot: 135°F or above.							
Inspect all ready-to-eat (RTE) products for proper date marking. Pull and discard any items past their 7-day consume-by date (Day 1 = day of prep or opening).							
Verify that all prep surfaces, cutting boards, and utensils have been cleaned and sanitized from the previous shift.							
Check sanitizer solution concentration with test strips. Ensure it meets manufacturer specs (chlorine: 50–100 ppm; quat: per label).							
Inspect the deli slicer: confirm it was disassembled, cleaned, and sanitized at close. If not, clean before first use.							
Stock gloves, deli paper, hairnets, and aprons. Confirm all staff are wearing proper attire including hair restraints.							
Verify allergen information is available for all prepared items. Written notification (sign, menu card, or binder) must be accessible to customers per FDA Food Code.							
<i>Additional Task:</i>							

Instructions:

Complete all tasks before the deli opens for service. The 7-day date marking rule applies to ALL refrigerated ready-to-eat TCS foods prepared on premises or opened from commercial packaging and held for more than 24 hours (FDA Food Code 3-501.17). Day 1 = the day of preparation or opening.

DELI & PREPARED FOODS SAFETY CHECKLIST

(During Service / Ongoing)

During Service Tasks

from to

TASK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Disassemble, clean, and sanitize the deli slicer at least every 4 hours during continuous use (FDA Food Code 4-602.11).							
Change gloves between tasks — especially between handling raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. Wash hands before putting on new gloves.							
Use separate cutting boards, knives, and utensils for raw and ready-to-eat items. Never use the same knife for raw meat and deli products without cleaning and sanitizing between uses.							
Monitor cold-holding temperatures every 2–4 hours. All cold TCS foods must remain at 41°F or below.							
Monitor hot-holding temperatures every 2–4 hours. All hot TCS foods must remain at 135°F or above.							
If using Time as a Public Health Control (no temperature control): label food with the discard time. Food must be discarded within 4 hours if not temperature-controlled.							
Date mark all RTE TCS food prepared or opened today. Label with the item name, prep/open date, and the 7-day consume-by date.							
When combining ingredients with different prep dates, the date mark must use the EARLIEST prepared ingredient's date.							
Keep raw meat stored below and separate from ready-to-eat foods at all times. Use drip-proof containers.							
Refresh sanitizer solution as needed throughout the shift. Test concentration each time it is changed.							
<i>Additional Task:</i>							

Instructions:

The deli slicer is the highest-risk equipment in your department. CDC research found that about half of retail delis do not clean slicers every 4 hours as required. Listeria monocytogenes contamination from improperly cleaned slicers is a leading cause of deli-related foodborne illness outbreaks. Clean every 4 hours — no exceptions.

DELI & PREPARED FOODS SAFETY CHECKLIST

(Slicer Cleaning Procedure)

Deli Slicer Cleaning Procedure

Date

TASK	STATUS
Turn off and unplug the slicer before cleaning. Lock out if your facility uses lockout/tagout procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set the blade thickness to zero and carefully wipe both sides of the blade with a gentle scrub pad to remove food debris.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove all detachable parts: product tray, slice deflector, center plate, blade guard, and sharpening stone.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wash all removed parts with hot soapy water. Rinse with clean water. Sanitize using approved sanitizer at correct concentration.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wipe down the slicer body (non-removable parts) with hot soapy water, rinse with a clean damp cloth, and apply sanitizer spray.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspect the blade for nicks, cracks, or dull spots. Report damaged blades for replacement — do not continue using a damaged blade.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspect all seams, seals, and gaskets for food buildup, cracks, or wear. Food debris in these areas is a major Listeria contamination source.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allow all parts to air dry completely. Reassemble the slicer.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record the cleaning time, date, and staff initials on the slicer cleaning log.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Additional Task:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instructions:

This procedure must be followed every 4 hours during continuous use AND at the end of every shift. Always unplug the slicer before cleaning. Inspect seams and seals for food debris every time — this is where Listeria hides. Never use a damaged blade. Log every cleaning in the slicer cleaning log.

DELI & PREPARED FOODS SAFETY CHECKLIST

(Closing / End of Day)

Closing / End of Day Tasks

from to

TASK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Disassemble, clean, and sanitize the deli slicer (follow Page 3 procedure) at end of day regardless of last cleaning time.							
Date mark and properly wrap/cover all open RTE TCS items. Store in walk-in cooler at 41°F or below.							
Discard any hot-held food that has been below 135°F or held for more than 4 hours (FDA Food Code time/temperature rules).							
Discard any food that was placed under Time as a Public Health Control and has reached its labeled discard time.							
Cool any hot prepared foods that will be stored using the 2-stage cooling method: 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours, then 70°F to 41°F within 4 more hours (6 hours total).							
Clean and sanitize ALL food contact surfaces: prep tables, cutting boards, knives, utensils, scales, and display case surfaces.							
Clean deli display case interiors: remove all products, wipe down shelves and walls, sanitize, and restock.							
Empty and clean the sanitizer bucket. Prepare a fresh solution for the next shift.							
Sweep and mop the deli floor. Clean floor drains if visible debris is present.							
Complete the end-of-day temperature log, slicer cleaning log, and waste/discard log.							
<i>Additional Task:</i>							

Instructions:

The 2-stage cooling method is required by the FDA Food Code for cooling hot foods for storage: 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours, then 70°F to 41°F within the next 4 hours. If food does not reach 70°F within 2 hours, it must be reheated to 165°F and the cooling process restarted or the food must be discarded.

DELI & PREPARED FOODS SAFETY CHECKLIST

(Weekly Deep Cleaning & Review)

Weekly Deep Cleaning & Review

from to

TASK	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH
Deep clean the interior of all deli refrigerated display cases. Remove shelving, clean, sanitize, and replace.					
Deep clean the hot-holding case/steam table. Drain, scrub interior surfaces, sanitize, and refill.					
Descale and deep clean the deli slicer per manufacturer instructions. Sharpen the blade if needed.					
Clean and sanitize all shelving, racks, and storage containers in the walk-in cooler used for deli products.					
Inspect and clean the deli case condenser coils and vents. Dust and debris reduce cooling efficiency.					
Check all thermometers in display cases and walk-in cooler for accuracy. Calibrate or replace any that read inaccurately.					
Review the 7-day date marking log. Confirm all items currently in inventory are within their consume-by date.					
Review allergen information for all prepared items. Update if recipes or ingredients have changed.					
<i>Additional Task:</i>					

Instructions:

Weekly cleaning should be scheduled during a slow period. Thermometer accuracy is critical – an inaccurate thermometer can make unsafe food appear safe. Calibrate using the ice-point method (32°F in ice water) or replace with a new unit.

DELI & PREPARED FOODS SAFETY CHECKLIST

Documentation and Compliance

Date

TASK	STATUS
Maintain a daily temperature log: cold-holding, hot-holding, and walk-in cooler temperatures at opening, mid-shift, and closing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain a slicer cleaning log: date, time of each cleaning, and staff initials. FDA Food Code requires cleaning every 4 hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Log all food waste/discards: item name, quantity, reason (expired, temperature abuse, damaged), and date.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep date marking records showing prep/open date and 7-day consume-by date for all RTE TCS foods.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Document all staff food safety training: date, topics covered, trainer name, and employee signatures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
File any health department inspection reports with corrective actions taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retain all food safety records on-site for a minimum of 6 months (or per your local jurisdiction's requirement).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Additional Task:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instructions:

Health inspectors check temperature logs, slicer cleaning logs, date marking systems, and waste records during every visit. CDC research found that 1 in 4 delis do not properly date mark foods that should be date marked. Complete, accurate records are your best defense during inspections and your proof of due diligence in the event of a foodborne illness complaint.