

The Mushroom Industry Food Safety Training Flip Chart Instructor's Guide

The Mushroom Industry Food Safety Training Flip Chart provides uniform food safety training for the benefit of the mushroom industry and the consuming public. The Flip Chart is designed to deliver food safety training as required in the Mushroom Good Agricultural Practices (MGAP) program.

The training kit contains five comprehensive lessons each designed to provide workers with the knowledge and skills they need to follow food safety rules at work.

The lessons are:

-  **The ABC's of mushroom safety**
-  **Personal hygiene practices**
-  **Hand washing and glove usage**
-  **Cross-contamination on the farm**
-  **The ABC's of mushroom defense**

Each lesson is independent from the other so that they can be delivered separately or all together in one session. However, workers must be trained in all five areas.

Audience

The lessons are specifically targeted at employees who handle mushrooms before, during or after harvest. While harvesters are the primary audience, others who may come into contact with mushrooms such as watering and spawning crews, loading dock operators, and truck drivers should also receive food safety training as necessary for compliance with the MGAP standards.

How to use the Food Safety Training Kit

The flip chart training format relies on illustrations and visual aids to deliver simple, but important, messages. To use this training program, the instructor should display the opened flipchart so that all participants can see the illustrations.

Each page contains an illustration that corresponds to the script on the following page. The instructor reads the script that explains the corresponding illustration. After the script is read, the page is flipped and the next illustration appears. There is no need to memorize the text. However, to make the training sessions more effective, it is advisable that the instructor become familiar with the lesson plan before training begins.

Farm policies

Before starting the training, carefully review and become familiar with the company's food safety policies and make sure that what you teach is consistent with these rules. For instance, some companies might require specific types of hair restraints or may require the use of gloves when handling mushrooms.

Documenting Food Safety Training

If your training is not documented, a food safety auditor will assume that it never happened. To provide evidence that each farm employee has received food safety training, the instructor should create a simple attendance sheet that records the date and the topics covered. Each participant should sign the sheet which should be filed along with other required audit documents. A sample training log is available at www.mgap.org under Logs & Schedules.

Tips for improving your food safety training session

Preparation and class size

The five lessons included in the flip chart can be delivered individually or all at once. They range in length from 10 to 20 minutes, with the complete program lasting approximately 45 minutes. Do not train more than 12-15 employees at a time since it is important that every participant can clearly see the flipchart.

The training program is designed to be delivered to workers at the farm location. Be creative and find a place that will be most successful for delivering training sessions. Consider the employees' lunchroom, the breezeway, a warehouse, the shop, or even a common area in worker housing facilities. But, make sure the training location you choose is quiet enough so that you can clearly be heard and that discussions can occur without distraction.

Nothing is worse for maintaining a good learning environment than having an instructor yell to be heard over a loud piece of equipment. If there is excessive noise in the area, it is definitely not a proper place for learning.

Do not rush the training session. Speak clearly and slowly while looking at the audience. Watch for the audience reactions and engage them by asking for examples of things that happen at the farm.

During each session, try to get participants actively involved by asking them if they have any questions or comments. If necessary, repeat anything that is not clear to them.

Hand washing demonstration

The second lesson teaches hand washing skills. This is perhaps the most important component of the training program. At the end of the hand washing lesson, it is advisable to have each participant go through the six hand washing steps at a hand washing station. Therefore, try to select a training location that is near a hand washing station or a restroom equipped with a sink. Before starting the training, make sure the hand washing station has running water and is properly stocked with soap, disposable paper towels and a trash container.

To hold a hand washing demonstration, ask for a volunteer to come up to the sink. Make sure he/she goes through the proper hand washing procedure steps, especially the lathering step for 10-15 seconds.

Ask the rest of the group to judge how well the volunteer washed his/her hands.

When the first volunteer is finished, demonstrate the correct hand washing procedure to all participants, then have the rest of the group do the same procedure. Make sure each person follows the correct hand washing procedure.

Follow-Up Training and Supervisory Enforcement of the Rules

Management commitment is the key to the success of any food safety program. Merely acquiring knowledge does not always result in positive changes in behavior. Employees may learn that regular hand washing is necessary to keep food safe, but they may not actually wash their hands more frequently. In order for hand washing and other hygienic practices to become habits, enforcement and monitoring by supervisors is essential. It is recommended that supervisors choose a different food safety topic each week for follow-up and reinforcement of the lessons.

Management support of the importance of supervisors in this role will contribute to the success of the food safety program.

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