



Keeping foreign matter out of food

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Know

What do you need to know?

- Many food complaints made to authorities are related to finding foreign matter in foods.
- Foreign matter includes dead pests (e.g. flies, mice etc.), hair, fingernails, band aids, coins or jewellery, bits of cleaning cloth, razor blades, nuts, bolts, plastic and cardboard, stones, twigs, glass, metal shards, etc.

Why is managing the risk of foreign matter in foods important?

- Some foreign matter is unsafe, including hard or sharp objects like glass, hard plastic or stones etc. These can cause damage to the mouth, tongue, throat, stomach, intestine, teeth and gums.
- Keeping foreign matter out of food is important and can be done in a variety of ways. This depends on the types of foods and chance of foreign matter occurring.
- Food is unsafe if you think it contains:
 - glass,
 - hard or sharp foreign matter that measures 7mm to 25mm, in length, or





Know

- hard or sharp foreign objects less than 7 mm or between 25mm and 77mm in length and the primary intended consumers of the product are:
 - children under 6 years old,
 - elderly people,
 - people with dentures.
- Foreign matter from people or pests that gets into food that won't be treated (e.g. heated) to kill bugs (or after treatment to kill bugs) can cause people to get sick.
- Much of the foreign matter found would not cause illness or harm, but could damage your reputation.
- Even if foreign matter doesn't cause harm or make your customer sick, they will often link it to unsafe food practices.
- Many of the procedures in this guide will help, but you could also consider filtration or sieving, visual inspection, colour sorting, implementing jewellery policies for workers, metal detection, x-ray inspection, etc.



Do

What do you need to do?

- Implement procedures to prevent foreign matter getting into food and/or to detect foreign matter in final products.
- Always make sure nothing in your process contaminates your food with foreign matter.
- Calibrate and check the performance of foreign matter detection equipment such as metal detectors, x-ray or colour sorting units.



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Show

What do you need to show?

- Show your verifier:
 - how you keep foreign matter out of food, or check that it is not present in final foods,
 - how you know any foreign matter detection equipment is regularly calibrated.