Self-regulation
In stores and restaurants

An aid to introducing self-regulation in stores and restaurants – both written self-regulation and good work practices

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Revised June 2009
This folder deals with the introduction of self-regulation in stores and restaurants – both written self-regulation and good work practices.

Self-regulation helps you to keep an eye on:

**Food safety**
**Good daily hygiene practices**
**Adherence to laws concerning foods**

All stores and restaurants that produce foods must carry out self-regulation. Self-regulation must be described and documented in a program describing the manner in which regulation is to be carried out. Self-regulation with control of the activities most critical for food safety must be written down. For stores and restaurants, written self-regulation will typically include regular control of temperature in products during storage, heating and cooling.

Small stores and restaurants with limited production and limited selection of products may use The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s example of self-regulation as a source of inspiration in the design of a self-regulation program. You can find it on The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s website: www.fvst.dk > Kontrol > Egenkontrol

Self-regulation provides you with a good overview of what can typically go wrong in your business. With self-regulation you can limit the damage and in this way save money because you will throw out less merchandise.

Some self-regulation must be documented in writing, for some things it is not necessary. It depends on whether food safety may be at risk.

By ‘stores’ is meant e.g.:
- Grocery stores
- Supermarkets
- Butcher shops
- Bakers
- Cheese stores
- Fish stores

By ‘restaurants’ is meant food services in general, e.g.:
- Restaurants
- Pizzerias
- Cafés that produce their own foods
- Cafeterias
- Business canteens
- Institutional kitchens
Self-regulation in stores and restaurants

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Risk assessment
- you should evaluate the processes one at a time

The businesses themselves must judge whether food safety may be at risk. This is called risk assessment.

When you need to decide whether there is a need for written self-regulation or whether good oral instructions are sufficient, you must carry out a risk assessment. You must therefore check all the activities in your business and for each individual activity you must judge:

1. Can this activity incur a risk for food safety?
2. If there is a risk – what should I do to control it?

An activity can be said to be controlled if you are able to control and minimize the risk that the foods can make people ill. This could, for example, be by ensuring that the temperature is sufficiently low for cooled products, ensuring that heating reaches a sufficiently high temperature or by ensuring an appropriate order of cleaning activities.

An activity that requires repeated regular attention in order to control risk is called a critical control point.

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s guidelines for self-regulation include a list with examples of good work practices and the type of activities requiring a self-regulation program and written documentation.

Your risk assessment must deal with:

- Work spaces in your business: e.g. kitchen, dishwashing and cold store.
- Work processes in your business: e.g. heating of foods, grinding of meat, handling unpackaged foods and cleaning of surfaces that come into contact with foods.
- Personal hygiene and training.

The retail branch codes can be helpful in designing self-regulation. If you use a branch code you will not need to perform a risk assessment for those activities described by the branch code.
All foods business must employ good work practices for the way they ensure proper hygiene and ensure that products are correctly labeled.

You may decide for yourself how you determine the good work practices in your business – the main thing is that your work processes ensure that production hygiene, personal hygiene and cleaning are in order, that foods are correctly labeled and that you generally comply with the rules.

Some businesses will likely choose to write down their good work practices to help in controlling everything. This can be an advantage – especially for businesses with many employees, in which more than one person must be familiar with the good work practices. Here, work practices often come to resemble job descriptions or work instructions.

Good work practices typically encompass cleaning, pest control, waste disposal and training of personnel. Examples of more specialized good work practices are e.g. where stores that produce foods ensure that their packaging is appropriate for contact with foods and that products are properly labeled.

Low risk businesses need not have more self-regulation than the good work practices. These are e.g. stores that only sell products that do not require cooling or freezing.
Writing your self-regulation program

When writing your self-regulation program you must consider the issues that have vital significance for food safety.

You can do this by asking yourself the following questions:

- What and where can things go wrong in my business?
- How can I control my business so that things do not go wrong?
- How can I ensure that things do not go wrong?
- What do I do when something nevertheless goes wrong?

When you review these questions at every place where things can go wrong, you get a good overview.

Take, for example a product's course through your business:

- You receive the product
- You handle the product, e.g. put it in the cooling room, prepare it, package it and
- You store the product and sell it - cold counter/buffet/ serving.

In the next three sections you can see examples of what typically can go wrong for stores and restaurants when receiving products, producing products and storing finished products.

When your receive products – what can typically go wrong and what can you do?

When you receive products, they must be fresh and must not make people ill. It is therefore important that chilled and frozen products are sufficiently cooled during transport.

You must regularly measure the temperature of products before storing them.

EXAMPLES OF CONTROL OF RECEIVED PRODUCTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can go wrong?</th>
<th>What can you do about it, and how can you prevent it?</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a risk of e.g. bacterial growth if chilled products are stored at inappropriately high temperatures.</td>
<td>Make an agreement with your supplier to: • Ensure cold transport of the products. • Keep fresh fish on ice. • Deliver the products at a time when you can immediately put them in cold storage.</td>
<td>Measure the temperature of the products at reception, so that you do not accept chilled products that are too warm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**When your produce products – what can typically go wrong and what can you do?**

Restaurants and stores that produce their own foods should ensure that products do not contaminate each other. Bacteria that cause illness can also grow in the foods if they are not heated sufficiently and not cooled quickly.

**EXAMPLES OF CONTROL DURING PRODUCTION OF FOODS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can go wrong?</th>
<th>What can you do about it, and how can you prevent it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Products contaminate each other</td>
<td>Keep products separated – e.g.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- e.g. meat juices on salads or dirt from vegetables in ready-to-eat dishes.</td>
<td>• Meat must not drip onto the salad in cold storage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cutting boards, knives and tables must be washed thoroughly after every use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There must be sufficient space so that storage and preparation of various products are not mixed together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel contaminate the food.</td>
<td>Good instruction to employees about personal hygiene. Instructions to employees about the risk of contagion via food, if one is ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness-causing bacteria from eggs, e.g. salmonella, if the food is not heat-treated (e.g. ice cream, mousse and buttermilk dessert).</td>
<td>Use pasteurized eggs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is an advantage to use a recipe in which the size of portions, time and temperature for heating and cooling are indicated. You then have better control over food safety.

WHEN WARMING AND COOLING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can go wrong?</th>
<th>What can you do about it, and how can you prevent it?</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The food is insufficiently heated.</td>
<td>Adjust the size of portions. The larger the portions, the longer it takes to be thoroughly heated. The temperature of the food should be at least 75° C.</td>
<td>Measure regularly the temperature in the food to ensure that your procedure is sufficiently good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooling time for the food is too long.</td>
<td>Adjust the size of portions. The larger the portions, the longer it takes to be thoroughly cooled. It should not take more than 3 hours to cool down from 65° C to 10° C. Consider dividing large portions up in smaller containers when cooling.</td>
<td>Measure regularly the temperature in the food to ensure that cooling is sufficiently rapid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Min. 75° C 65° C → 10° C 3 hours Max. 5° C
Storing of ready-to-eat products – what can typically go wrong and what can you do?

It is also important to control temperature of items in storage. Cold foods must not become too warm – and hot products must be maintained at sufficiently high temperatures. If not, illness-causing bacteria may grow in the food.

**EXAMPLES OF CONTROL DURING STORAGE OF FOODS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can go wrong?</th>
<th>What can you do about it, and how can you prevent it?</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacterial growth in foods due to insufficient heating during production or to overlong storage in a hot cupboard / on a hot table.</td>
<td>Good maintenance of equipment used in connection with heating of foods, including, for example, thermometers.</td>
<td>Measure regularly the temperature of food on a hot plate. The food should be at least at 65° C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control how long the individual platters and bowls are exposed and wash them prior to filling them.</td>
<td>Measure regularly the temperature of the food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food should not be displayed on a buffet for longer than 3 hours.</td>
<td>Note the time food has been placed on the buffet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not place too many products together in the cold cupboard. This increases the amount of time needed to cool them. Keep the door to the cold storage area closed.</td>
<td>Control regularly the temperature in the cold storage room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buffet remains may not be reused. Therefore, display only small portions at a time.</td>
<td>Use a thermometer to measure the temperature – remains (from the kitchen, not from the buffet) should be at least at 75° C before reusing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You must write your self-regulation down – when dealing with food safety.

You must maintain an account of the part of your self-regulation that involves control of those aspects that are of vital importance for food safety. In your self-regulation program there must therefore be a record of:

- What you write down, and
- How often you do this.

You may use forms for your self-regulation – this makes it quicker.

Your self-regulation program must also include an account of errors. You use this when something goes wrong. You must write down:

- What went wrong
- What did I do about it, and
- What am I doing to ensure that it does not happen again.

You should keep the forms for at least two years.

**Your self-regulation program should always match your business**

Your self-regulation program should always match your business. If you make changes in the store or restaurant you must check as to whether an adjustment of the program is needed.

Changes can, for example, be new equipment, a new product selection or changes in work practices.

You should check the program at least once a year to be sure that it matches your business. Here, forms and error accounts can be helpful to see whether something should be changed.

**Use a branch code**

A branch code is helpful when you need to write down your self-regulation program. The branch code also has forms that you can copy to register your ongoing control.

You must contact the branch organization to get a branch code – some put them on their website and others sell them.

A number of branch codes are available in a digital version, so that you can record your self-regulation results on the computer or mobile phone.

See the list of relevant branch codes and branch organizations for stores and restaurants at the back of this folder.

**If you do not use a branch code**

If you do not use an approved branch code, you must design a self-regulation program yourself.

You can find help for your self-regulation program in The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s example of a self-regulation program for a food business with limited production and selection.

Remember that the example must be adjusted to your business and your activities.

The example may be found at www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk > Kontrol > Egenkontrol
Self-regulation In stores and restaurants

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

If you import your products yourself
If you import food products directly to your business from another country, there are special requirements for your self-regulation.

This applies to both, products from other EU countries and products from countries outside of the EU.

For example, your business must be registered before you begin to import, and you must have a special import self-regulation.

Read more about it at The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s website www.fvst.dk > Import, eksport

Control of your business by The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration will pay you an unannounced control visit. The point of departure for the control visit is control of your good work practices and your self-regulation program.

The inspector will determine whether you have the necessary self-regulation, whether your self-regulation matches your business and whether you ensure that everything is as it should be.

The inspector looks at your self-regulation program and your forms at every control visit. So you must be able to produce it all.

If you do not have control of your self-regulation the inspector can direct you to change it. You can also be directed to have a written self-regulation if your good work practices are not good enough.

If you have just started your business
New businesses must send their self-regulation program together with the application for authorization to the local Danish food council.

The inspector will go through the program with you and assess whether there is a need for adjustments or additions. The self-regulation program is thereafter of part of your business’s authorization.
List of branch codes for stores and restaurants

Here are the relevant branch codes for stores and restaurants - and reference to the branch organization that publishes the code:

Supermarket branch code, tel.: 39621616  www.dsk.dk
Branch code for Bakers and Confectioners in Denmark, tel.: 32630400  www.bkd.dk
Branch code for hotels and restaurants, tel.: 35248080  www.horesta.dk
Branch code for fish retailers, tel.: 35372023  www.fiskehandlere.dk
Branch code for butchers, tel.: 66128730  www.danskeslagtermestre.dk
Branch code for cheese retailers, tel.: 66128730  www.danskeslagtermestre.dk
Branch code for restaurants and cafeterias, tel.: 33251011  www.d-r-c.dk
Branch code for confectioneries, bakeries and chocolatiers, tel.: 97122305  www.akbc.dk

On The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s website is a listing of all branch codes:
www.fvst.dk > Kontrol > Egenkontrol > Branchekoder
Where to find the rules

The rules concerning self-regulation and hygiene are in the EU Parliament and Council’s decree (EF) no. 852/2004 of 29. April 2004 on food hygiene

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration has produced:
Vejledning om egenkontrol i fødevarevirksomheder >>
(Guidelines for self-regulation in food businesses)

Vejledning om virksomheders egenkontrol for aktiviteten import af fødevarer >>
(Guidelines for self-regulation by businesses of the activity of import of food products)

Declarations and guidelines may be found at
Retsinformations hjemmeside >>
The library, book shops or
Schultz Information
Herstedvang 10-12
2620 Albertslund

Tel. 43 22 73 00
E-mail: schultz@schultz.dk

Decrees are to be found on the EUR-Lex website >>
at the library, at bookshops or at the branch organization.

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration’s example of a self-regulation program for a food business with limited production and selection can be downloaded at
www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk > Kontrol > Egenkontrol

This pamphlet can be downloaded at fvst.dk > publikationer