



INTRODUCTION

In food packaging facilities, food safety is the number one priority. This means ensuring that all employees are trained on safe food handling techniques. It also means that employees should be trained on how to notice and prevent anyone from intentionally harming food products.



FOOD DEFENSE BASICS

The U.S Food and Drug Administration launched an initiative to ensure that food industry workers know the steps they can take to practice food defense effectively. This initiative is named under the acronym “FIRST” to remind employees that they are the first line of defense. FIRST stands for:

Follow the company food defense plan and procedures at all times.

Inspect your work area and surrounding areas before, during, and after your shift.

Recognize anything out of the ordinary.

Secure all ingredients, supplies, and finished products.

Tell management if you notice anything unusual or suspicious.





SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

It is important for every employee to monitor their work area and let management know immediately if something seems suspicious. Things to look out for when following the FIRST initiative, are:

- Anyone who does something out of the ordinary in your work area.
- Anyone with an unusual interest in security measures. For example, someone who studies guard shifts or takes pictures of surveillance cameras.
- Anyone making changes to or using your equipment without permission.
- Individuals who are not wearing appropriate clothing or who do not have identification.
- Disgruntled employees, particularly in areas where they don't belong.
- Unescorted visitors.
- Unlocked or open doors that are usually left locked or closed.
- Signs of food materials or supplies being tampered with.



ADDITIONAL SAFE WORK PRACTICES

- Store food products separately from cleaning products and personal items.
- You should be aware of all the codes of conduct relating to your tasks.
- Observe all company guidelines that limit access to the facility and various controlled areas.
- Never give a key card or access code to anyone.



CONCLUSION

The most important part of this process is that you make sure to report anything unusual that you notice. If all of the other steps are completed except for this one, the food defense program will be ineffective. Employees are always to practice food safety techniques to protect against unintentional contamination, and if the food defense program is not followed just as carefully, it could have terrible consequences.