Listeria Controls in Finished Product (Higher Risk) Areas

Preventing Cross Contamination
What is Cross Contamination?

“Cross Contamination” occurs when bacteria, like *Listeria* are moved from one object or place to another.

It is your job to prevent cross contamination if you work in areas where “ready-to-eat” finished products are handled!
What are “Ready-to-Eat” Foods?

Foods that may **NOT** be cooked before they are eaten.

Normally, when we cook foods before we eat them any harmful bacteria (germs) that might be present are killed.
Examples of Ready-to-Eat foods

- Smoked fish
- **Cooked products like crabmeat, crawfish, or shrimp**
- Deli meats
- **Chopped or sliced fruits & vegetables**
- Salads, including seafood salads
How are bacteria transferred from one place to another in the plant?

- By people with dirty hands, clothing etc.
- By dirty utensils such as knives
- By dirty totes or other containers
- By dirty processing equipment
- By dirty carts or racks used to move products around the plant
- By splashing or dripping water

Note: “Dirt” may not always be visible. Any surface that hasn’t just been sanitized should be considered “dirty”
Cross contamination could occur if You

• Touch smoked fish with dirty hands

• Touch other objects with dirty hands that will eventually touch smoked fish

• Allow smoked fish to touch dirty tables, utensils, containers, equipment, etc.

• Go from raw product to finished product areas of the plant without taking precautions.

• Don’t keep your work area cleaned and sanitized.
You prevent Cross Contamination by Washing Your Hands

✓ Before you start work
✓ After using the bathroom
✓ After leaving your work area
✓ Before returning to your work area
✓ After touching your body
✓ After touching dirty objects
You Can Prevent Cross Contamination by:

- Making sure all equipment is clean before you use it
- Keeping your work area clean
- Not bringing personal items to work
- Never putting finished product back onto a packing line if it dropped onto the floor or touched something dirty
Don’t Move from Raw to Finished Product Areas Without Taking Proper Precautions

- People and Equipment in the plant can carry harmful bacteria into the “cleaner” areas where smoked product is handled when they move from one area to another.

THINK BEFORE YOU GO INSIDE

DANGER
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY
• People can carry bacteria on their hands, gloves, aprons, clothing, and shoes.

• Bacteria can get onto equipment, containers, and racks or carts and their wheels.
You Prevent Cross Contamination by:

✓ Cleaning & sanitizing equipment, carts, or containers before you move them from one area to another.

✓ Cleaning up puddles & standing water that could splash onto equipment.
You Prevent Cross Contamination by:

- Washing your hands
- Changing your apron
- Cleaning footwear before going from raw to finished product areas
Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Proper cleaning and sanitizing is necessary to kill harmful bacteria that could contaminate your company's products.

- All food products must be removed, before cleaning starts.
You prevent cross contamination by following company procedures for:

- Routine cleaning of your work area during the day.
- Final cleanup of your work area at the end of the shift.
Clean Work Areas Before Breaks and Lunch

- Put away all products.
- Remove scraps and garbage.
- Wipe down work surface with cleaning/sanitizing solution.
- Check area when you return to work and re-clean if necessary.
End of the Day Cleaning and Sanitizing

1. Put away all product
2. Remove scraps & garbage
3. Wet down work area
4. Scrub with detergent and cleaning pad
5. Rinse
6. Sanitize
You Prevent Cross Contamination

✅ Don’t cut corners - your job could depend on it!!

✅ Use the same care maintaining your work area that you would use when preparing food for your own family.
Safe Food Depends on You

If *We* All Work Together *We* Can Provide Safe Food for *Our* Customers
Credits

This training program was developed as part of a project entitled “Control Strategies for *Listeria monocytogenes* in Food Processing Environments” funded under the National Food Safety Initiative in 2000 by the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Services of USDA Project No. 00-51110-9768.

Lots of hard work was contributed by:

Cornell University  
New York Sea Grant  
University of Delaware Sea Grant College  
University of Maryland Sea Grant  
VPI Sea Grant Extension  
LSU Cooperative Extension  
National Food Processors Association  
National Fisheries Institute