ALERT: The Basics

Food and Drug Administration
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Defending food from intentional contamination depends on you!

**A L E R T**, a food defense awareness program, now available in a web-based training module, will show you what food defense means and how to make it part of your operation.

**Course Objectives:**
- Increase food defense awareness
- Describe the five parts of the ALERT initiative
- List examples of preventive measures you can use
Food Defense is a term used to describe activities associated with protecting the nation’s food supply from intentional contamination. The Food and Drug Administration has adopted 3 broad strategies that encompass its food defense activities:

Prevention > Response > Recovery
Food Defense Continuum

Prevention

- Increase awareness among federal, state, local and tribal governments and the private sector to better understand where the greatest vulnerabilities lie; and

- Develop effective protection strategies to shield the food supply from intentional contamination
Food Defense Continuum

Response

• Develop the capacity for a rapid coordinated response to a foodborne terrorist attack
Food Defense Continuum

Recovery

- Develop the capacity for a rapid coordinated recovery from a foodborne terrorist attack
Integrating Food Safety and Food Defense

• Efforts to integrate food safety and food defense led to a need for the development of tools to assist regulatory stakeholders, such as federal, state and local inspectors, with the task of raising food defense awareness in industry.
ALERT

In today’s world it is important to be ALERT to protect your business.

A
How do you ASSURE that the supplies and ingredients you use are from safe and secure sources?

L
How do you LOOK after the security of the products and ingredients in your facility?

E
What do you know about your EMPLOYEES and People coming in and out of your facility?

R
Could you provide REPORTS about the security of your products while under your control?

T
What do you do and whom do you notify if you have a THREAT or issue at your facility, including suspicious behavior?

Can you answer these questions?

See www.cfsan.fda.gov/alert for more information
FDA’s ALERT Initiative

- Intended to raise awareness of food defense
- Applies to all aspects of the farm-to-table continuum
- Identifies 5 key food defense points:
  - Assure
  - Look
  - Employees
  - Report
  - Threat
How do you **Assure** that the supplies and ingredients you use are from safe and secure sources?

- Know your suppliers
- Encourage your suppliers to practice food defense measures
- Request locked and/or sealed vehicles, containers, or railcars
- Supervise off-loading of incoming materials
How do you Look after the security of the products and ingredients in your facility?

- Implement a system for handling products
- Track materials
- Store product labels in a secure location and destroy outdated or discarded product labels
- Limit access and inspect facilities
- Keep track of finished products
- Encourage your warehousing operations to practice food defense measures.
What do you know about your Employees and people coming in and out of your facility?

- Conduct background checks on staff
- Know who belongs in your facility
- Establish an identification system for employees
- Limit access by staff
- Prevent customer’s access to critical areas of your facility
Could you provide *Reports* about the security of your products while under your control?

- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of your security management system
- Perform random food defense inspections
- Establish and maintain records
- Evaluate lessons learned
What do you do and who do you notify if you have a *Threat* or issue at your facility, including suspicious behavior?

- Hold any product that you believe may have been affected

- **After reporting to local law enforcement officials:**
  - For FDA regulated products contact the Food and Drug Administration
  - For slaughterers or processors contact USDA/Food Safety and Inspection Service.
WEB-BASED TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE AT
WWW.CFSAN.FDA.GOV/ALERT
Product Recalls

First Alert

• Company discovers the problem and contacts FDA
• FDA inspection
• FDA receives reports through CDC or various reporting systems

Unintentional

Voluntary
Recall Classifications

Class I

• Dangerous or defective products that could cause serious health problems or death.

  -Botulinum toxin, undeclared allergens, label mix up on lifesaving drug, or defective artificial heart

Class II

• Temporary health problems or slight threat of a serious nature

  -Drug that is under-strength but not used to treat a life-threatening situation

Class III

• Unlikely to cause any adverse health reactions

  -Minor container defects or lack of English labeling on a retail food product
Alerting the Public

- Serious hazard and wide spread distribution
- Alert the media, press releases, news conferences, updates on the FDA website

www.fda.gov
Effectiveness Checks

- FDA evaluates corrective actions taken by the firm

  Voluntary recalls - firm issues the press release and guidelines for the recall

- If recall is complete, FDA monitors the destruction or reconditioning of the recalled product

- Investigates why the product was defective
Reporting Problems

Emergencies

- Contact local law enforcement
- FDA 24 hour emergency number
  301-443-1240

Non-Emergencies

- New Orleans District Consumer Complaint Coordinator 1-866-289-3399
- USDA Hotline (meat and poultry products)
  1-800-535-4555
CONCLUSION

• The nation’s awareness of terrorism has been heightened and there is an increased focus on protecting the nation’s food supply.

• It is everyone’s responsibility to recognize food defense as an important issue and to get involved.

• Being aware of the threats, identifying the vulnerabilities and taking action to mitigate the risks are activities where federal, state, local and private industry stakeholders must continue to work.