



HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES: FOOD

Reduce Food Contamination During Transport

Each point along the farm-to-fork continuum has its own unique challenge. Food can get contaminated during production, processing, distribution, or preparation. Food safety is enhanced by taking a Health in All Policies approach that integrates health considerations during food transportation and distribution.

Food Transportation

Transporting food and commodities requires multiple steps between the point of origin and point of use. It also involves different modes of conveyance via air, land, railroad, and water. Food-related outbreaks during transportation have been attributed to cross-contamination and improper refrigeration.¹

Major Food-Related Outbreaks During Transportation

- In 1994, a salmonellosis outbreak affecting 224,000 people was attributed to cross-contamination of pasteurized ice cream transported in tanker trailers that had previously hauled non-pasteurized liquid eggs.²
- In 1997, several bodies of deceased stowaways were found in three ships carrying cocoa beans and raw sugar. In at least one case, cargo was spoiled by the decomposed bodies.²
- In 2013, a salmonellosis outbreak affected 261 people and caused three deaths across 24 states. Investigation results indicated that the *Salmonella* contamination in an Indiana grower's cantaloupes likely occurred in the growing fields and packinghouse operations, but was amplified during storage and transportation.³

Sanitary Food Transportation Act

In 1990, the United States General Accounting Office (GAO, now the Government Accountability Office) released a report to address complaints and press reports in the late-1980s indicating that multipurpose trucks may have been hauling garbage after delivering meat, poultry, and produce without taking proper sanitary measures.⁴ Although the GAO report only found limited information on the use of trucks to carry both food and garbage, it did spur Congress to enact the Sanitary Food Transportation Act in 1990, which instructed the Department of Transportation to establish regulations to promote the safe transportation of food products.⁵ The law was amended in 2005 to give the Food and Drug Administration authority to issue regulations that would address the risks to human or animal health associated with the transportation of food. In addition, sanitary transportation practices such as proper temperature control and other criteria had to be met to ensure that food is not transported under conditions that may render it adulterated.⁶

In 2011, the Food Safety Modernization Act (Section 111. Sanitary Transportation of Food) directed FDA to carry out the regulations that were authorized by the Sanitary Transportation Act of 2005. FDA is in the process of finalizing its sanitary transportation rule, which was released for public comment on January 31, 2014.

Indiana Food Transportation Assessment Projects

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has the authority to inspect, embargo, and condemn food in transport. ISDH conducts Indiana Food Transportation Assessment Projects on Indiana's roadways, coordinating with other agencies such as the Indiana State Police (ISP), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and local health departments to examine truck loads for food safety and defense concerns. ISP also has authority to detain a motor vehicle used to transport food if it is not in compliance with ISDH laws.⁷

Since 2008, ISDH has inspected 532 trucks and found 43 in violation of ISDH food safety laws, resulting in the disposal of 29,564 pounds of food.⁷ Violations vary from cross-contamination, food products not kept at acceptable temperatures, and mislabeled food items. ISDH encourages food transporters to maintain refrigeration units so food is transported at the proper temperature, organize the load properly to prevent cross-contamination, and properly label all food items so food may arrive at its destination wholesome and with no danger to human health. ISDH also recommends food safety and defense training for truck drivers who transport food products.

Overview of Indiana's Collaborative Effort⁷ above

- In 2012, Indiana introduced an act (HEA 1298) to amend the Indiana code concerning transportation to develop a coordinated response during a food safety related investigation.
- ISP assists by pulling aside trucks transporting food to conduct vehicle safety inspections.
- ISDH, USDA FSIS, and APHIS examine truck loads for food safety and defense concerns.
- USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine program inspects for pests such as the emerald ash bore.

¹ Keener L. "Transportation: The Squeaky Wheel of the Food Safety System." *Food Safety Magazine*. October/November 2003. Available at: <http://www.foodsafetymagazine.com/magazine-archive1/octobernovember-2003/transportation-the-squeaky-wheel-of-the-food-safety-system/>. Accessed 1-10-2014.

² U.S. Department of Transportation. "Review of Departmental Actions Concerning the Sanitary Food Transportation Act of 1990." Available at: <http://www.oig.dot.gov/sites/dot/files/pdfdocs/tr1998100.pdf>. Accessed 1-10-2014.

³ Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy. "FDA finds field contamination links in cantaloupes Salmonella probe." March 4, 2013. Available at: <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2013/03/fda-finds-field-contamination-links-cantaloupe-salmonella-probe>. Accessed 1-10-2014.

⁴ U.S. General Accounting Office. Report to Congressional Requesters. Truck Transport. Available at: <http://archive.gao.gov/d23t8/141739.pdf>. Accessed 1-10-2014.

⁵ FDA. "Sanitary Food Transportation Act. Available at: <http://www.fda.gov/regulatoryinformation/legislation/ucm148790.htm>. Accessed 1-10-2014.

⁶ FDA. "Focus on Prevention: FDA Food Safety Modernization Act." Available at: www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/UCM277331.ppt. Accessed 1-10-2014.

⁷ Indiana State Department of Health. "Food Transportation." Available at: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/25014.htm>. Accessed 1-10-2014.