

## TOOL 4 - EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS MEETING

**Purpose:** This document provides suggested Agenda and Talking Points for communications and meetings with employees.

**Instructions:** Review this information and prepare your own talking points prior to a meeting with employees. Items marked with “ ” are Meeting Leader duties. The recommendations under Recommended Policies, part C - Illness Prevention and Management are general in nature. Guidance specific to an actual outbreak event should be sought from the Regulatory/Health Authority.

### EMPLOYEE MEETING ATTENDANCE - RECOMMENDED POLICY:

It is suggested that attendance at an employee meeting be required. Employees cannot return to work unless they have attended one of the employee meetings or have been briefed by the management. It is recommended that a meeting roster be created so that you and the regulatory authority know who has attended the meeting and can be placed back on the schedule. The following is a script outlining suggested talking points for the employee meeting.

“We are meeting today to inform you of a confirmed (or suspected, if that’s the case) foodborne illness outbreak that is related (or possibly related) to our establishment. We will provide an overview of the outbreak, reinforce our illness and hygiene policies, and provide some instruction. We are also here to answer any questions that you might have.”

### 1. Overview of Confirmed Foodborne Illness:

- Describe foodborne illness outbreak and name the disease agent (if known).

“We or a representative of the Regulatory/Health Authority may speak to each of you in private to make sure you understand what this means and see if you have any questions about the foodborne outbreak.”

- Review Fact Sheet (Obtain disease fact sheet from your Regulatory/Health Authority. An example could be found on [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov). Consider whether you may need this information in other languages).

“We are providing you with a “Fact Sheet” that should answer many of the questions you might have.”

### 2. Employee Interviews:

“We are working closely with the Regulatory/Health Authority to gather information. You may be contacted to answer questions. The purpose of these questions is to gather information to determine a possible exposure/cause for the outbreak.

The questions may cover employee work history, job duties and other issues. You may be asked to give a specimen (e.g., stool, blood, etc.). You should cooperate fully with them. Please be open and honest with your responses and provide as much information as you can. This will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions.”

### 3. Confidentiality:

“DO NOT discuss this foodborne illness event with anyone other than your supervisor and the Regulatory/Health Authorities.”

### 4. Media Contact:

“If you are contacted by any member of the media (e.g. television, radio or newspaper reporter), direct any questions to <Media Contact> \_\_\_\_\_ at <Media Contact Phone #> \_\_\_\_\_ and let your supervisor know immediately.”  
Do not answer any questions from the media unless your supervisor directs you to do so.

### 5. Review of policies:

At this time, you may want to review recommended policies regarding employee health and hygiene with employees. Recommended policies can be found below. Reinforcement of proper hand washing, good hygienic practices and illness prevention and management is very important! If it is necessary to temporarily make the glove policy more stringent, discuss any new requirements at this time.

“We will now review the company policies on handwashing, glove use, and illness prevention and management.”

### 6. Recommended Policies:

These are considered model practices. They may be used as is or refined based on local and state regulatory codes within your jurisdiction.

#### A. Proper Hand Washing

##### How to Wash Hands:

- Wash hands at designated hand wash sinks only.
- Wet hands with clean, warm running water.
- Apply soap to hands and rub hands vigorously to produce lather for at least 20 seconds.
- Thoroughly rinse soap from hands using clean, warm running water.
- Immediately follow the rinse procedure by drying hands using any of the following methods:
  - Individual, disposable towels.
  - Continuous towel system that supplies the user with a clean towel.
  - A heated-air hand drying device.
  - A high velocity, pressurized hand drying device at ambient air temperatures.
- If individual disposable towels are used, use the same towel to turn off the faucet and then discard paper towel.

##### When to Wash Hands:

- After using the rest room and again upon entering the kitchen.
- Arriving at work and after changing into your uniform.
- Each time you enter the food preparation area. (Wait staff, servers and non-food handling position employees are to wash hands before performing direct food han-

dling task if they have performed a non-food handling task immediately prior).

- After treating a cut or wound on the body.
- Before preparing food.
- Before handling clean equipment and serving utensils.
- When changing tasks.
- When switching between handling raw protein/meat foods (such as chicken, beef etc.) and working with Ready-to-Eat foods (such as sandwiches, produce etc.).
- After handling non-food items or touching non-food contact surfaces.
- After touching your face, hair, clothes or other people, such as shaking hands.
- After handling cash, trash, washing dishes, sweeping, mopping, wiping dining room tables, chemicals or cleaning - and returning to a direct food handling task.
- Coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, or blowing your nose.
- After taking a break.
- After smoking, eating or drinking.
- Before putting on clean, single-use disposable gloves.
- Between disposable glove changes.
- After caring for or handling service animals or aquatic animals (such as molluscan shellfish or crustacea in display tanks).
- Anytime contamination may have occurred.

**B. Disposable glove use (Gloves are never a substitute for hand washing):**

- Single-use disposable gloves shall be used for only one task such as working with ready-to-eat food or raw animal foods.
- Single-use disposable gloves may be required when touching ready-to-eat foods.
- Employees must wash hands prior to putting on a new pair of gloves.
- Never reuse a pair of disposable gloves that have been removed.

- Gloves must be immediately disposed of and replaced after:
  - Touching the body or other people.
  - Sneezing or coughing.
  - Drinking, eating or smoking.
  - Contact with non-food contact surface or item.
  - They have become damaged (e.g. torn) or soiled.
  - Changing tasks.

**C. Illness Prevention and Management:**

Do not come to work if you are experiencing ONE OR MORE of the following:

- Have any foodborne illness or any infectious or contagious disease that can be transmitted by food
- Are vomiting, nauseous or have a fever
- Have diarrhea or loose stools
- Jaundice (yellowish eyes or skin)

“You might want to see a doctor depending on how sick you feel.”

**Employees must immediately inform the Person-in-Charge if they:**

- Have recently been or are currently experiencing nausea, vomiting, fever, sore throat with fever, jaundice or diarrhea.
- Have been exposed to any foodborne illness or a communicable disease that can be transmitted through food.
- Are being tested by a physician for any foodborne illness or communicable disease that can be transmitted by food.
- Have been confirmed by a physician with any foodborne illness or communicable disease that can be transmitted through food.

- Are aware of another employee who is ill with, or has been exposed to, a foodborne illness or communicable disease that can be transmitted by food.
- Live with a family member that has been diagnosed with a foodborne illness or communicable disease that can be transmitted by food.
- Live with an employee that has been diagnosed with a foodborne illness or communicable disease that can be transmitted by food.
- Become ill or begin to feel ill before, during, or after their shift.
- Have been exposed to anyone with symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat with fever or jaundice.

Employees must immediately inform the Person-in-Charge if they are diagnosed with:

- *Salmonella* Typhi
- *Shigella* spp.
- Norovirus
- Enterohemorrhagic or Shiga Toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*)
- Hepatitis A virus
- Other foodborne diseases reportable in your state (ask your local Regulatory/Health Authority for the list)

Employees diagnosed with any of the diseases listed above might be restricted or excluded from work, depending on local or State regulations. In some cases approval from the Regulatory/Health Authority or your physician may be required to return to work.