Crossing the Contamination Line

Strategies to avoid cross-contamination in every step of the food flow.

tizer and let it air-dry for 30 seconds. sprayed each table with spray sanidipped the cloth in sanitizer or every couple of tables, then either worker should have rinsed the cloth ing that they're spreading bacteria." contamination all over the place. of Boston-based Eastern Mass a ServSafe instructor and owner or sanitizing bucket," says Rice, wiping items with cloths, not thinkagain—people just unconsciously I've seen that happen over and over Food Safety. "She was spreading the same cloth, with no rinsing Cleaning with dirty cloths is just "She went from table to table using food-safety consultant Cindy Rice Instead, Rice says, the food-court room-temperature water after **he sight of an employee at a food court worried diligently wiping down tables

nappen. Cross-contamination occurs

food flow is extremely important."

"It's a bigger umbrella than workers touching raw meat chemical before the spray dries. and then chopping vegetables ter sprayed with a cleaning to placing food on a counto preparing foods with without washing their hands. improperly washed utensils,

cross-contamination range from

entegra 360



or equipment. It's any time that chemical. It can come from hands Compliance, National Restaurant pathogens are being transferred from tion can be physical, biological or Association. "Cross-contamina-

bacteria throughout all stages of the Other scenarios that could cause preparing and serving processes. way through the receiving, storing, for keeping foods safe all the tion of meals. Here are key steps begins long before the prepara-Preventing cross-contamination

Palazzolo, Manager of Program most people understand," says Vito says Brian Turner, Senior Manager, it is properly separated on the truck top of the produce, whether they're hermetically sealed [airtight] or not," "Make sure the raw items are not on and that packaging is undamaged. Inspect food at delivery to ensure

one surface or food to another." let the distributor know. Turner adds. If an issue does arise, has the authority to reject product sure the person inspecting the this, but people get busy." Make delivery at your facility is trained and entegra. "Most distributors know Food Safety Information Services

raw meats] on the outside. lot of times salads come mixed and such as premade salads carefully. "A didn't come in contact with other "Be alert for any blood or fluid [from in their containers," says Palazzolo. foods, check ready-to-eat produce When ensuring that raw items

foods and chemicals weren't stored non-frozen foods. "Checking that chemicals, as well as frozen and truck, but also foods and cleaning raw foods be kept separate on the Not only should raw and non-

> temperatures during transport." items are being stored at the proper on the invoice, so I can monitor that temperature of the truck by writing it My stock clerks also report the items and not with any dry storage. that frozen items are with frozen Dothan, Ala. "We do make sure Food and Nutrition, Flowers Hospital, an entegra customer and Director of spot-check," says Barbara Spann, together is one of the main things we

off the truck, watch where you put walk-in coolers and freezers. receiving area to the appropriate transport raw proteins from the Palazzolo. Use separate carts to the produce or next to it," says erly, don't stack the raw meat over it. "After you've received it prop-Finally, as you receive the food

Storage Solutions

ly): first seafood, then whole meats to store them completely separateto be processed. Below that, place then ground meats, then poultry. raw proteins (unless you have room that, place produce that still needs cheeses and desserts. Just below cooked meats, prepped produce, hold ready-to-eat products such as coolers, food should be stored The top shelf or shelves should top-to-bottom order, says Turner. wrapped and covered, in a standard In walk-in, reach-in and prep

cooking temperatures required, based on the minimum internal

The order for raw proteins is

says Rice. be cooked to a higher temperature," chicken juice, since chicken has to to minimize risks in case mean salmonella or campylobacter in the hamburger enough to get rid of any Use color-coded dot stickers to hamburger, you may not cook the juices drip. "If chicken drips on

are different languages spoken in your kitchen," she says. is really effective, especially if there and brown for cooked foods. produce, white for dairy products seafood, yellow for poultry, green for nations are red for meat, blue stored in the proper order, she suggests. Standard color desighelp keep food cases and pans

Prep Protocols

and we try to provide food-safety

akes one outbreak to ruin a facility,

and what's going to be cooked, via

tongs and whisks. knives, mixing spoons, spatulas Partner Ecolab are coming out now of color-coded cutting boards, man prep stage. Following the success with color-coded utensils such as ufacturers such as entegra Preferred vent cross-contamination during the Color-coding can also help pre-

maintaining brand protection. It only that everybody sees it as critical to Global Accounts, Ecolab. "We hope Sciarrone, Assistant Vice President for the task at hand," says John is utilizing the proper equipment determining whether an employee It has simplified the process of stantial impact on the industry "Color coding has made a sub-

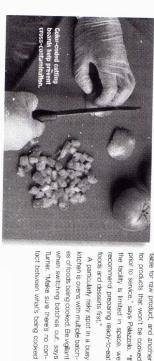
specified for raw beef, fish, kosher produce. "I've seen cutting boards standard color designations, such solutions and tools to prevent that." as red for raw meats and green for Some operations go beyond the spilling or handles," he says. "And don't put a batch of raw stuff above cooked stuff in the same oven."

procedure and policy in place, with ple, designating blue cutting boards no problem with using your own and allergens," says Turner, There's posters available to promote the The important thing is to have a just for peanut-butter sandwiches. color systems, he adds, for exam

the facility is limited in space, we for products that won't be cooked table for raw product, and another nation. "If you have space, have one good way to prevent cross-contamifor raw and cooked foods is another proper use of boards and utensils. Separating prep areas or prep times four hours. "That's no matter what Palazollo. At bare minimum, gloves from one product to another, says any time they become soiled in even if you're staying at the same must be changed at least every any manner, and when switching Gloves should be changed

sure that you're changing them as as a person's hands," she says. "Be Spann. "Gloves can get just as dirty of good handwashing, recommends sense of security or take the place Don't let gloves provide a false

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Clean and sanitize outting boards, utensits and Separate prep areas or prep times of raw proteins

foods, and between raw proteins with different internal work surfaces between prep of raw proteins and other

Properly wash, rinse and sanitize food-contact surfaces at least every four hours, switching between raw proteins and other foods. Change gloves and wash hands well whenever

to use disposable gloves properly. hands frequently and thoroughly and a concern." Train workers to wash how you handle those products is food is maintaining good personal 'From delivery all the way through starts with your hands," says Turner hygiene. "Cross-contamination cross-contamination while prepping Another vital element of avoiding

often as needed."

