

# HOW TO: Maintain Food Safety During Post-Harvest



## ✓ DO

## ✗ DON'T

✓ Separate produce handling areas from farm equipment repair, animal care, and other tasks that could contaminate produce.

✗ Allow the produce handling areas to be used for multiple purposes such as an employee lunch area, animal care, farm equipment repair, etc.

✓ Minimize standing water.

✗ Allow standing water in equipment and on the floor of the packing area.

✓ Use a pest management program to discourage pests in the packing area, such as roosting birds.

✗ Allow trash or cull piles to sit for multiple days and attract pests and/or allow conditions such as torn screens that facilitate pests entering the area.

✓ Provide workers with clean bathrooms and break areas. Keep soap and paper towels well stocked.

✗ Fail to provide workers the materials they need to maintain adequate post-harvest food safety such as soap, paper towels, sanitizers, etc.

✓ Separate produce covered by the Produce Safety Rule from uncovered produce, unless produce items are handled in accordance with rule requirements.

✗ Mix produce covered by the Produce Safety Rule (tomatoes) with uncovered produce (potatoes) risking cross contamination.

Use a 4 part cleaning & sanitizing system

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1. Remove dirt and debris
  2. Apply a detergent and scrub
  3. Rinse the surface with water
  4. Apply an approved sanitizer for use on food contact surfaces

✗ Forget to maintain records of the date and method of cleaning and sanitizing of post-harvest equipment.

✓ Ensure equipment with food contact surfaces and tools used in post-harvest are able to be cleaned and sanitized.

✗ Allow post-harvest food contact surfaces (conveyors, sorting tables, etc.) to be unclean and potentially cause cross-contamination (e.g. using ice made from unsafe water) and fail to regularly inspect and maintain equipment to prevent contamination (cracked hoses, condensation in packing, etc.).

✓ Ensure food contact surfaces in farm and transport vehicles are cleaned and sanitized before post-harvest use.

✗ Fail to regularly clean and sanitize the food contact surfaces in farm and transport vehicles.

✓ Inspect, maintain, and clean, and when necessary and appropriate, sanitize all food contact surfaces of equipment and tools as frequently as necessary to prevent contamination.

✗ Use equipment and tools that aren't able to be cleaned, sanitized, nor properly maintained (fail to ensure thermometers are accurate, precise, and adequately maintained).

✓ Train workers on post-harvest food safety procedures and their job specific duties and make and retain records of the trainings.

✗ Assume workers are aware of post-harvest food safety procedures and fail to provide adequate and (at least) annual training on this subject.



Questions? Contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture at 410-841-5769, [produce.safety@maryland.gov](mailto:produce.safety@maryland.gov)

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