

How to?

17) Address a product recall

Why is this important?

Product recalls can be made for a number of reasons, but they all have one common aim once they have been made: ensuring that potentially harmful food is not eaten by a customer. It is therefore essential that food product recalls are acknowledged and the information is used effectively by all team members.

What to do?

When a food product is recalled, it is essential that all team members recognise the importance of this and know how to act during the occurrence.

A product recall is made by manufacturers of the product or the suppliers, for example, they may have recognised that they have incorrectly stored the food product prior to it being delivered to the food premises. This could be identified following results of microbiological analysis or team members simply recognising that unsafe food practices have taken place.

Once a recall has been made, it is likely the Head Chef of the kitchen, or the manager of the unit/location, will be informed. This will be through email, telephone or word of mouth from an appropriate team member. It is then essential that **all team members in the kitchen / unit** are informed of the recall. This will ensure that all team members are able to look out for the product, and can then take action if it is identified, which could involve disposing of the product or being placed in a safe quarantine area, where it should be labelled appropriately, such as with "**DO NOT USE**".

It is likely that essential information will be provided when a product is recalled. This will include information such as the **product batch number, product barcode, date of production or use by/best before date**. This information should be used when looking to identify if the recalled product is present in the kitchen/unit and if it is found to be, then the procedures detailed above should be followed.

How to?

17) Address a product recall

Check your understanding by:

- What are the likely ways in which a kitchen or unit would find out if a food product been recalled?
- What information should be obtained when looking to identify if a recalled product is present in a kitchen/unit? e.g. date coding etc.
- If a recalled product is identified to be present, how this should be stored/dealt with? Who should be informed?

You can tell it's correct if:

- Team members are aware that product recall can be made at any time.
- There is an awareness that recalls are made and it is not always guaranteed that all products are safe to eat.
- There is a good system of communication between kitchens/units, so that if any product recalls are required, then these can be acted on as soon as is possible.

Hints and tips:

The Food Standards Agency runs an internet page titled "*Food Alerts, product withdrawals and recalls*". This page provides information about product withdrawals and recalls to chefs or unit managers, and helps them know about problems associated with food. This page can be currently accessed at <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/alerts/>.

It is a good idea to keep an eye on this information as this will enable quick action to be taken if a product recall is made which is appropriate to the kitchen/unit.