

CHAPTER 29

SERVICE

GENERAL

One of the most important factors in satisfying the diner is the manner in which food is served. Serving a meal involves more than preparing meats, potatoes, vegetables, and salads and placing the food items on the serving line. The FSS must select the best arrangement for displaying the food items to be served. He must also supervise the serving of food to the diners. Diners are entitled to friendly, courteous, and efficient service. Meals must be served on time so that diners do not have to wait. Thoughtful and imaginative planning and good supervision in the dining facility are musts.

PROGRESSIVE COOKERY

The last soldier on the serving line, as well as the first, is entitled to be served an attractive, well-cooked, hot meal. To accomplish this for up to 1,000 or more diners takes planning. Progressive cookery is a primary method used to provide fresh, hot items throughout the meal-serving period. In progressive cookery, food is cooked in batches at staggered times. You maintain a continuous cooking operation up to and through the serving period. For example, it would take too long to try to cook french-fried fresh potatoes completely at serving time. However, you can partially cook (blanch) the potatoes and cool and refrigerate them ahead of time. Then close to serving time, you can finish the cooking in two or three minutes as you need potatoes. In this way, each diner gets hot, tasty, french-fried potatoes with his meal. When possible, serve French toast, hot cakes, steaks, and chops directly from the griddle to the diner.

SERVING LINE

The order in which you place food on the serving line is governed largely by the equipment, the

space available for cold items, the location of the steam table, and the location of the grill. However, you must follow certain rules. These rules are discussed below.

Protect displayed, open food or drink against consumer contamination with easily cleanable counter-protector devices, cabinets, display cases, containers, sneeze guards, or other NSF-approved protective equipment.

Serve hot foods *HOT* --140° F or more--and cold foods *COLD* --45° F or less. Place only small quantities of food on the serving line at one time. Replenish the food as needed. Place hot items--soup, meat, and vegetables--on the steam table. Place cold items--salads, relishes, and certain desserts--near refrigerators for speed and ease in replenishing.

Ice for consumer use is dispensed only by employees with scoops, tongs, or other ice-dispensing utensils or through automatic self-service equipment. Use of glassware for scooping ice from bins is prohibited. Between uses, ice-transfer utensils must be stored outside the ice bin in a way that protects them from contamination or inside the bin, provided the handle always remains uncovered. Except for ice-dispensing equipment, self-service ice is not permitted.

Arrange food attractively on the serving line. For instance, fresh fruit should be neatly arranged and not just dumped on a tray.

Make certain that trays, glasses, dinnerware, flatware, and serving implements are clean.

See that flatware is on hand at all times for diners. Place flatware at the end of the serving line. This will help eliminate unnecessary walking and help prevent diners from taking more utensils than they need for the meal.

You want those in the line to move as rapidly as possible. To help them, place condiments, salad dressings, and similar items on a condiment table in the dining area. For fast-moving items, select locations for easy access for both replenishment and service.

Make sure serving lines are set up as close to serving time as possible. Hot food should be placed on the line last. Once the line is set up, check menu items against those listed on the production schedule. Sample the food for palatability, and check the serving temperature.

Make sure that grilled items for both short-order and main-course meals are grilled to order.

Make sure pastry and baked items are prepared as close to serving time as possible. They should be cut and replenished in uniform portions throughout the serving time to keep them from drying out.

Check the layout of mobile service and dispensing equipment and self-service beverage-dispensing equipment to see how it affects traffic flow.

Check for plate waste, and try to determine why foods are being discarded.

SERVICE

A primary duty of the FSS or contractor and first cook is to provide good service to the diners. To assist them in carrying out their duties, they assign food servers to serve related food items. They should encourage the use of self-service except for certain high-cost food items such as meat. Self-service may have to be limited when a large number of people must be served in a short time.

SERVERS

Servers must be given instructions about the correct utensil to use for serving each food item. Some of the various serving, utensils

and their uses in the dining facility are as follows:

- Use tongs for serving items that should be picked up and placed in the dish (certain meats, bread, relishes, and similar items).
- Use an ice-cream scoop for serving foods such as mashed potatoes.
- Use the 8-ounce ladle for serving soup. Dip the ladle into the soup, stir the soup, then pour the soup into the bowl. Use the 2-ounce ladle the same way for serving gravy or a dessert sauce.
- Use a basting spoon for serving stews, certain vegetables, and other foods of a fairly soft consistency. Use a slotted spoon for serving any item with which the liquid is not served. If the food you serve sticks to the spoon, use another utensil to free it.
- Use pie- and cake-servers and food-turners for serving pie, cake, and individual salads from a sheet pan. Use a second utensil to push the item from the serving utensil.

REPLENISHMENT OF FOOD ON THE SERVING LINE

The FSS or contractor designates one or more persons to replenish food items on the serving line. Cooks assigned this job must remember the following:

- Do not bring food to the serving line and dump it into an empty or almost-empty serving pan. Instead, take the serving pan to the kitchen, and replace it with a fresh pan of the items.
- Add the food remaining in the pan on the serving line to the new supply before bringing it from the kitchen. Do not do this if the food is baked in the pan from which it is served (for example, turkey pot pie, macaroni and cheese, and baked beans).
- Be sure each new tray of food you bring to the serving line is as appetizing and attractive as the first.
- Try to minimize interfering with traffic flow while replenishing food items.
- Additional guidance on food display, service, and sanitation is in TB MED 530.