

The Food Innovation Team (FIT)

FIT at a glance

The Food Innovation Team is a forum where experts in food regulation and regional food systems come together with food entrepreneurs to review business models that do not easily fit into existing statutory licensing structures. FIT makes recommendations and advises on the best pathway to licensing of these complex models.

FIT works as part of the current licensing process; it does not replace any part of the current process. FIT does not confer licenses of any kind. This task remains the work of regulators.

FIT brings regulators and members of nonprofits together to aid food business entrepreneurs in their quest for licensing their business models. FIT membership is entirely voluntary. Some members may already attend Task Force meetings; others, may be called on an as-needed basis. Ad hoc members belong to nonprofits that already work to advance the local food system.

FIT may work best by being part of the Food Safety and Defense Task Force, as a sub-committee within this Task Force. FIT aligns with the Task Force's mission and fits well within its structure. FIT would then be able to work beyond the term of those who currently support the idea.

How was the need for FIT identified?

Innovation in food processes and food business models is increasing. Licensing these businesses is difficult because regulations may not exist that address the new model, interpretations differ from inspector to inspector or jurisdictional boundaries may not be clear.

When there is lack of clarity on jurisdiction or interpretation, the licensing process **slows down or stops**, leaving entrepreneurs unable to open their businesses within a reasonable time-frame or at all.

Licensing complex cases takes time. Supervisors need to get involved and there is no process by which inspectors and entrepreneurs can discuss and adjust the model to arrive at licensing more quickly.

Licensing may be denied. Since there is no appeals process, the food entrepreneur is left with few choices. Either the entrepreneur abandons the model altogether or changes it substantially so it can fit current licensing categories.

In 2014, a team of professionals representing government agencies, community nonprofits, the University of Minnesota, and individual businesses received funding from a Bush Innovation Grant to find ways to improve the licensing process for small food businesses in MN. The improvements had to remain focused on food safety and provide a speedier path to licensing. FIT was one of the solutions that the group identified. Several case studies were used to exemplify different issues with the current system.

Input for the creation and support of FIT came from food business entrepreneurs, from members of various nonprofit organizations such as MFMA, MISA, RTC, and others, and from regulators at MDA and MDH. The birth of FIT was truly a collaborative process that brought government agencies, nonprofits and business owners together to work toward a common goal.

Proposal

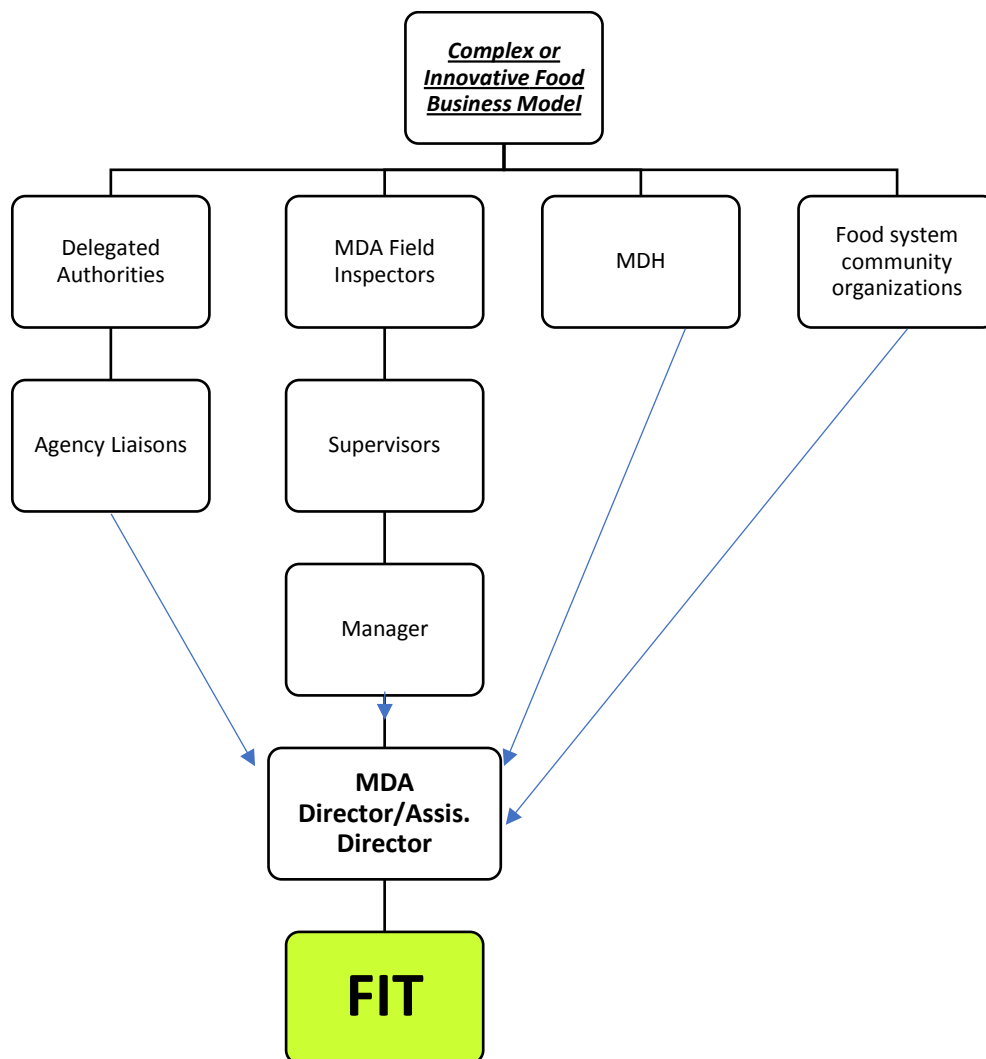
To pilot FIT, we ask the FSDTF to consider a motion to create a FIT sub-committee. Membership within this sub-committee, as will all FSDTF sub-committees, is strictly voluntary.

When does FIT operate?

FIT comes into the licensing process when MDA Director or Assistant Director requests a case review.

A case review request may result from (but not limited to) the following issues:

- When the applicable regulation is ambiguous and open to different interpretations,
- When jurisdiction can't be easily ascertained,
- When new or unusual processes or ingredients are proposed for which there is no licensing precedent, or
- When the business model does not fit into currently existing licensing categories.



How does FIT work?

The MDA Food and Feed Division Administrators and Community-based food system groups decide which cases FIT will consider.

FIT brings together the business owner, MDA supervisors, the original inspector, representatives from non-profits with interest in local food systems, delegated authorities, or anyone who is interested in discussing, advising and learning how a complex model can be licensed.

The group learns about the case ahead of a meeting time, and facilitates a discussion on how to move the licensing process forward and within what timeframe. The group may also review complex cases that have already been resolved for “shared learning” and for building a database.

What is learned from this process is added to a database. This repository of information is shared with all interested parties. This feedback loop allows for the continuous improvement of the food licensing and inspection process.

FIT adds to the current process; it does not replace or modify the current sequence. Final licensing decisions remain with the agency with jurisdiction – MDA, MDH, or delegated authority.

FIT makes recommendations and advises; it does not license nor disrupt the established sequence of authority.

When appropriate and necessary, FIT will refer license applicants out to other types of business development experts.

What are the goals of FIT?

Primary goal:

Provide a forum to facilitate discussion among regulatory agencies, food-system community organizations and innovative food businesses facing difficult or complex licensing issues to arrive at a mutually-agreeable resolution for a “licensable” business within a reasonable amount of time.

Ancillary goals:

- Expedite the licensing process while maintaining food safety.
- Provide feedback to agencies and community organizations for the continual improvement of the licensing and inspection process.
- Create a database of case studies and lessons learned.
- Aid in the creation of guidance documents for use by both regulators and food entrepreneurs.
- Refer innovative food business entrepreneurs to business experts or organizations (such as DEEDS) when needed.

What are the benefits of FIT?

For food entrepreneurs: an accessible forum where licensing and food safety issues may be resolved in a timely manner and within the framework of their innovative food business model.

For the agencies and delegated authorities: a means of increasing outreach and engagement with the public; access to a database of complex cases and their resolutions; continual improvement of the licensing process.

For community-based food system organizations: access to a link between food business innovators and regulatory agencies; access to a database of decisions that will improve their interactions with entrepreneurs.

For the Minnesota economy: an innovative food business environment where these businesses can open their doors in a timely manner; a system that may create more jobs and more tax revenue.

Who is FIT?

The Food Innovation Team is proposed to be a sub-committee of the Food Safety and Defense Task Force, supported by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, with participation by the MDH Food, Pools, and Lodging Division and by delegated authorities under MDA and MDH.

The FIT will include representatives from the local food, farming, and small-scale food manufacturing communities. Those community-based members will supply non-regulatory food system expertise and will be able to assist with access to additional resources new food entrepreneurs may need. These members already work toward building an innovative local food system, so participation in FIT will provide a natural extension of their mission.

License applicants may also participate, and any team member may request participation of additional experts.

What is the role of the Food Safety and Defense Task Force relative to FIT?

For FIT to work, it needs to be a permanent group that can withstand changes in administration and culture. It needs to live somewhere within an existing structure, at least during the pilot phase. We thought establishing FIT as a sub-committee of this Task Force makes sense:

FIT fulfills some of the duties of this Task Force:

- (2) provide advice and coordination to state agencies as requested by the agencies;
- (4) make recommendations about appropriate action to improve food safety and defense in the state.

This Task force is coordinated and attended by MDA staff persons from the same Food & Feed Licensing Division that has authority over food manufacturing and handling. These MDA persons already have working relationships with MDH regulators with similar authority. And these MDA and MDH regulators have existing working relationships with their delegated authorities.

What the Food Safety & Defense Task Force will do is create the official venue where regulatory, legal, business, and food system expertise can come together to resolve specific licensing issues.

What would the responsibilities of the Task Force be were it to adopt FIT?

To draft an amendment to the charter that establishes FIT as a permanent sub-committee of the Task Force, thus creating an official venue where regulatory, legal, business, and food system expertise collaborate to resolve complex licensing issues.

No member of the Task Force is obligated to participate in this forum, but all are welcome to sit in, listen, advise, learn

FIT will not make decisions on licensing. FIT will only make recommendations.

The role of the Innovation Team sub-committee will be to take difficult cases and resolve questions of jurisdiction and legal interpretation. The definitive answers on these points will come from MDA, MDH, or delegated authority staff who are authorized within their agencies to make such determinations. Once determinations are made, the cases will be sent to the correct regulatory authority with jurisdiction to complete the actual licensing.

How are members of FIT chosen?

Membership to this committee will be strictly voluntary, with no current members of the Task Force mandated to participate. The skeleton membership of FIT will include representatives of MDA, MDH and the DA's, who already attend Task Force meetings. Other ad hoc members will be invited on an as-needed basis.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Doesn't something like FIT already happen within MDA, MDH, and delegated authorities?

A. Often, yes. But sometimes figuring out how to license complex models leads to delays, inconsistent interpretations, or confusion about jurisdiction. These situations are frustrating to food entrepreneurs and food system advocates. FIT will smooth the process of dealing with complex situations and give both regulators and applicants confidence in the answers.

Over time, as more cases are funneled through FIT and the information learned gets supplied back to regulatory staff and other food system representatives, the licensing process will improve.

Q. What does FIT have to do with food safety?

A. Lots! Having tricky statutory questions settled definitively means both the food inspector's and food entrepreneur's energy can be focused on food safety questions, and getting to the correct inspector quickly means the inspector assigned to the case has the right expertise to deal with the entrepreneur's business model.

Preventing unusual situations from becoming quagmires for food entrepreneurs will lead to more confidence in the regulatory system and encourage more entrepreneurs to work with an inspector sooner.

Q. Doesn't this take authority away from delegated authorities?

A. No. FIT will sort out jurisdiction in cases where that is unclear, but licensing authority that correctly belongs with a delegated authority will get routed back to that authority.

Q. Won't FIT create liability for the Food Safety and Defense Task Force or FIT sub-committee?

A. No. The role the FIT sub-committee will be to take difficult cases and resolve questions of jurisdiction and legal interpretation. The definitive answers on these points will come from MDA, MDH, or delegated authority staff who are authorized within their agencies to make such determinations. Once determinations are made, the cases will be sent to the correct regulatory authority with jurisdiction to complete the actual licensing. **What the Food Safety & Defense Task Force will do is create the official venue where regulatory, legal, business, and food system expertise can come together to resolve specific licensing issues.**

Q. Why use the Food Safety & Defense Task Force for FIT?

A. The Food Safety & Defense Task Force is already established in Minnesota Statute as a governor-appointed task force, and is coordinated by MDA staff persons from the same Food & Feed Licensing Division that has regulatory authority over food manufacturing and wholesale and retail food handling. These MDA regulators already have working relationships with MDH regulators who have authority over food and beverage service. These MDA and MDH regulators also have existing working relationships with their delegated authorities.

These features mean that FIT can be established within existing structures, will fit into the existing missions of those structures, and will have a comprehensive view of the food regulatory system in Minnesota.

FIT “fits” into the mission of the FSDTF and will serve to diversify its portfolio of activities within its current mandated charter.

Q. *What is the process of creating a space for FIT within the FSDTF?*

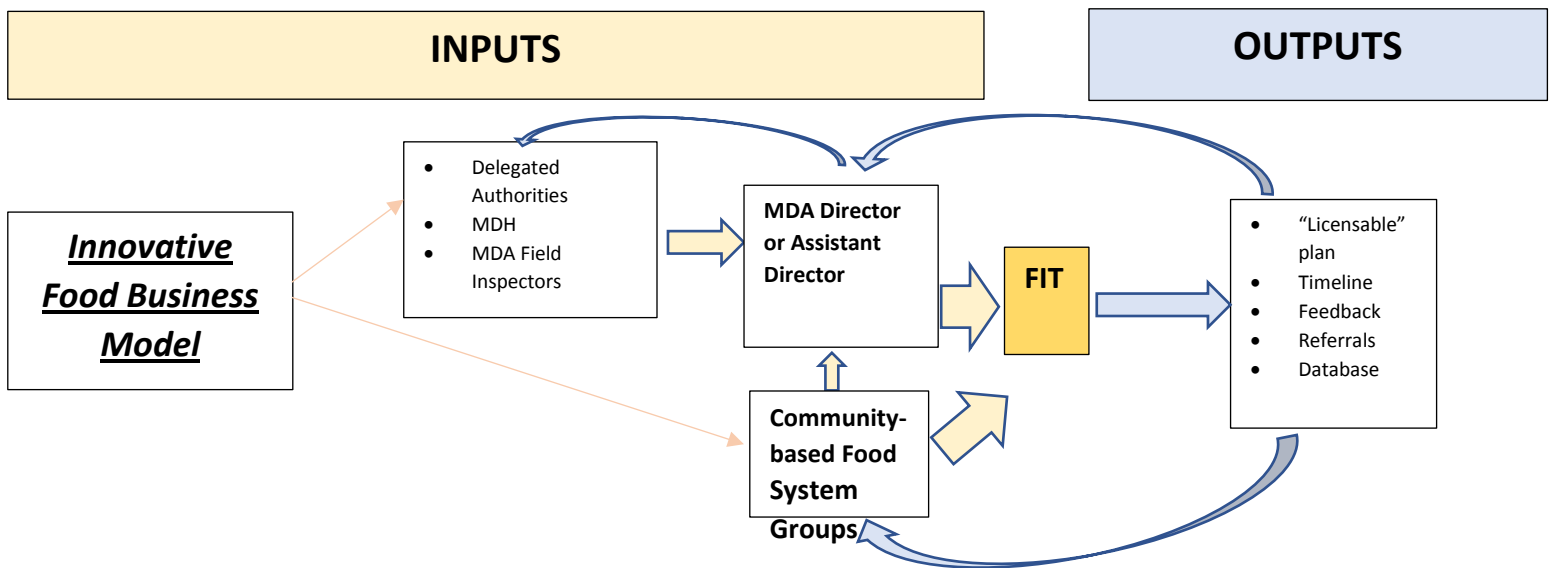
A. A charter will need to be drafted that ensures the sub-committee where FIT will reside exists in the FSDTF. Membership in this committee will be strictly voluntary, with no current members of the Task Force mandated to participate. The skeleton membership of FIT will include representatives of MDA, MDH and the DA’s who already attend Task Force meetings. Other ad hoc members will be invited on an as-needed basis.

Acknowledgements

Members of “Team FIT” wish to thank representatives from MDA, MDH and delegated authorities, for their time and support in bringing the idea of FIT to reality.

Contact people for more information about the Innovation Team proposal:

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MDA Sponsored PCQI Courses

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19 – September - 2017



August Course Evaluations

Evaluation Question	Score (1-5)
Quality of instruction	4.3
Professional behavior of instructors	4.8
Use of training aids	4.5
Use of classroom equipment	4.4
Course Length	4.0
Instructors prepared	4.6
Materials presented clearly and at reasonable pace	4.4
Instructors interaction with participants	4.6
Participants ability to apply the course	4.5
Usefulness of materials	4.7
Expectations met	4.5



Voluntary Comments

- “I will be our company’s backup PCQI and this was my intro to food safety. It was very helpful.”
- “SQF specific”, “Get more into SQF qualifications.”
- “Provide more FDA interpretations and/or examples from recent audits on this program”
- “Longer – more exercises to do”
- “So many times there are no definite answers to questions”



Voluntary Comments 2

- “More opportunities to work and develop plans and such on our own products”
- “It would be nice to have the ability to follow up with instructors at a later date.”
- “Presentations at industry group meetings”
- ”Scaled back, abbreviated training for leads and other employees that could use training from a source other than me”
- “There seemed to be confusion on who was teaching what”



Voluntary Comments 3

- “Instructors were awesome!”
- “Thank you MN Department of Agriculture for putting this on.”
(multiple evaluations)



Resulting Questions

- Does the Task Force want to try to present at the relevant state/regional industry meetings?
- Does the Task Force want to take on creating a “Mini-PCQI” for delivery as a stand alone or as part of state/regional industry meetings?
- Do any Task Force members have recent audit results that could be sanitized and shared?



Next Class

- November 14-16 at Lunds and Byerlys in St. Louis Park
 - Generally ~2.5 days – end time on final day varies by class
- Target is small/very small food firms
- Additional instructor opportunities – one day or all three!



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Food Safety Learning Alliance Practitioner Level Training

For: MN Food Safety & Defense Task Force
Presented by: Cassidy Meeks
September 19, 2017



Agenda

- **Share** GMI philosophy and *why* standardized physical hazards content was created
- **Share** overview of GMI *physical hazards for practitioners* curriculum
- **Discuss** partnership journey with GMA Food Safety Learning Alliance (FSLA) to develop industry-wide practitioner training
- **Demo** Metal Detector Practitioner E-Module
- Q&A



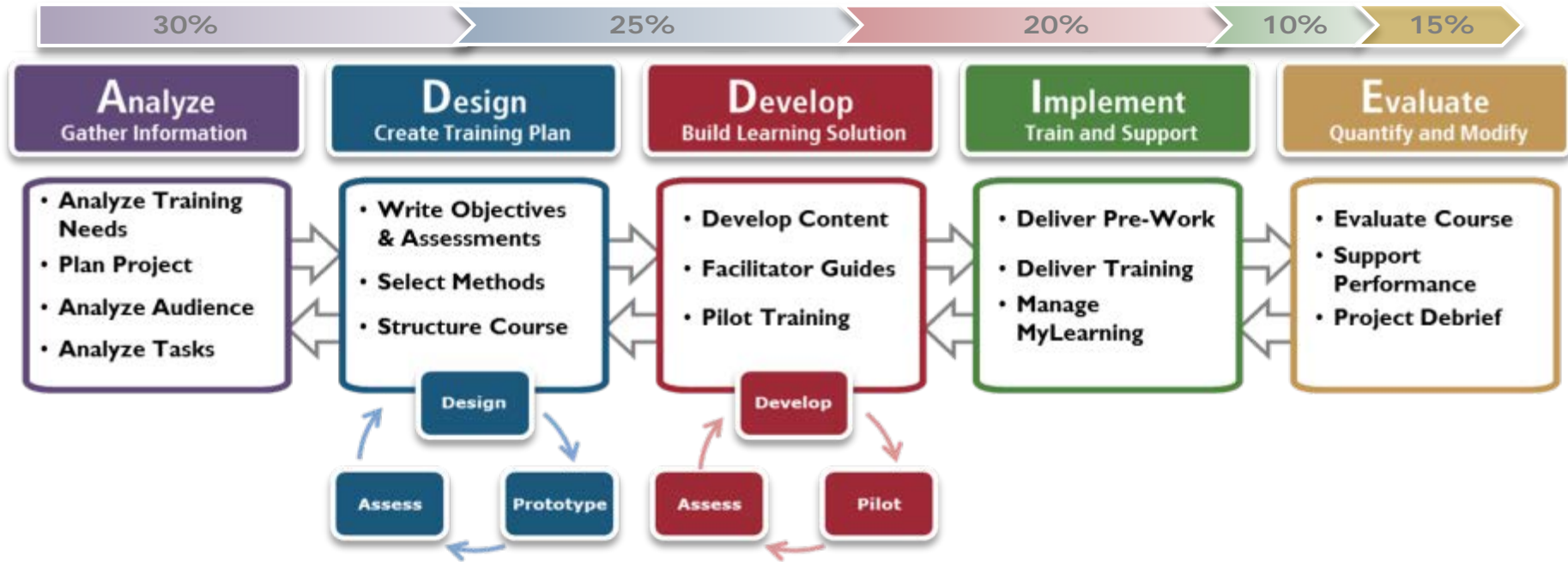


GMI Philosophy

- At General Mills, we believe:
 - Food Safety is **not** a competitive advantage
 - Producing safe food requires both:
 - ❖ Effective programs **and**
 - ❖ Flawless program execution everyday
 - Training supports doing the right things 24/7
- Food Industry *needs* standardized Food Safety Training to:
 - ❖ Standardize leading industry practices
 - ❖ Effectively prioritize resources
 - ❖ Drive consistency among stakeholders



GMI Leveraged ADDIE for Training Analysis



Completed thorough Analyses of:

- ✓ 108 Audiences
- ✓ 280 Food Safety Topics
- ✓ Expected Skill Levels

Standard Learning Scale

1. **Learner:** awareness level knowledge
2. **Practitioner:** perform a task in daily job
3. **Expert:** teach a topic



Why Practitioner level?

Practitioner level employees have daily impact on Food Safety

Current training was focused on Awareness and Expert Levels



Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)



FS Essentials



INTERNATIONAL
FOOD PROTECTION
TRAINING INSTITUTE

An Initiative of the Global Food Protection Institute

Commercial Programs

HACCP Certification Training

Web Images Maps Shop

About 3,300,000 results (0.30 seconds)



Awareness vs. Practitioner Level

Awareness Level: “I Know”




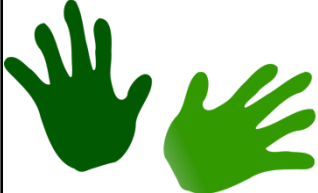
- HACCP is a 7 step process to identify and either eliminate or control common hazards.
- A Metal Detector is used to monitor products for potential metal contamination.
- “If something goes wrong, I need to tell somebody.”

Practitioner Level: “I Do”

- Here are the things you must do to minimize physical contaminants on your equipment.
- How to properly monitor a Metal Detector.
- “If something goes wrong, I make the appropriate corrections every time.”



GMI Physical Hazards Curriculum

	Prerequisite: Critical Concepts	Metal Detectors	Magnets	Size Separators (Sifters, Screens, Strainers, & Filters)	X-Ray
 <p>Customizable Microsoft PowerPoint®</p>	English French Greek Mandarin Portuguese Spanish	English French Mandarin Portuguese Spanish	English French Mandarin Portuguese Spanish	English French Mandarin Portuguese Spanish	English French Portuguese Spanish
 <p>4 E-Modules: view separately or together.</p>		English French Mandarin Portuguese Spanish			
 <p>Facilitator Guide</p>	English	English	English	English	English
 <p>Hands On Demo</p>		English	English	English	English

Metal Detector E-Modules

- Four Modules include:
 1. Why is a Metal Detector important & how does it work?
 2. How do I check a Metal Detector?
 3. What do I do when the check fails?
 4. How to do I respond to a reject?



GMA SEF + Member Companies =
**FOOD SAFETY LEARNING
ALLIANCE**



Partner to create standardized Practitioner training courses across the Food Industry

➤ Benefits:

- Consistency across entire industry
 - ❖ Common standards for suppliers and co-packers
- Shared development costs and resources
- Risk Reduction
- Fills the application level content void
- Robust, defensible training material
- Enables solid and consistent decision making



Current Content

Representing the Makers of the World's Favorite Food, Beverage and Consumer Products

SEARCH



GMA

HOME

ABOUT

ISSUES & POLICY

NEWS & EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP

RESOURCES



Online Courses



Food Processing Metal Detector Operator

USD 125.00

Training

This online on-demand training teaches metal detector operators on how to properly calibrate and use metal detectors as well as the importance of metal detectors in ensuring the safety of the final product.

Industrial Food Safety: Sanitation Operator Training

A Train-the-Trainer Program

October 3-6, 2017

Talon Business Center

5891 Cedar Lake Road

Minneapolis, MN 55416

Recognized by industry organizations, this course is intended to provide job-seekers and front-line workers with a comprehensive overview of what is required to clean and sanitize food manufacturing equipment and facilities to ensure safe food production. Persons completing this training will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to oversee implementation of proper cleaning and sanitizing in their own manufacturing facilities. The course is comprised of 20 course modules (14 foundation level and 6 specialized level) and is instructor-led with facilitated discussions, activities and hands-on practice to reinforce the objectives.

Cost: GMA Member - \$1400; GMA Non-member - \$1500





Metal Detector Module Demo

Types of Metal Detectors

There are many different types of Metal Detectors.

Hover your mouse over each image to learn more.



[Click to learn more.](#)

[How Metal Detectors Actually Detect Metal](#)

Upcoming Content

➤ Allergen Management for Practitioners

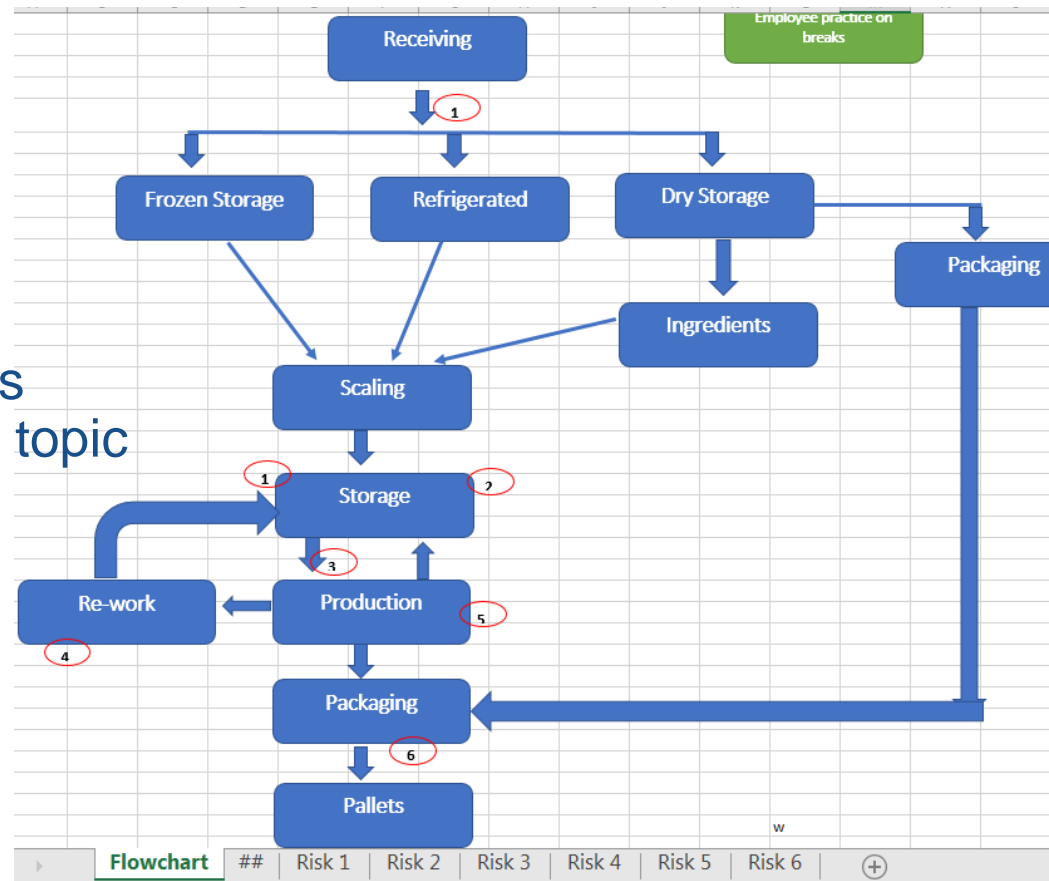
1. Right Product/Right Package (Labeling)

2. Preventing Cross Contamination

- Audience: Operators

➤ Current Progress

- FSLA member company SMEs from member collaborating on topic analysis and design
- E-module developer search



To Access This Content

➤ Option 1: Purchase [Here](#)



ONLINE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Food Processing Metal Detector Operator Training

This online on-demand training teaches metal detector operators the proper calibration and use of metal detectors as well as the importance of metal detectors in ensuring the safety of the final product. Interactive questions are embedded throughout the modules to test participant learning and emphasize important concepts. Supervisors may purchase bulk registrations at a discounted rate and monitor employee progress as they complete the training. For more information contact us sef@gmaonline.org.



Online Courses



Food Processing Metal Detector Operator

USD 125.00

Training

This online on-demand training teaches metal detector operators on how to properly calibrate and use metal detectors as well as the importance of metal detectors in ensuring the safety of the final product.

➤ Option 2: Join FSLA

- Contact Brian Bedard at GMA for more info





What Questions do you have?








REFERENCE SLIDES



Facilitator Guide Example

➤ Facilitator Guide Contains:

- Best practices for effective training
- Script (with symbols) for each slide
- Options to vary delivery to keep the content fresh (ex knowledge checks)

Term	Symbol	Definition	To be successful . . .
ACTIVITY		An exercise for participants to practice knowledge or skills gained in the class.	<i>Provide positive and constructive feedback during and after the activity to help solidify the learning.</i>
ASK		Question for the instructor to ask to increase audience engagement.	<i>Allow 30 seconds of silence for the audience to answer. If no one answers, Ask the question another way, provide hints, or call on someone you know will have the answer and feel comfortable speaking.</i>
BEYOND THE BASICS		Provides information that, while not critical, could help participants expand their knowledge.	<i>Use when your audience wants more information. Skip if time does not allow.</i>
PLANT SPECIFIC		Add in the plant specific information here to help the audience connect the theory to their actual situations, tasks, equipment, etc.	<i>Try to find situations, tasks, and equipment that most audience members can relate to.</i>
SAY		Text for the instructor to say to the audience.	<i>Modify some of the words to better fit your normal speech patterns, while keeping the intent of the content the same</i>

