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**CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE PREPARATION AND
SALE OF STRET VENDED FOODS**

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The preparation of this standard for the Standard Advisory Council established under the Standards Act of 1992, was carried out under the supervision of the Bureau's Technical Committee for Food and Food Related Products, which at the time comprised of the following members:

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code contains a series of requirements and practices to be observed in the preparation and sale in the street of food and beverages for direct consumption.
- 1.2 This code shall apply to places where they are prepared, points where they are sold and means of transport used.
- 1.3 This Code of Practice was adopted from the Codex Code of Practice for Street Vended Foods - CAC

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This Code of Practice applies to “street-vended foods” which are foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time without further processing or preparation. Fresh fruits and vegetables which are sold outside authorised market areas for immediate consumption are also included.
- 2.2 It contains the minimum requirements of hygiene up to and including transportation of the food and is intended to assure the safe handling of food.
- 2.3 This Code of Practice shall be read in conjunction with the Belize Agriculture Health Authority (BAHA) Food Safety Regulations.

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 For the purpose of this Code, the definitions specified in the documents of the Codex Alimentarius shall apply. Other relevant definitions are as follows:
 - 3.1.1 **Authorized** – which has been permitted by the competent authority.
 - 3.1.2 **Crockery** – All glasses, plates and dishes used in serving meals.
 - 3.1.3 **Environment** – Surrounding area/place where food are prepared, maintained, exposed, served and/or consumed.
 - 3.1.4 **Food and beverages for direct consumption** – Any type of hot or cold food or beverage ready for consumption.

- 3.1.5 ***Ingredient*** - Any substance, including a food additive, used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and present in the final product although possibly in a modified form.
- 3.1.6 ***Input*** – Element needed to obtain a product.
- 3.1.7 ***Organoleptic Testing*** – Assessment made through the sense organs (sight, smell, touch, taste).
- 3.1.8 ***Perishable*** – Easily spoiling or decomposing.
- 3.1.9 ***Sales stall*** – Any fixed or mobile structure intended for the sale of food or drink for direct consumption in the street.
- 3.1.10 ***Street Foods*** – Ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold in streets and other similar public places.
- 3.1.11 ***Waste water*** – Water that is rejected as unsanitary because it was used to wash fruits, vegetables, hands, crockery, pots, etc.

4 REQUIREMENTS FOR INPUTS AND INGREDIENTS

4.1 *Purchase of Inputs and Ingredients*

- 4.1.1 Purchase inputs and ingredients from approved retailers, under adequate storage conditions, refrigeration/freezing when necessary (perishable items), stored on shelves, in boxes or baskets and protected from contamination.
- 4.1.2 Purchase packaged inputs and ingredients that bear a manufacturer's name or guarantee. Do not purchase food products that are unlabelled and/or without a clearly stated shelf life, where appropriate.
- 4.1.3 Only purchase inputs and ingredients whose organoleptic properties are proper or correspond to the specific characteristics or nature of the fresh food or raw material and that do not show signs of any kind of alteration and/or adulteration.
- 4.1.4 Only purchase perishable products inputs and ingredients maintained at adequate temperature.
- 4.1.5 Only purchase food products in quantities that correspond to adequate storage/preservation capacity.

4.2 Transport, Reception and Storage of Inputs and Ingredients

- 4.2.1 Transport all purchased items in adequate conditions, avoiding hazards of chemical, physical or biological nature and spoilage of the goods, maintaining an adequate temperature, isolation of each item to prevent cross-contamination. They should not be transported with toxic and/or chemical substances (disinfectants, detergents, pesticides, etc.). For packaged products follow the instructions from the manufacturer on the label; and/or storage conditions in compliance with the general principles of food hygiene and legal applicable provisions.
- 4.2.2 The vehicle for transportation should be adequately cleaned and disinfected and should have sufficient internal space and the necessary equipment to assure food safety and quality.
- 4.2.3 Inputs and ingredients must be received and kept in clean, protected place: meat, offal, fish and all perishable product shall be placed on trays, under refrigeration and/or freezing, and bulk commodities in clean containers.
- 4.2.4 Shelves, boxes and storage space should be of non-contaminating material, clean and protected from dust and other contaminating agents. They should not be placed directly on the ground.
- 4.2.5 Keep receptacles containing foods clearly labelled, and in separate areas from non-edible products, like soap, disinfectants, pesticides, other toxic or poisonous substances, observing the adequate conditions for better maintenance of each item.
- 4.2.6 Rotate the stock of products: first in, first out.
- 4.2.7 Keep the food protected against contact with pests.

NOTE HA – (HAZARD ANALYSIS) – *Food products can be contaminated by pathogenic microorganisms. Bacteria can grow in inadequate time/temperature conditions. Proximity between different products can cause cross-contamination. Exposure to the environment can contaminate food. Physical and chemical contamination can occur when edible and non-edible products are transported together. Chemical, physical and biological contaminants can be controlled from the source/origin of food products.*

NOTE CCP – (Critical Control Points) – *Control of time/temperature is an effective measure to prevent bacterial multiplication and food spoilage. Separation of food items can prevent cross- contamination. Protect foods from air, dust and other environmental vectors in order to preserve its safety and quality. Cleanliness and disinfection of transport area is basic to prevent physical, chemical and biological contamination. Selection of place of purchase/origin of product ensures hazard control until the stages of transportation and storage.*

5 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AREA OR PLACE OF PREPARATION

5.1 *Area where the food is prepared*

5.1.1 Indoor areas

- 5.1.1.1 These should be designed and constructed in accordance with Section IV of the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 3-1997).
- 5.1.1.2 They should be sufficiently lit, kept as clean as much as possible at all time and situated far from any source of contaminants (rubbish, waste water, animals).
- 5.1.1.3 Equipment should be made from appropriate materials for easy cleaning and disinfecting, as often as necessary.
- 5.1.1.4 Water for general purposes (to wash items and receptacles) shall be potable.
- 5.1.1.5 Dispensers, pipes and containers for water storage shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
- 5.1.1.6 The waste water must be adequately collected, and disposed of so as not to present a hazard to the potable water supply, to the food, to the surrounding area, to the food handlers.
- 5.1.1.7 The working area, including surfaces in contact with food (utensils, table surface, cutters, water outlets, etc.) should be in good condition and properly maintained and should be washed with potable water and disinfected as appropriate.
- 5.1.1.8 Do not place food in containers used for insecticides, paint, motor oil and other non edible products.
- 5.1.1.9 Do not keep fuel, toxic and inflammable products in direct contact with food and food contact surfaces such as crockery, pots, work tops, etc. Food

handlers should avoid handling fuel, toxic and inflammable products so as not to contaminate food.

5.1.2 Out door areas

- 5.1.2.1 These should be sufficiently clean and protected from direct sun, dust and wind, and should not be in direct contact with the public and consumers.
- 5.1.2.2 Equipment, such as stoves or similar appliances, must be constructed and maintained safety and adequately.
- 5.1.2.3 The potable water supply should be sufficient for all needs. When not from a public source of potable water, the water must be of similar quality.
- 5.1.2.4 The area where the food will be prepared should be at least 60 to 70 cm (approximately 23.5 to 27 ½ inch) from the ground and the preparation surface must be made of hygienic impermeable material that is in good condition and is easy to clean.
- 5.1.2.5 Equipment, utensils and blender/juicers should fulfil the same requirements described in 5.1.2.1.

NOTE HA – *The surrounding and surface areas may be a source of chemical, physical and biological contamination. Inadequate or contaminated water is a source of contamination of food, food handlers, consumers and the environment.*

NOTE CCP – *Surrounding and surface areas should always be clean, disinfected and well maintained. Water should be potable since it is a food ingredient (as water and ice) and a commodity used to clean food, surfaces in contact with foods, hands, utensils, etc.*

5.1.3 Hygienic Facilities

- 5.1.3.1 When necessary, potable water may be transported and maintained in adequate container (easy to clean, non-toxic material, sealed, supplied with a cover, with a tap or faucet), constructed in order to preserve the product and prevent contamination.
- 5.1.3.2 Containers, utensils and working surfaces for food handling should be of a non toxic material, easy to clean, resistant to high temperature, when used for cooking.

- 5.1.3.3 Detergents and disinfectants used to clean and disinfect working surfaces, utensils, blenders/juicers and similar equipment should be non toxic and non corrosive, as much as possible.

5.2 *Hygiene Practice*

- 5.2.1 Persons in contact with and/or directly or indirectly handling food, inputs or ingredients should not be affected by a communicable disease, including sore throat.
- 5.2.2 People with cuts, wounds or similar afflictions in the hands and forearms, should not handle foods.
- 5.2.3 Hair must be completely covered during food handling. Nails should be short and clean.
- 5.2.4 Persons preparing or handling food, inputs and ingredients should refrain from spitting, sneeze, smoking or behaviour/habits that can compromise food safety.
- 5.2.5 Food handlers should wear appropriate clean clothing and protect themselves with an apron or other suitable garment, which should be changed every day or as often as necessary.
- 5.2.6 Food handlers should not wear rings or bracelets while handling food. Refer to the appropriate sections of the Belize Agriculture Health Authority (**BAHA**) Food Safety Regulations.
- 5.2.7 People should not manipulate food and money at same time.
- 5.2.8 Hands and forearms should be carefully washed with potable water and disinfecting soap after use of the toilet and direct handling of fresh foods, such as meat, fruits and vegetables, and before handling prepared or semi-prepared foods.
- 5.2.9 Food handlers should be trained in hygienic handling of foods and shall demonstrate capacity to protect foods all the time.
- 5.2.10 Utensils, dishes, glasses, water outlets, working surface area, etc. should be cleaned and disinfected after each instance of food preparation, before final food preparation or handling of ready-to-eat foods, and immediately after their use.

NOTE HA – *There are many sources of food contamination and/or cross-contamination between different food products, surfaces and hands by direct or*

indirect contact, as well as conditions that can promote growth of pathogenic bacteria or contamination in foods.

NOTE CCP – All ingredients and stages in food handling should be considered and analysed for the possibility of pathogenic bacteria growth and/or direct or indirect introduction of contaminants. Avoid excessive time spans/temperatures and possibilities of contamination in each and every stage of the chain (purchasing, transporting, storage, display, handling, etc.).

6 REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD PREPARATION

6.1 Hygienic handling of fresh foods

6.1.1 Fruits and vegetables

- 6.1.1.1 Only use fruits and vegetables that were preserved from cross contamination and conserved adequately.
- 6.1.1.2 Select fruit and vegetables, taking off parts or whole pieces that are unsuitable and checking that they are intact and fit for human consumption.
- 6.1.1.3 Wash and disinfect, as appropriate, fruits and vegetables before using them directly or as food ingredient.
- 6.1.1.4 Prepare each kind of fruits and vegetable in the appropriate manner and according to its intended use.
 - 6.1.1.4.1 Peel, squeeze and/or cut as appropriate, fruits and vegetables in hygienized equipment and utensils.
- 6.1.1.5 Keep previously prepared fruits and vegetables in hygienized and properly covered recipients at a maximum temperature suitable for the product in question.

NOTE HA – Fruits and vegetables may be contaminated from origin and/or by cross contamination in the market (chilling water, contact with surface and other products), with pathogenic bacteria, viruses and parasites. Take care not to contaminate surface areas and/or final product. Other contaminants of a chemical nature (pesticides, mycotoxins, etc.) shall be controlled at the source and during transport and storage, since there is no effective preventive measure applicable during final preparation. Physical hazards may be controlled by manual sorting out.

NOTE CCP – *Selection, rinsing, washing and disinfecting are important and indispensable measure that can be carried out before storage (to prevent contamination in the refrigerator and other storage areas) or immediately before use. Avoid leaving excessive water on the product, to prevent bacterial multiplication and for better storage of the product. Select location of purchase and origin to ensure hazards are under control.*

6.1.2 Fresh meat and fish

- 6.1.2.1 When necessary, thaw meat in a refrigerator overnight, under running water or in a microwave oven that may accelerate thawing. Avoid thawing at room temperature.
- 6.1.2.2 Avoid excess exposure at room temperature when working with fresh meat.
- 6.1.2.3 Handle fresh meat in such a way to prevent direct or indirect cross contamination of meat, working surface, utensils, and other food products.
- 6.1.2.4 Clean fresh meat, cutting off non desirable parts, when necessary.
- 6.1.2.5 Pre-prepare the meat by slicing, cutting, grinding, etc. as adequate for the intended use.
- 6.1.2.6 When applicable, season and flavour according to the intended use.

NOTE HA – *Fresh meat or fish can be contaminated from origin and by handling/marketing conditions and can present pathogenic bacteria, viruses and parasites, thereby acting as a potential source of contamination (surfaces, food handlers, utensils, etc.). Inadequate thawing can lead to pathogenic bacteria multiplication on product surface, since surface will be at room temperature for a long period of time.*

NOTE CCP – *Clean and disinfect all surfaces that have been in contact with fresh meat or fish to prevent contamination of ready-to-eat food. Avoid excessive exposure at room temperature of fresh meats or fish to prevent excessive multiplication of pathogenic bacteria. Select location of purchase and origin of products to ensure that hazards in pervious stages are under control.*

6.1.3 Other foods

- 6.1.3.1 Cheese, salami, sausages, etc. shall be handled under hygienic conditions:

- 6.1.3.1.1 Avoid contact with hands; conduct all operations such as slicing, cutting, grinding, etc. with appropriate instruments and/or utensils.
- 6.1.3.1.2 Where there is a likelihood of a potential food safety, high risk food items may need to be kept at refrigeration temperature (5°C – 8°C/41°F – 46.4 °F).
- 6.1.3.1.3 Prepare the amount necessary for a maximum 4 hours of work.
- 6.1.3.2 Food containers and food packaging material shall neither alter nor adulterate packaged foods (corrosion, visual alteration, etc.).
- 6.1.3.3 Grains, flour, sugar, salt and similar products shall be kept in containers with appropriate covers to protect from humidity and to prevent alteration/contamination.
- 6.1.3.4 Do not use raw eggs in the preparation of food and beverages intended for direct consumption, if they are cooked afterwards.
 - 6.1.3.4.1 Mayonnaise, egg sauces, mousse and similar dishes prepared with raw eggs should originate from industrial establishments.
- 6.1.3.5 For other products, in general, maintenance and use shall be as indicated by the producer and/or in accordance with hygienic rules.

NOTE HA – *Foods may be contaminated at source and may be contaminated by inadequately washed and disinfected devices and utensils. May be internally contaminated with pathogenic bacteria.*

NOTE CCP – *Avoid any source of contamination and/or pathogenic bacteria multiplication. Select purchase local and origin, in order to assure hazard control.*

6.2 Requirements for final preparation

- 6.2.1 Cook the food sufficiently, noting the corresponding change of colour, aspect and/or consistency.
- 6.2.2 Protect the food before cooking from all possible sources of contamination. If the prepared food is to be garnished with non cooked ingredients, avoid excessive contact with them, as regards time and temperature, before consumption.
- 6.2.3 The time between preparation and consumption of foods should be as follows:
 - 6.2.3.1 Up to 6 hours, when foods are kept at a temperature superior to 60°C.
 - 6.2.3.2 Up to one day, when foods are kept at a maximum temperature of 5°C/41°F.
 - 6.2.3.2.1 Chilling time for hot foods shall not be superior to three hours to reach a temperature of 5°C/41°F.
 - 6.2.3.3 Reheat refrigerated food completely only once to a temperature of 70°C/158°F, immediately before consumption.
- 6.2.4 Sandwiches prepared at the street-vending sales point shall be prepared at the moment of consumption.
- 6.2.5. Fresh salads and prepared fresh fruits dishes shall be preferably seasoned at time of sale.
- 6.2.6. Other kind of salads (vegetables, additions such as mayonnaise dressing, other creams, cheese, ham, etc.) shall be maintained below 8°C/46.4°F from their preparation until final sale.
- 6.2.7. Foods that will be cooked/heated immediately before consumption (such as pizza, kibe, etc) shall be maintained below 5°C/41°F.
- 6.2.8. Avoid all use of leftovers and only prepare what can be sold in a day.

NOTE HA – *Micro-organisms are sensitive to heat to a degree depending on biological type and on form and duration of exposure at detrimental temperatures. However, cooking in kitchens is not sufficient to sterilize foods. The remaining bacteria can*

multiply exponentially at room temperature and their final number will depend on the time of exposure at inadequate temperature. Multiplication's is reduced below 5°C in such a way as to avoid high numbers of pathogenic bacteria with the same intensity and high level of risk. Other factors can control/intensify the effect of heat: low pH, high acidity, high concentration of salt, presence of additives, etc (low humidity is used to control, but not to strengthen heat effect). Others pathogens such as fish parasites, can be controlled by freezing, during adequate periods of time, prior to use. Some bacteria can produce heat-stable toxins in the product.

NOTE CCP – *Considering that heat sensitivity and other factors can be used to control pathogenic microorganisms, cook the food completely to reach its internal parts and keep it at low temperatures to control the risk of bacterial growth.*

7 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TRANSPORT OF PREPARED FOOD

- 7.1 Vehicles for the transport of prepared foods shall have a separate area protected from direct sun, wind, dust, rain and other contamination agents.
- 7.2 The compartment of the vehicle should be made of appropriate material for the transportation of food and should be waterproof and easy to clean.
- 7.3 The transportation of waste materials and dirty containers shall be in special duly closed containers to protect the food.
- 7.4 When necessary, food shall be transported in adequate (non toxic material, well cleaned and disinfected) containers, conveniently sealed and protected from extraneous contamination.
- 7.5 The temperature shall be controlled where necessary, avoiding room temperature for foods that must be maintained heated or refrigerated, when the time of transportation exceeds 1 hour and/or in conformity with the necessary procedures to control bacterial multiplication.
- 7.6 When the transportation time exceeds 2 hours, the food containers may be packaged in thermal boxes.
 - 7.6.1 Keep hot foods separated from refrigerated foods in thermal boxes. Use different thermal boxes for these two types of prepared foods.
 - 7.6.2 When hot transportation of prepared food at 60°C/140°F is not possible, pre-chill the food below as indicated in section 6.2.3.

NOTE HA – *Transportation can be a source of contamination and/or a phase of bacterial multiplication.*

NOTE CCP – *Avoid any situation that can contaminate food and/or allow bacterial multiplication.*

8 REQUIREMENTS FOR STREET FOOD MARKETING

8.1 *Sales Area*

- 8.1.1 Sales point (kiosks, barrows, mobile stalls, etc.) shall be built in solid and resistant material, and should be easily sanitized.
- 8.1.2 Sales point shall be kept clean and in good condition/repair.
- 8.1.3 When not in use, the sales stall should be kept under cover and in the case of a mobile structure should be kept in a clean place.
- 8.1.4 The outdoor sales area should not be used for any other purpose.
- 8.1.5 The outdoor sales area should be located in a zone determined by the authorities so that it is protected from contaminants originating from traffic, pedestrians, domestic animals and/or vectors.
- 8.1.6 The sales area should be free from personal belongings, such as clothes, footwear, blankets, tobacco etc. Avoid contact between personal belongings and the area of food preparation, storage and/or consumption.
- 8.1.7 The surrounding of sale point should be kept clean and litter-free.
- 8.1.8 Adorning items, such as decorations may be placed in such a way that does not represent a source for food contamination.

NOTE HA – *The surroundings of a sales point can represent a source of food hazard.*

NOTE CCP – *The outdoor area for the sale of food should be carefully selected and, to the extent possible, the surrounding should not present inappropriate conditions.*

8.2 *Protection and Sale of foods*

- 8.2.1 Where possible, food and beverages should be served using disposable plates, utensils, glasses, napkins etc.
 - 8.2.1.1 When this is not possible, the non-disposable serving items in good condition should be washed, cleaned and disinfected after each use.
 - 8.2.1.1.1 Leftovers in dishes, glasses, etc. should be deposited in covered, secure and appropriate containers to avoid attracting domestic animals and/or vectors. Used disposable

items should be deposited into separate containers from those used for leftovers, and should also be appropriate and secure.

- 8.2.1.2 Take-away food should be wrapped in unused non-contaminating paper and/or plastic. The use of printed plastic/paper is forbidden because the print can rub off, especially if in direct contact with the food.
- 8.2.2 Final food preparation and reheating can be done at point of sale so long as food safety is maintained and assured.
 - 8.2.2.1 For safety, avoid excessive handling of foods in street vending area.
- 8.2.3 The food and beverages displayed for sale should be well protected and kept at an appropriate temperature.
 - 8.2.3.1 When hot foods were chilled for transportation, reheating must be completed above 70°C/158°F.
- 8.2.4 Salt, sugar, mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise and similar products to be used by the consumer should be supplied in single-portion units or in dispensers that will avoid their contamination.
- 8.2.5 Utensils used to serve food portions for consumption should be cleaned and disinfected when necessary.
 - 8.2.5.1 Avoid direct hand contact with ready-to-eat food of any kind, including peeled fruits.
- 8.2.6 Do not handle money, tickets, etc. and food at the same time.
- 8.2.7 If the outdoor point of sale is a vehicle, the driver's compartment should be duly separate from the compartment used for final food preparation, storage, sale and/or consumption or the food handling sections should be separate from the rest of the vehicle.

NOTE HA – *Dishes, glasses, serving utensils and similar items can also be important sources of food contamination. Leftovers can attract domestic and/or vectors, which can also, represent a source of food contamination.*

NOTE CCP – *Dispose of dishes, glasses and similar items in separate containers from food leftover. Avoid attracting domestic animals and vectors. Kept serving utensils in good condition and cleanliness.*

8.3 *Requirements for the Vendor/Handler*

8.3.1 Food vendor/handler shall wear appropriate clothes, preferably protected with an apron used exclusively during food handling activities.

8.3.1.1 Clothes and apron should be always cleaned and shall be changed as frequently as necessary.

8.3.1.2 Hair and beards shall be completely covered.

8.3.1.3 Fingernails shall be short and clean.

8.3.2 Food vendor/handler should have good and hygienic attitudes/habits.

8.3.2.1 General knowledge of foodborne communicable diseases and of possible sources of food contamination.

8.3.2.2 Knowledge of possibility of foodborne disease by contamination of foods via cuts or skin infection, sore throat and other skin diseases.

8.3.2.3 Knowledge of the factors affecting the life and death, survival and multiplication of pathogenic micro-organisms in food.

8.4 *Responsibility of vendors*

8.4.1 In addition to the above requirements, food handlers or vendors shall be responsible for the hygiene and protection of foods they prepare or sell, and of all conditions, which may affect their safety.

NOTE HA – *The food handler can be an important source of contamination.*

NOTE CCP – *Appropriate training and observance of hygienic practices for the food handler are important to assure food safety.*

9 HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF WASTE AND PEST CONTROL

9.1. Waste bins (containers) should be kept far from the food handling area and have a lid and, where possible, should be fitted with an automatic closing device.

- 9.1.1 Waste containers should be of resistant material, impermeable and easy to clean.
- 9.1.2 Waste containers should be located in such a way as to avoid contact with the floor or the walls.
- 9.2 Wastewater shall be collected and discharged in a separate way from solid wastes, with a connection to the sewage network if possible. It shall be disposed in public drainage, avoiding discharge on the ground and/or surface water, as river and lakes.
- 9.3 When collecting solid wastes, recyclable and non recyclable material should be kept separate. The destination should be according to the public municipal regulations.
 - 9.3.1 Food waste material should be disposed in such a way as to avoid attracting animals, such as flies, dogs and cats.
- 9.4 Pest control should be carried out in accordance with municipal or national regulations. The application of chemical substances for pest control should only be done by authorised technical personnel. The procedure should avoid the contamination of food, food vendors/handlers, the public and the environment.