

**Co-op Food Stores  
Hanover and Lebanon, NH**

<b>Protocol for Food-Related Illness/Foreign Object Report</b>
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**Introduction**

Customers may call any department at any time to report finding a foreign object in food or to tell us they believe they have become sick because of a food product they purchased from us.

Handling these calls appropriately from the beginning is very important. For this reason, such calls should be given to a manager—preferably, the manager of the department responsible for the product. If the manager is not available to take the call, it should be referred to the food store manager, the manager on duty, the service desk, or the store receptionist.

The person who takes responsibility for the call **MUST** fill out the Food-Related Illness/Foreign Object Report, which is available in every department food safety SOP manual and at the service desk. In departments most likely to receive these calls (produce, PFD, commissary kitchen), forms should be located near the phone.

**Using the Food-Related Illness/Foreign Object Report**

The report form includes detailed pointers on questions to ask and how to ask them. All staff who may use this report form should be familiar with the form ahead of time. It is important that the person taking the information **NOT** deviate from the instructions on the form.

When responding to the customer, the staff person should be polite and concerned, but should not make any statements that admit liability on the part of the Co-op. For instance, the staff person could say, “I’m sorry to hear you’re not feeling well,” but **NOT** “I’m sorry our food made you sick.”

Do not prompt the caller with suggestions of symptoms or medical care or give any opinions about what might be happening. Do not suggest that something else may have made the person sick.

Remain polite and concerned at all times. Assure the person that someone will be contacting them in the near future and close the conversation. If the person makes any demands or other statements, record them but do not ask any more questions. Let the return caller take care of responding.

Be sure to finish filling out the back side of the form. Make a copy of both sides and give it to the manager of the affected department. Give the original to one of the individuals named on the back of the form.