

Carry-Out containers (Specifically prohibits the re-use of take home food containers for refilling at a food facility DFAC)

Team,

Please pass this to all food service operations WW to include the FTI locations. We have had this issue at several AF installations that are allowing bring your own carry-out containers to be used for Carry-out at the DFAC. The following is the response from USAFSAM/PHR (Food Protection)

We agree with your interpretation of the Food Code. Paragraph 3-304.17 specifically prohibits the re-use of take home food containers for refilling at a food facility. Additionally, Paragraph 4-101.11(E) states that multiuse utensils (which per definition includes containers) must be resistant to scratching, scoring and distortion; something that plastic containers can't do.

BLUF: If we are charged with protecting Airmen (sometimes even from themselves) there are several issues with this policy:

1. There is no way to verify the correct cleaning and sanitation of that container. This may translate into numerous "new" illnesses every year (examples of possible illnesses may be Norovirus, Hep A, Campylobacter, etc...) which will in-turn translate into lost productivity and increased healthcare costs, so we will just be shifting the cost at best.

2. Even if the policy was to put the food on a clean plate that the person will then fill their container from; that will mean that there is still a cost for hot water, sanitizers and maintenance of ware washing equipment to clean the plates anyway. So again, it will only shift the costs to a different area. Additionally, this will only work if the use a clean plate is enforced every time. Because, it is likely that people will take it upon themselves to say "this is stupid, why use a clean plate anyway" and will start filling the containers directly from the food displays.

A more correct approach may be to limit the use of (single use) take out containers to on-duty personnel with a mission need (such as cops, flight line personnel, etc...). I.e. not just taking food back to their rooms or offices to eat. This will save on the cost of the single service containers without increasing the risk of food borne illnesses.

This email is coordinated with USAFSAM/PHR (Food Protection)

Take care
R, and PLZ be Safe

//Signed//
George Miller, DAF
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