



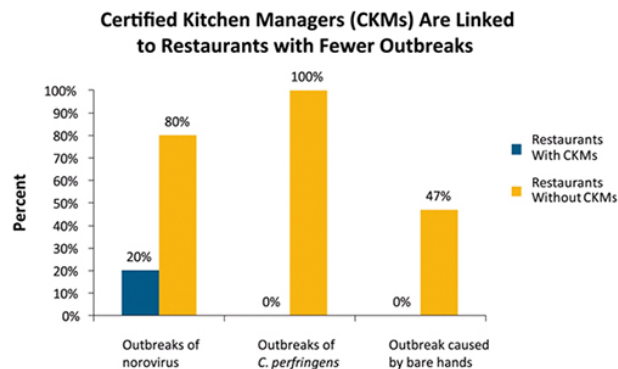
The Important Correlation Between Food Safety Certification, Effective Management Systems and Reduction in Outbreaks

September is National Food Safety Education Month and it's the perfect time to enhance awareness about the importance of preventing illnesses related to food consumption. More importantly, it's an opportunity to understand and implement ways to reduce these risks. Several reports from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Communicable Disease and Prevention (CDC)¹ have shown a correlation between food establishments and decreased risk of foodborne illnesses and compliance if the establishment:

1. Is properly staffed with Certified Food Protection Managers (CFPM)/or Certified Kitchen Managers (CKMs).
2. Have effective Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS).
3. Have a well-defined employee illness policy.

CDC's Environmental Health Specialist Network published a study that described how restaurant traits (for example, number of meals served), policies, and practices were linked to foodborne illness outbreaks and to infected food workers as the cause of outbreaks. The findings are illustrated below and indicate that:

- 20% of norovirus outbreaks occurred in restaurants with a CKM.
- 80% occurred in restaurants without a CKM.
- No *C. perfringens* outbreaks occurred in restaurants with a CKM; 100% occurred in restaurants without a CKM.
- Bare-hand contact with food was not a contributing factor in any outbreaks in restaurants with a CKM.
- Bare-hand contact with food was a contributing factor in 47% of outbreaks in restaurants without a CKM.



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¹ [Kitchen Manager Certification: An Important Way To Improve Restaurant Food Safety \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/ckm/certification.html)

² https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ehsnet/plain_language/differences-restaurants-linked-to-outbreaks.htm

Additionally, the FDA conducted long-term surveillance on the top contributing risk factors associated with foodborne illness risk factors in both full-service and fast-food restaurants and their findings are quite clear. FDA's report³ released in 2023 points to the importance of Active Managerial Control (AMC), CFPM, and FSMS. The FDA's findings underscore that robust FSMS are useful in reducing foodborne illnesses. FDA's report refers to FSMS as:

“A specific set of actions used by food service establishments to help achieve Active Managerial Control (AMC). Active managerial control means the purposeful incorporation of specific actions or procedures by industry management into the operation of their business to attain control over foodborne illness risk factors. It embodies a preventive rather than reactive approach to food safety through a continuous system of monitoring and verification.”

Food safety practices are critical and should be at the top of an owner/manager's business priority list. There are several systems that food establishment management can use to attain AMC. Some of the most critical systems include International Organization for Standardization (ISO 22000), Good Manufacturing Practices, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points among many others.

Another way to protect your businesses and customers is to double down on the best food safety training and rely heavily on a CFPM's transfer of knowledge to other food workers. A CFPM is an individual who has shown competence in food safety education by passing a test that is part of an accredited program (FDA, 2013a).⁴ Research shows the correlation of a CFPM and improved food safety knowledge and inspection scores (Cates et al., 2008; Brown et al., 2014).⁵ Even more profound, the FDA's findings indicate that FSMS predict compliance with food safety practices. We would love to talk with you about FSMS and more.

RQA, Inc. offers a variety of customized services and is continually improving and developing new service offerings. Our consultants have extensive years of industry experience along with degrees, advanced degrees and certifications in varying disciplines. In addition to the service offerings listed below, RQA Consultants can work as an extension of your management team to develop customized services based on your company's structure and project requirements. Examples of how RQA, Inc. can collaborate with you:

- Review Food Safety Programs
- Refine your HACCP Plan
- Enhance your Consumer Care Line Scripting
- Menu Risk Assessment
- Benchmark Employee Health Policies with Regulatory Requirements
- Develop Crisis Management Plans
- Supplier Remediation and Qualification

³[Technical Report: FDA Report on the Occurrence of Foodborne Illness Risk Factors in Fast-food and Full-service Restaurants 2017-2018](#)

⁴ Food and Drug Administration (2013a). Food Code. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/media/87140/download>.

⁵ Cates, S.C., Muth, M.K., Karns, S.A., Penne, M.A., Stone, C.N., Harrison, J.E., and Radke, V.J. (2008). Certified Kitchen Managers: Do They Improve Restaurant Inspection Outcomes? *Journal of Food Protection*, (72)2, 384-391.

Contact RQA today to learn how we can help you prepare, prevent, and respond to events involving your food establishment.

Additional Resources

[Food Safety Requirements \(servsafe.com\)](https://www.servsafe.com)

[State Retail and Food Service Codes and Regulations by State | FDA](#)

[RQA, Inc. – Global Quality Audit, Crisis, Recall, and Retrieval Services. \(rqa-inc.com\)](https://www.rqa-inc.com)