

# Food safety and Hygiene

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## Innovative strategy to improve food safety standards in the emirates of Dubai by happiness inspection

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**Introduction:** Dubai Municipality Food Safety Department used an innovative strategy “Happiness Inspection - No fine but more support & guidance” to improve food safety standards of 450 establishments evaluated as “unsatisfactory” consecutively in the last 3 years and required improvements to meet regulatory standards.

**Methods:** Initial data of these establishments was retrieved from Food Inspection System to determine non-conformities. Following data analysis, these establishments were visited to establish root causes of non-conformities. A behavior-based approach of inspection i.e. coaching, guidance, on job training, regular meetings and frequent follow-ups were used which resulted in gradual improvement in hygiene practices. After achieving required level of compliance, establishments were scheduled back to regular routine inspections.

**Results:** After implementing Happiness Inspections, evident improvement was noticed in food safety standards at these establishments. Sixty percent establishments have achieved improved food safety scores within 9 months. Improved

establishments data was statistically analyzed (t-test) and a significant improvement ( $p < 0.05$ ) was observed where food safety standards i.e. cross contamination, cleaning & disinfection and pest control showed considerable improvement. Next routine inspection reports showed noticeable improvement in grade & color cards issued to these establishments.

**Significance:** Through this coaching and guidance approach, food safety culture has also been improved significantly inside these establishments. This initiative also assisted regulatory authorities in planning new specialized trainings to improve regular inspection approach.

### Speaker Biography

Sultan Ali Al Taher is the Head of Food Inspection Section in Dubai Municipality Food Safety Department. He has been working in Dubai Municipality Food Safety Department since April 1999. He has completed his Master degree in Food Safety Management from Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai, UAE. He did his Bachelor of Public Health, Environmental Health Major from Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia. Sultan has participated in several local & international conferences (like NEHA, IAFP, Cold Chain Conference etc.) and meetings & food safety activities. He is also an active member of IAFP & other international organization like IFST, NEHA, etc.

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