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1. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to describe post-response activities, including the maintenance and distribution of final reports and annual summaries, and the annual analysis of food-related incidents or emergencies investigated by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Food and Feed Safety Division (FFSD) Rapid Response Team (RRT). The purpose of investigation review is to identify trends, contributing factors, antecedents, and suggest steps for prevention. These procedures are to be conducted at least once per year. The two products described in this procedure are the *RRT Annual Investigation Summary* and the *RRT Lessons Learned Report.*

1. **SCOPE**

This document pertains to human or animal food-related incident or emergency investigations conducted by the Rapid Response Team (RRT) within the Food and Feed Safety Division (FFSD) of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). food-related incidents may include but are not limited to: animal illness or death, foodborne illness outbreaks, facility contamination events, product recall follow-up, and natural disaster response. For foodborne illness outbreak investigations involving illnesses of Minnesota residents, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is responsible for creating, storing, and disseminating the official outbreak summary. MDA also writes an Investigation summary following each investigation. The MDA Investigation summary may provide supporting information, but is not the full, complete summary of record for foodborne illness outbreak investigations involving illnesses of Minnesota residents. This procedure also does not apply to the review of inspection program led reinspection or follow-up inspections or specific compliance actions. These actions are documented in compliance summary documents and within inspection reports.

The illness and contamination investigational data to be analyzed as part of the RRT Lessons Learned Report includes, but is not limited to, rrt investigations, foodborne illness complaints, product and environmental sampling results, and consumer advisories conducted by MDA and pertaining to FFSD-regulated products and processes. This does not supplant similar activities that may be conducted by other units or programs in FFSD. It also does not replace the need to conduct after action reviews following individual rrt investigations (see *RESP.50.03 – After Action Review SOP*)*.*

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Rapid Response Team (RRT) is the primary investigation and response management unit for incidents involving food and feed products made, stored, or sold in Minnesota. The RRT is involved in responding to food and feed emergencies that surpass the routine capacity of any one FFSD program to respond. Summaries of all RRT responses are created every calendar year to provide investigational information to other agencies and entities, help demonstrate the impact the RRT has on protection food safety in Minnesota, and provide a mechanism for response and trend analysis. Foodborne illnesses and food contamination events are valuable sources from which to learn about new food safety risks, identify gaps in current practices, and promote ways to improve preventative measures.

1. **RESPONSIBILITY**

**Response and Outreach (RO) Supervisor** – The RO Supervisor oversees RRT staff in completion of the data compilation and analysis. The RO Supervisor is responsible for reviewing final reports for completeness and accuracy.

**Rapid Response Team (RRT) Coordinator** – The RRT Coordinator is responsible for the annual completion of the RRT Annual Investigation Summary, data analysis, and the annual RRT Lessons Learned Report or delegating tasks to the RRT Investigator/Analyst as described in this SOP.

**Rapid Response Team (RRT) Investigator/Analyst** – The RRT Investigator/Analyst is responsible for assisting the RRT Coordinator with data analysis and the annual RRT Lessons Learned Report. Additionally, the RRT Investigator/Analyst is responsible for completing the RRT Annual Investigation Summary or assisting in the completion of the annual summary as delegated by the RRT Coordinator.

1. **DEFINITIONS**

**After Action Review** **(AAR)** – A no-fault process or meeting whereby everyone involved in the response/event collectively evaluates the response. The emphasis should be on identifying strengths and weaknesses of the jurisdiction’s or agency’s plans, protocols, and procedures, and the tactics utilized to achieve the strategic goals. The outcome of the AAR is the After Action Review Report.

**Emergency(ies) –** An unforeseen or sudden occurrence requiring immediate action to protect against substantial risk to animal and/or public health, and that involves the safety, efficacy, and security of ANIMAL FEED supply.

**Environmental Assessment –** Onsite food production or food processing environment investigation, conducted in conjunction with investigations as needed to assess and rule out the potential that the contaminant of concern was introduced at a particular point in the distribution or production system. This is achieved by identifying contributing factors and environmental antecedents.

**Food** – Every ingredient used for, entering into the consumption of, or used or intended for use in the preparation of food, drink, confectionery, or condiment for humans or other animals, whether simple, mixed, or compound; and articles used as components of these ingredients.

**Food-Related Incidents** – Unintentional or deliberate contamination, threatened or actual, of food that may occur at any point in the production system and may cause food-related illness, injury, outbreaks, and hazards. Examples of food related incidents include but are not limited to foodborne illness outbreaks and food tampering.

**Hazard** – Any biological, chemical, or physical agent in food that is reasonably likely to cause illness or injury in the absence of its control.

**Investigation Summary** – A document used to capture the nature of the problem and summarize the actions taken in response. The Investigation Summary is MDA RRT’s official record of the response and serves as the MDA FFSD’s final report of the response once the investigation is closed.

**RRT Investigation** **–** Any type of incident that involved the MDA RRT to either lead or assist. These include, but are not limited to: animal illness or death, foodborne illness outbreaks, facility contamination events, product recall follow-up, and natural disaster response. Note that not all of these types of events necessarily involve the RRT.

**RRT Annual Investigation Summary** – A document capturing the summaries and “next steps” identified for each RRT-led response in a calendar year. The RRT Annual Investigation is completed within 60 days of the end of the calendar year and is circulated to MDA FFSD staff and investigation partners.

**RRT Lessons Learned Report –** A document capturing lessons learned from investigations managed by the MDA RRT. The report summarizes trends in contributing factors or antecedents; suggested steps for prevention; increased or decreased prevalence of an agent, food vehicle, or establishment type; complaint summary; and notable changes in food or feed practices.

1. **PROCEDURES**
   1. **RRT Annual Investigation Summary Development**

RRT Coordinator

* + 1. Assist RRT Investigator/Analyst as needed with location, collection, and summary of investigational and response documents from the calendar year.
    2. Review the rrt annual investigation summary for accuracy and completeness before submitting to the RO Supervisor for review. The rrt annual investigation summary will be completed within 60 days of the end of the calendar year. Exceptions will be made for ongoing investigations initiated in the previous calendar year.

RRT Investigator/Analyst

* + 1. Locate and collect investigational and response documents from the calendar year. Each investigation or response involving the RRT will have an investigation summary that includes key information for the event. Investigation summaries can be found in OneNote. Final PDF versions of investigation summaries and associated exhibits are attached in the SharePoint Investigation Dashboard.
    2. Complete an rrt annual investigation summary for the calendar year by pulling all investigation summaries and outlined “next steps” into a single document.
    3. Submit a draft of the rrt annual investigation summary to the RRT Coordinator for review.
    4. After review and approval by the RRT Coordinator and RO Supervisor, upload the completed rrt annual investigation summary to the RRT SharePoint site and FoodSHIELD.
  1. **RRT Lessons Learned Report Development – RRT Investigator/Analyst**
     1. Assemble the data sources for review and analysis. Data should be collected from the past calendar year. These sources may include the following, as applicable:
        1. Previous data analysis and lessons learned summaries;
        2. Investigation Summaries and associated investigation reports and environmental assessments;
        3. Annual Summaries;
        4. RRT AAR Reports (including improvement plans);
        5. MDA consumer advisories or news releases pertaining to FFSD-regulated products;
        6. Laboratory results of environmental or finished product samples collected by FFSD inspectors;
        7. Warning Letters and Letters of Information issued by FFSD Compliance Unit;
        8. Foodborne illness complaints for which FFSD action or follow-up was taken; and
        9. Any other foodborne illness investigation, food contamination event and/or root cause analysis, food facility environmental assessments, or food recall that involved FFSD staff.
     2. Review and analyze the assembled data. Request assistance or consultation from other staff as needed. Analyze assembled data to identify:
        1. New or novel causative agents, food vehicles, or agent-vehicle combinations;
        2. Increased prevalence of an agent, food vehicle, or agent-vehicle combination;
        3. Number of complaints implicating the same establishment or the same type of establishment, the same food or similar food preparation processes, or the same agent or novel agents;
        4. Number of complaints involving real or alleged threats of intentional food contamination;
        5. Food harvesting, production, transportation, or storage practices or equipment that may have contributed to food contamination and/or illness;
        6. Frequency of contributing factors or antecedents identified in environmental assessments; and
        7. Other trends or root causes.
     3. Consult scientific literature, regulatory guidance, and current Minnesota statutes and federal laws, among other sources, to determine the background and context for any analytical findings.
  2. **RRT Lessons Learned Report – Summarize and Disseminate Findings – RRT Investigator/Analyst**
     1. Write a summary of the data analysis findings; the scientific, regulatory, or legal context of the findings; and any recommended strategies to mitigate and contain food-related illness, injury, and hazards, including but not limited to: training, outreach, education, enforcement, procedural changes, public awareness activities, or other actions to address food safety gaps or preventative measures.
     2. Submit the summary report to the RRT Coordinator for review.
     3. After approval by the RRT Coordinator and RO Supervisor, circulate a copy to relevant FFSD staff and appropriate local, state, and federal partners responsible for prevention, education, and outreach.
     4. Maintain a copy of the final report on the RRT SharePoint site and post a copy to FoodSHIELD.
  3. **RRT Lessons Learned Report - RRT Coordinator**
     1. Assist RRT Investigator/Analyst in the assembling of data and data analysis (6.2 and 6.3) as requested.
     2. Assist RRT Investigator/Analyst in drafting the final report (6.4) as requested.
     3. Review the final draft of the report and share with the RO Supervisor for final approval.
  4. **RRT Lessons Learned Report - RO Supervisor**
     1. Provide assistance and consultation to the RRT Coordinator and RRT Investigator/Analyst during the data analysis and drafting of all final reports.
     2. Review the final rrt lessons learned report and RRT Annual Investigation summary for accuracy and completeness and make edits as necessary. Submit the approved copy to the RRT Coordinator and RRT Investigator/Analyst for posting and sharing.
     3. Approve all final reports before publishing or sharing outside of the agency.
  5. **Investigational Documentation Maintenance and Final Report Distribution – RRT Coordinator and RRT Investigator/Analyst**
     1. Ensure all investigation-related documentation is maintained in OneNote throughout the investigation and in accordance with the current data practices retention policy.
     2. At the close of each investigation, identify “next steps” to be included in the rrt investigation annual summary. “Next steps” include, but are not limited to, suggested sampling assignments for routine surveillance sampling, future follow up with the facility based on an environmental assessments, opportunities for outreach, industry education, public awareness activities, and suggestions for staff training.
     3. Distribute final investigation report(s) (including the environmental assessment, if completed) to relevant MDA staff and local, state, and federal partners and other relevant partners responsible for prevention, education, and outreach and to agencies such as MDH that are responsible for reporting contributing factors and antecedents to CDC.
     4. Maintain program investigation and environmental assessment findings and reports on the RRT SharePoint and OneNote sites and in accordance with the current data retention policy.

1. **RELATED DOCUMENTS (includes References, Attachments)**

*RESP.50.03 – After Action Review SOP*

1. **EQUIPMENT/MATERIALS NEEDED**

Access to SharePoint, FoodSHIELD, and OneNote

1. **SAFETY**

N/A

1. **CIRCULATION**

This document will be circulated to the following individuals: RRT members (including RO Supervisor, RRT Coordinator, and RRT Investigator/Analyst), Feed and Food Program Management and Supervisory staff, and the FFSD Director and Assistant Director. The current version will be stored electronically on the FFSD document control site.