

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** National Food Safety Standard for Hygienic Specification for Catering Services of Railway Passenger Trains Notified to WTO

**Country:** China - People's Republic of

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**Report Category:** FAIRS Subject Report, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, WTO Notifications

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**Report Highlights:**

On October 25, 2023, China notified the National Food Safety Standard for Hygienic Specification for Catering Services of Railway Passenger Trains to the World Trade Organization (WTO) under G/SPS/N/CHN/1292. The proposed date of entry into force is to be determined. Comments may be submitted to China's SPS National Notification and Enquiry Center at [sps@customs.gov.cn](mailto:sps@customs.gov.cn) until December 24, 2023. The report provides an unofficial translation of the draft standard.

## Report Summary:

On October 25, 2023, China notified the National Food Safety Standard for Hygienic Specification for Catering Services of Railway Passenger Trains to the World Trade Organization (WTO) under [G/SPS/N/CHN/1292](#). The proposed date of entry into force is to be determined. Comments may be submitted to China's SPS National Notification and Enquiry Center at [sps@customs.gov.cn](mailto:sps@customs.gov.cn) until December 24, 2023.

This is the first national food safety standard applicable to the sanitation requirements specifically for railway passenger train catering services. The standard specifies basic food safety requirements and management criteria for venues, facilities, equipment, and personnel during food procurement, receipt, storage, delivery, processing, and supply for railway passengers. The report provides an unofficial translation of the draft standard notified to WTO.

Previous national food safety standards that this new standard refer to include:

- National Food Safety Standard for General Sanitation Requirements for Catering Services as [GB 31654-2021](#) (link in Chinese) published in 2021.
- National Food Safety Standard for Cold Chain Foods Logistics Hygiene Practices as [GB 31605-2020](#) (link in Chinese) published in 2020.
- National Food Safety Standard of Hygiene Requirements for Food Operating Processes as [GB 31621-2014](#) (link in Chinese) published in 2014.

## BEGIN TRANSLATION

### **National Food Safety Standard Hygienic Specification for Food Services of Railway Passenger Trains (Draft for Comments)**

#### **1. Scope**

This standard specifies basic food safety requirements and management rules on the venues, facilities, equipment, and personnel during the processes such as procurement, receipt, storage, delivery, processing in dining cars, and supply services for catering services on railway passenger trains.

This standard applies to catering services on railway passenger trains.

#### **2. Terms and Definitions**

The terms defined in GB 31654 and the terms and definitions listed below apply to this standard.

## **2.1 Dining car**

A train carriage used to provide food services for passengers.

## **2.2 Prepared foods for railway passenger trains**

Pre-packaged foods processed intensively and delivered to railway passenger trains with hot or cold chain processes, including the packaged foods kept in hot, cold, and frozen conditions.

## **2.3 Online ordered foods for railway passenger trains**

Foods ordered in advance by passengers through internet platforms on the trains, distributed by railway delivery organizations, and delivered to the passengers who will dine in railway passenger trains.

## **2.4 Foods transit storeroom**

A storeroom where foods prepared beforehand or ordered online for a railway passenger train, are kept temporarily after their arrival at a station and before they are delivered to the train.

## **3. Venues and Layouts**

### **3.1 Sites and layouts of dining cars and foods transit storerooms should comply with provisions in GB 31654.**

### **3.2 Venues and layouts of a dining car**

3.2.1 A train where foods catering services are provided, should be equipped with dining cars that suit the varieties and quantities of the foods supplied.

3.2.2 It is appropriate and helpful to place dining cars in the middle of passenger trains for the convenience of delivering foods to carriages on both sides and meeting delivery time requirements.

3.2.3 A dining car should be designed and developed as a whole. The food processing areas should be designed according to the processes of food storage, processing, and delivery, and divided into areas of food storage, processing and cooking, finished products, and tableware washing and sterilization, and cleaning. The areas should be clearly marked to prevent cross contamination.

### **3.3 Venues and layouts of the foods transit storeroom**

3.3.1 The foods transit storeroom should be preferably within the scope of a railway station, with clean and neat surroundings, away from sources of pollution such as the rubbish and sewage treatment places.

3.3.2 The structure of the building should be in good conditions, and reasonably laid out

according to the processes of food storage and delivery. There should be a separate area or facility to place cleaning tools in, located in such a way that foodstuffs should not be contaminated.

#### **4. Facilities and Equipment**

##### **4.1 It should comply with provisions in GB 31654.**

##### **4.2 Facilities and equipment in a dining car**

4.2.1 It should be equipped with sanitary facilities such as water supply, drainage, power supply, and gas-expelling devices, and the facilities should be at good conditions.

4.2.2 There should be facilities and equipment for handwashing, cleaning, disinfection, refrigeration, freezing, heating, hot storage, storage, and processing. The quantities and structures of the facilities and equipment for cold storage and freezing should meet the requirement that raw materials, semi-finished products, and finished products are stored separately.

4.2.3 Food containers, tools, cupboards, the facilities and equipment for hot storage, cold storage, and freezing should have clear distinguishing signs. Colors, materials, shapes, letters, symbols, and patterns can be used to for different marks. All facilities and equipment, cupboards, tools etc. should be classified and stored in designated places to prevent cross contamination.

4.2.4 There should be special cabinets to store and keep tableware clean.

4.2.5 Devices for heating foods such as micro-wave ovens in the dining car should function well and safe to use.

4.2.6 In a dining car, places such as the drain outlet in the floor, the air vent at the top, and the gap in a carriage wall should be equipped with relevant facilities to prevent harmful creatures such as mice from entering it.

##### **4.3 Facilities and equipment in the food transit storeroom**

4.3.1 According to food storage and delivery requirements, there should be facilities and equipment for storage, delivery, hot storage, cold storage, freezing, cleaning, and disinfection, to meet with food safety requirements.

4.3.2 Preferably, there should be ventilation and gas-expelling devices to keep a dry condition. If necessary, facilities for protection against light should be provided.

4.3.3 There should be shelves to store boxes (bags) used in transit of foods.

4.3.4 Preferably, there should be facilities for handwashing, cleaning, disinfection, and drainage, to meet with the cleaning and disinfection requirement for employees' hands, foods utensils, and

tools.

4.3.5 Suitable facilities for preventing and controlling harmful living creatures should be provided according to needs.

#### **4.4 Facilities and equipment for transportation and delivery**

4.4.1 Special delivery tools (boxes, bags, and vehicles) should be provided.

4.4.2 The transportation tools should be airtight. Materials for delivery boxes (bags) should meet with food safety requirements and easy to clean and disinfect.

#### **4.5 Facilities and equipment temperature control requirements**

The facilities and equipment for storage, transportation, and delivery that have temperature requirements should be equipped with temperature measuring devices that can display internal temperatures. The temperature measuring devices should be regularly calibrated.

### **5. Purchase and Receipt of Foods**

#### **5.1 Purchase**

5.1.1 It should comply with provisions in GB 31654.

5.1.2 A unified system for purchasing and receipt of foods should be established for the procurement of the raw materials, semi-finished products, and finished products used in dining cars. Relevant supporting documents should be checked and verified according to relevant national food safety standards, and supplier's records should be established.

5.1.3 A system should be established to evaluate the suppliers of prepared or online-ordered foods for railway passenger trains, and only foods provided by qualified suppliers should be purchased.

5.1.4 It is inappropriate to purchase fresh cut fruits and other foods that cannot meet the specific conditions for transportation, storage, and processing.

5.1.5 Purchase of raw materials and semi-finished products for use in dining cars

5.1.5.1 Raw materials and semi-finished products used in dining cars should meet relevant requirements of the food safety standards.

5.1.5.2 It is appropriate to purchase packaged prepared fresh vegetables that are treated, cleaned, peeled or not peeled, sliced or not sliced beforehand.

5.1.5.3 Outer package of a semi-finished product should be marked with such information as foods names, processing time, storage conditions, shelf life, and manufacturers.

5.1.5.4 It is not allowed to purchase edible oil in bulk for use in dining cars.

#### 5.1.6 Purchase of prepared foods for railway passenger trains

5.1.6.1 A supplier's qualifications, manufacturing and processing capacity, and management systems should be evaluated. The quality control over the raw and auxiliary materials for foods, the environment, facilities, and processes for manufacturing and processing, conditions for storage, reserved samples of foods, and the capacity for transportation and delivery should be evaluated on the spots. Qualified suppliers of prepared foods for railway passenger trains are determined after comprehensive evaluations.

5.1.6.2 A supplier of prepared foods for railway passenger trains should comply with relevant provisions in GB 31654 or GB 14881, and meet with the following conditions:

- a. The supply has an automatic packaging and production line.
- b. If the supplier produces and processes cold-stored and frozen foods, it should have quick-freezing equipment, and technical parameters of the equipment should meet requirements of freezing rate and production quantity.
- c. The supply should have a finished products freezer with functions of temperature controlling and monitoring.
- d. The packaging materials of prepared foods for railway passengers' trains should comply with national food safety standards. Packaging materials to be heated with micro-wave ovens should be suitable for relevant heating methods, and the heating processes should not affect food safety.
- e. Prepared foods for railway passengers' trains should be marked with foods names, production dates, storage conditions, shelf life/expiry time for consumption, and relevant information about the manufacturers. Prepared foods that need heating processes before consumption should be marked with heating methods and requirements.
- f. Hot or cold stored prepared foods for railway passengers' trains should be marked with production dates accurate to hour and minute.

#### 5.1.7 Purchase of online-ordered foods for railway passengers trains.

5.1.7.1 A supplier's qualifications, processing capacity, and management systems should be evaluated. The environment, facilities and equipment, and processes for manufacturing and processing, should be evaluated on the spots. Qualified suppliers of prepared foods for railway passenger trains are determined after comprehensive evaluations.

5.1.7.2 A supplier of online-ordered food for railway passengers trains should comply with relevant provisions in GB 31654 and meet the following conditions:

- a. Start to prepare the foods ordered online in a designated railway passenger train 1 hour before the arrival of the train at the station and finish the preparation within 30 minutes.
- b. Comply with the specific requirements of railway catering service in terms of the varieties of online-ordered foods, and preferably not provide uncooked or cold foods with animal origins.
- c. Online-ordered foods should be in an air-tight small packages and at good conditions to avoid any strange smell, leakage, and food contamination.
- d. Online-ordered foods for railway passengers trains should be marked with foods names, processing time, expiry time, and information about the manufacturers, and indicate usage if necessary.
- e. Online-ordered foods for railway passengers trains should bear a food safety seal.

## **5.2 Receipt of foods**

5.2.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.

5.2.2 Acceptance of foods for use in dining cars

5.2.2.1 Criteria for accepting the purchased foods and foods related products should be established.

5.2.2.2 Every batch of foods and raw and auxiliary materials that are purchased should be checked and verified, any product not qualified should be rejected, and records should be made.

5.2.2.3 The raw materials and semi-finished products used for self-made foods in dining cars should be checked such as that whether invoices are inadequate, vegetables are not trimmed or packaged, semi-finished products are not marked with complete information.

5.2.2.4 The prepared foods should be checked mainly to see if there are any cases where packages are broken, information on labels is incomplete or illegible, products have expired, not marked with production time, temperatures exceeding limits during transportation, or invoices are not matched.

5.2.2.5 The duration of acceptance should be as short as possible when prepared cold-stored and frozen foods are checked to mitigate any change in the temperatures on surface of foods. After acceptance of the foods, they should be moved to the cold storage cabinet or freezer in the dining car within 15 minutes by transportation tools.

5.2.2.6 Online-ordered foods for railway passengers trains are checked mainly to see if there are any cases where outer packages are broken, packages are not completely sealed with food safety slips.

5.2.3 Acceptance of foods from transit storeroom

5.2.3.1 Prepared foods for railway passenger trains should be checked mainly for the temperature of the incubators, as well to see if the number of ice banks meets storage requirements when cold storage and freezing are required.

5.2.3.2 Personnel delivering online-ordered foods should check and verify the information about the foods, such as variety, quantity, processing time, expiry time, and train number, and separately pack the foods from different orders on the same train.

## **6. Storage**

### **6.1 Storage of foods in dining cars**

6.1.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.

6.1.2 The raw materials, semi-finished products, and finished products of the foods that are delivered to a train should be placed in cupboards or shelves, and foods should not be in direct contact with floor.

6.1.3 Raw materials, semi-finished products, and finished products should be placed in different sections.

6.1.4 The prepared foods for use on railway passenger trains that require hot storage, cold storage, and freezing should be placed in hot storage cabinet, cold cabinet, and freezer respectively, with storage temperatures meeting specified requirements.

### **6.2 Storage of foods from transit storeroom**

6.2.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.

6.2.2 Stored foods should be kept an appropriate distance away from walls and floors to prevent pests and facilitate air circulation.

6.2.3 Foods in different forms should be separated with containers or packages, and the containers and packages should be air-tight to prevent foods from being contaminated.

6.2.4 Storage of prepared foods on railway passenger trains should meet the storage conditions indicated on the labels.

6.2.5 Storage equipment, tools, and containers should be kept hygienic and clean.

## **7. Transportation and Distribution**

**7.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654 or GB 31605.**



**7.2** The special equipment and tools (boxes, bags, and vehicles) for foods delivery should be kept clean, washed, and disinfected regularly. They should not transport and deliver any toxic harmful substances to prevent food contamination.

**7.3** Before delivery, it should be confirmed that food packages are in good conditions, labeling information is complete, and temperature of the foods meets requirements.

**7.4** When different foods are delivered with the same transportation tools, the foods should be independently packaged, separated, or isolated, and stored in areas where foods storage temperatures requirements are met.

**7.5** During delivery, instant and non-instant foods, cold stored foods, and uncooked foods should be separated, to prevent ready-to-eat foods from being contaminated, and to ensure that temperatures of different foods meet relevant requirements.

**7.6** The time of loading and unloading goods should be strictly controlled. When a box is opened, the temperature in the operating environment should be strictly controlled, and the operating time should be minimized, to prevent the foods temperature from exceeding the specified range.

**7.7** When outdoor temperature is relatively low, measures should be taken temperature preservation of the online ordered foods.

**7.8** The length of time from processing the online ordered foods till it is delivered to the passenger trains should preferably not exceed 30 minutes.

**7.9** Delivery personnel should not touch the foods during the delivery.

## **8. Food Safety Control during Food Processing and Catering Services in Dining Cars**

### **8.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654**

### **8.2 On-site foods processing in dining cars**

**8.2.1** It is not appropriate to conduct primary processing in a dining car.

**8.2.2** It is forbidden to make decorated cakes, process raw foods or cold foods containing animal origins, or any fresh fruit juice or vegetable juice.

**8.2.3** Before cooking, foods to be processed should be checked. If there is any sign of decay or abnormality, it should not be cooked or processed.

**8.2.4** The temperature and time for cooking the foods should ensure food safety. For foods that needs to be cooked, the central temperature of the foods should reach to more than 70°C.

**8.2.5** Finished products after processing should be separately placed from raw materials and

semi-finished products.

8.2.6 It is not allowed to use food additives such as nitrite which has been prohibited to use in catering industry.

### **8.3 Re-heating of prepared food for railway passenger trains**

8.3.1 Before prepared foods on railway passenger trains is re-heated, the integrity of its package and the sensory perception of its shape and properties should be checked. If the package is damaged or has gone moldy, it should be stopped immediately from being provided.

8.3.2 Micro-wave ovens or other heating methods are used to re-heat prepared foods for railway passenger trains. At the time of re-heating, the power, temperature, and time for re-heating should be selected according to the types and volumes of foods, to ensure the central temperature of the foods after re-heating reaches over 70°C. Re-heated food should not be heated again.

8.3.3 The re-heated foods placed at between cold storage temperature and 60°C should not be kept more than 2 hours.

### **8.4 Catering services**

8.4.1 Foods prepared in dining cars should be separately packaged in the finished products section, labeled, with processing time indicated, and sold within 2 hours.

8.4.2 When separately packaging foods, the personnel at work should wear masks, keep hands clean, or put on gloves.

8.4.3 Foods ordered online on a railway passenger train should be delivered to the passenger within 30 minutes after it is received on the train.

8.4.4 Effective protective measures should be taken during food delivery. Tableware placed beforehand in the dining areas should be prevented from being contaminated.

### **8.5 Foods disposal after arrival at destinations**

8.5.1 After a train has arrived at its destination and the services on this train has ended, the remaining semi-finished products, finished products, and prepared foods for use on the train that is close to the shelf life/expiry time should not be recycled for processing and sales purposes.

8.5.2 Foods that are out of shelve life/expiry time or sensationally perceived to be abnormal in its shape and properties, it should be placed in a special area to be marked with a label indicating that it is for disposal. After the train has arrived at the destination and the service on this train has ended, those foods should be transferred to an appropriate place off the train and disposed, and records should be made.

## **9. Cleaning, Maintenance, and Waste management**

## **9.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.**

## **9.2 Cleaning and sterilization in a dining car**

9.2.1 Surroundings, facilities, and equipment in dining cars should be cleaned and maintained regularly, and disinfected if necessary.

9.2.2 Tableware should be disinfected by specially assigned personnel in charge, using special facilities, and placed in special cabinets. Methods of cleaning and disinfection of tableware and usage instructions should comply with provisions in Appendices B and C of GB 31654.

9.2.3 Processing tools and tableware should be separately placed. Cleaned and disinfected tableware should comply with provisions in GB 14934.

## **9.3 Waste management**

9.3.1 Kitchen waste should be recycled in a unified manner, it should be bagged, sealed, and placed at a fixed location. It should be put to a designated waste station.

9.3.2 Dining cars should not dump waste and sewage without permission.

## **10. Prevention and Control of Harmful Living Creatures**

### **10.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.**

10.2 Dining cars and foods transit storerooms should have relevant measures to prevent the entry of any harmful living creatures.

## **11. Personnel Health and Hygiene**

### **11.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.**

11.2 Food processing and delivery personnel should be at good health and keep good personal hygiene.

## **12. Training**

Comply with provisions in GB 31654.

## **13. Food Safety Management**

### **13.1 Comply with provisions in GB 31654.**

### **13.2 Management system and accident handling**

13.2.1 A food safety management system should be established according to regulations.

13.2.2 Railway catering services providers should introduce relevant food safety control measures in processes such as inspection, storage, transportation, delivery, foods re-heating, supply services, disposal and ensure its implementation.

13.2.3 If a food safety problem occurs on a railway passenger train, the foods and raw materials, tools, equipment, facilities that cause or may cause food safety concerns should be sealed up immediately, a report to relevant railway authority should be made according to regulations, investigating and handling cooperation should be coordinated, and relevant measures should be taken to prevent the situation from escalating.

### **13.3 Food safety self-checking**

13.3.1 Railway catering services providers should conduct regular food safety self-checking activities, to find and eliminate any food safety risks in a timely manner and to prevent the occurrence of any food safety accidents.

13.3.2 Railway transportation units should regularly check food safety issues and strengthen food safety management of catering services providers.

13.3.3 If a case of food safety violation is found, it should be handled according to relevant requirements.

### **13.4 Records and documents management**

13.4.1 Railway catering services providers should establish records system, keeping a record of personnel trainings and evaluations, inspections, food safety self-checking, storage facility temperature monitoring, consumer complaints handling, foods disposal etc. according to regulations.

13.4.2 A record of purchased goods should be kept according to regulations. If any goods are purchased in the middle of a journey, the foods names, quantities, and suppliers' information should be recorded in detail.

13.4.3 Records on purchased goods inspections and relevant vouchers should be maintained.

## **14. Others**

Other foods business activities on a passenger train should be conducted according to GB 31621.

**END TRANSLATION**

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.