

Effective Inspection Interviews

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Objectives

- Learn the purpose of inspection interviews
- Improve your inspection interview strategy
- Conduct more effective inspection interviews

Effective Inspection Interviews

What is an inspection interview?

- To question or talk with someone to get information to accomplish your **inspection purpose**.

Effective Inspection Interviews

How will you know when your inspection interview is effective?

Your inspection interview is effective when you successfully collect **decision-making information** that helps you accomplish your **inspection purpose**.

Effective Inspection Interviews

Decision-making information

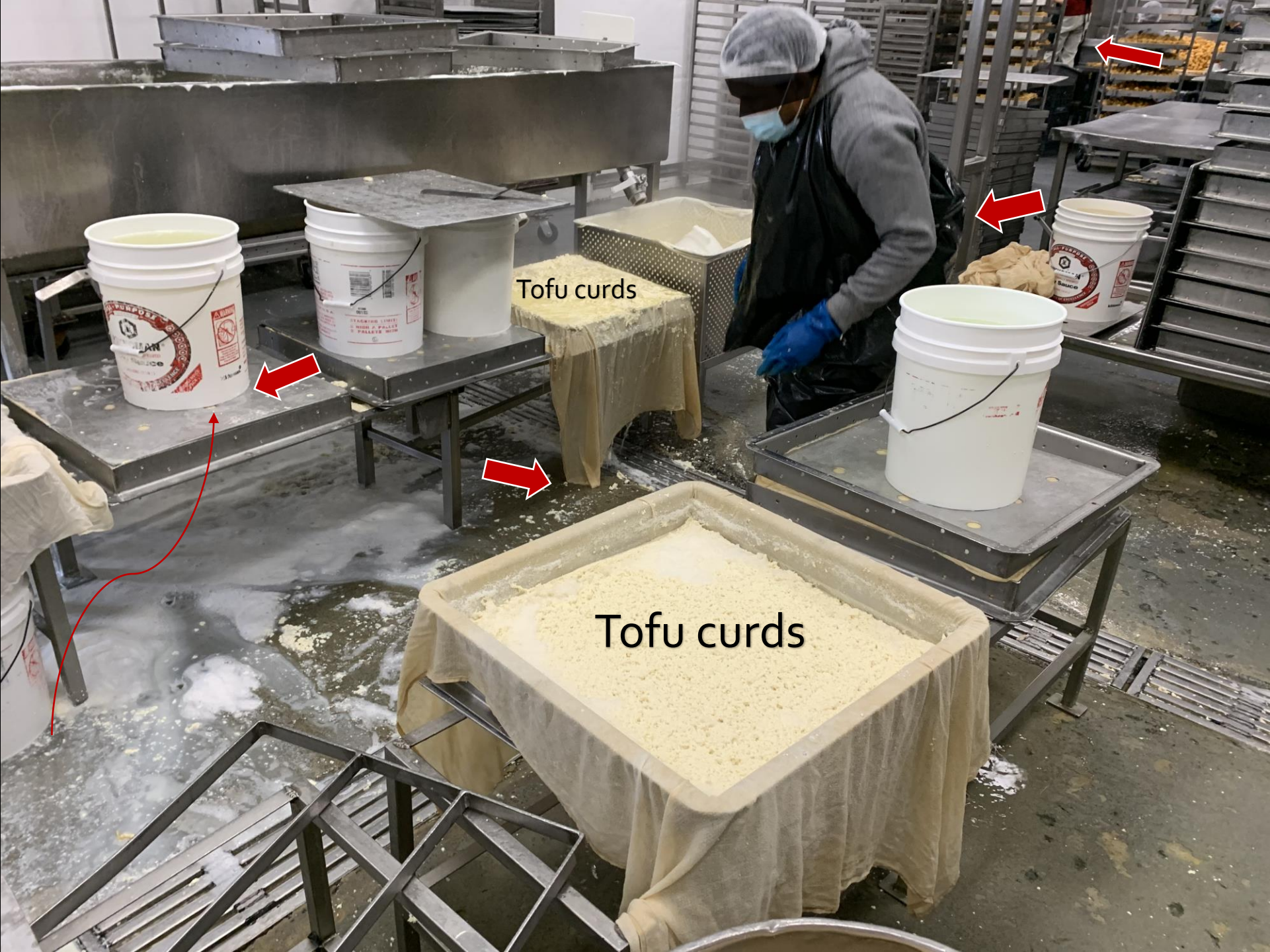
- Control measures
- Product distribution status
- Corrective actions
- Process clarification
- Equipment function
- Etc.

Effective Inspection Interviews

What is YOUR inspection purpose?

- To collect license payment
- To learn
- To find violations
- Recall check
- To issue license
- To meet inspection frequency
- To write report
- To understand process
- To punish bad firms
- Following orders
- Required by law
- To ensure corrections

Poll Question: Purpose



Tofu curds

Tofu curds

Planning for the interview

Purpose of our inspection

Our overall inspection purpose is to protect public health.

- Identify significant violations
 - Adulteration
 - Gross insanitary conditions
- Address significant violations
 - Take enforcement actions (Condemnation, Seizure, embargo, etc.)
 - Ensure corrections to eliminate/mitigate violation

Planning for the interview

Information needs

- What specific information do you need to characterize a violation?
- What specific information do you need to embargo adulterated food?

Develop Questions

- Compose specific phrasing for key questions.
- Develop predetermined lines of questioning.

Planning for the interview

- Anticipate **obstacles**
 - Think through your questions and the possible answers.
 - Do the questions make sense?
 - What might go wrong?
 - How will you handle emotional responses?

Effective Interviewing

Asking questions and Gathering inspection information

Improving Inspection Interviews

Be transparent

- Promotes trust
- Information is easier to gather
- Problems are solved faster

Improving Inspection Interviews

When conducting interviews, put yourself in the position of the respondent. Often, they will be thinking about this implied question:

Why is the Inspector talking to me now about this?

1. Explain how the issue was discovered; or point out observation physically if possible
2. Present all relevant facts upfront
3. Summarize your concern

Be transparent

1. Explain how the issue was discovered
 - I was in the processing room watching your employees getting the tofu curds ready for the tofu press.
2. Present all relevant facts
 - I saw a cheesecloth touching the insanitary floor, and I saw Joe flip the cheesecloth on top of the tofu curds.
3. Summarize your concern
 - My concern is that the tofu curds are now contaminated.
 - My concern is that Joe is contaminating your tofu curds.
 - My concern is that the tofu is adulterated.
 - My concern is that the adulterated tofu is going to make someone sick.
 - My concern is that...



Poll Question: Concerns

Improving Inspection Interviews

- Skilled interviewers will get information that is:
 - More Accurate
 - More Actionable

Improving Inspection Interviews

- Skilled interviewers:
 1. Ask the right type of question for the situation.
 2. Customize questions according to the respondent's known/presumed knowledge.
 3. Have "go to" interview questions and statements.

Improving Inspection Interviews

Types of Questions

- Open vs Closed

Improving Inspection Interviews

Types of Questions

- **Closed** question asks for a specific piece of information. Typically, it can be answered with a single word.
 - Did you sanitize the food press?
 - Did you properly address observed temperature deviations in your coolers?
- **Open** questions are an invitation to the respondent for broad discussion or explanation.
 - Tell me about your sanitation procedures for the food press?
 - How did you address observed temperature deviations in your coolers?

Improving Inspection Interviews

Open vs Closed Questions

Five Functions of Open Questions

- 1) Getting detailed information
- 2) Hearing the subject's frame of reference
- 3) Allowing the interviewer to listen and concentrate on observing non-verbal cues
- 4) Getting leads for follow up questions
- 5) Reducing anxiety

Five Functions of Closed Questions

- 1) Getting specific information quickly
- 2) Changing direction of an interview
- 3) Maintaining control
- 4) Confirming agreement
- 5) Getting attention

Improving Inspection Interviews

More Types of Questions to be aware of

- **Loaded:**

- Loaded questions contain a hidden assumption, which the respondent confirms by answering the question. Most often they make the respondent guarded, defensive, and distrustful of the interviewer.

- **Indirect:**

- Indirect questions attribute the question to someone other than the interviewer. With this technique sensitive subjects can be introduced with less direct emotional confrontation.

We want to know the root cause of this insanitary condition. Let's ask.



Loaded Question: (makes respondent feel defensive)

- How did you allow this equipment to become so dirty and poorly maintained?

Indirect Question: (less direct emotional confrontation)

- What's the firm's basic sanitation process for heavily used food processing equipment?

Improving Inspection Interviews

Properly phrasing questions

1. Consider your information needs.
 - Broad & Detailed (open) or
 - Short & Specific (closed)
2. Consider the respondent's knowledge or presumed knowledge of the subject matter.
 - Sanitation crew,
 - Food handler,
 - Supervisor,
 - Owner,
 - HACCP/PC Coordinator

Poll Question: Phrasing

Proper Phrasing of your Question

1. Information needs

- How much tofu was affected by this cheesecloth practice.
- Planned corrections

2. Respondent's knowledge

- We'll talk to the Supervisor in charge of Joe and other employees on this line. We'll presume he trained and monitors his line workers.



Phrasing of your Questions (Examples)

- **Open:** What type of training do you provide to your employees regarding use of the cheese cloths?
- **Closed:** How many batches of tofu did Joe manufacture this week?
- **Indirect:** What could be done at this time to make sure contaminated tofu is not distributed?
- **Statement:** Tell me how you would typically handle a contamination issue like this.



Inspection Interview Tips

Three go to **statements** for most situations

- 1) Tell me what's going on here.
- 2) Please walk me through the process.
- 3) Tell me what you call this equipment and how it's used.

Inspection Interview Tips

Four **open questions** for most common situations

- 1) How do you feel about your current process?
- 2) What challenges have you had with this process?
- 3) How can we resolve these discrepancies/deficiencies?
- 4) What can be done to improve these conditions/correct these violations?

What did we learn?

- We learned that the **purpose** of inspection interviews is to get information to characterize and address violations
- We learned how to improve our **interview strategy** by focusing on our inspection purpose, identifying our information needs, and pre-planning to address obstacles.
- We learned how to conduct more **effective inspection interviews** by building trust with transparency, asking expertly phrased questions, and making appropriate information gathering requests.

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Thank you.