

# Commercial Deli Slicer Inspection Tips for Food Safety Professionals

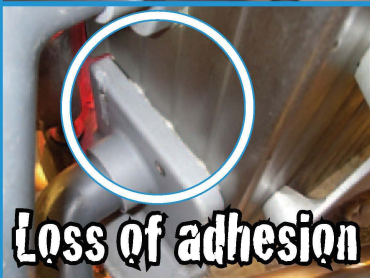
- Mechanical deli slicers commonly used in retail and foodservice establishments to slice meats, cheeses and produce may become difficult or impossible to adequately clean and sanitize after a period of use.
- Recent foodborne illness outbreaks have been associated with the accumulation of food soils and disease-causing microorganisms on areas of commercial deli slicers that are difficult to clean and sanitize.
- These outbreaks have resulted in serious illnesses and hospitalizations.

There are many seams created between the numerous adjoining parts and components of a typical deli slicer. Sealants and gaskets are often used to seal these seams. These seams can become worn, degraded or removed as a result of the heavy use and cleaning regimens to which deli slicers are subjected. As these seals and gaskets become degraded, spaces can be created that can trap debris and moisture, which can lead to areas that may not be adequately cleaned and sanitized under normal cleaning methods.



## During routine inspections of retail and foodservice establishments:

- Pay special attention to commercial deli slicers.
- Examine the equipment for degraded, defective or worn parts.
- If there are any signs of cracks, chips, deep scratches or loss of adhesion or if any seam or part is found defective or damaged, have the food establishment remove the slicer from service until repaired or replaced.
- Stress that establishment managers need to contact the slicer manufacturer for repairs and maintenance; all repairs should be performed by the manufacturer's authorized service representatives.
- Check that the retail or foodservice establishments are following the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and maintenance.



## NSF/ANSI Standard 8, *Commercial Powered Food Preparation Equipment*

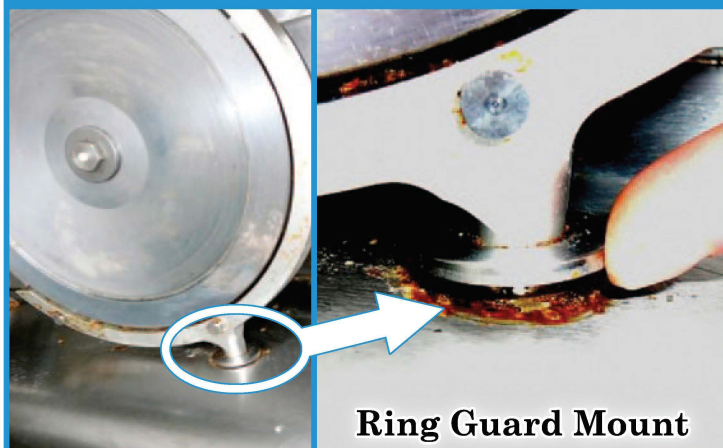
Most slicers used in food establishments are models that have been certified to the NSF/ANSI (American National Standards Institute) Standard 8, *Commercial Powered Food Preparation Equipment* by an ANSI accredited certification body. However, these certifications are issued for newly manufactured products only, and do not ensure that the slicer will be maintained in a cleanable condition after extended use. Once in the field, slicer seal and gasket life will be affected by a variety of factors such as conditions of use, type and frequency of cleaning protocols, and types of foods being sliced. Since slicers typically remain in use for a number of years, operators and regulators must be diligent in their inspection, evaluation and maintenance of this equipment.

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If you are inspecting the facility as part of a foodborne illness outbreak investigation:

- If a slicer is suspected as a source of contamination, breaking down slicers (including the disassembly of components attached with fasteners) may be necessary to examine if any seal or seam degradation has occurred that may result in contamination of food.
- If collecting environmental samples, be sure to swab surfaces and niches on the slicer where cross contamination hazards may have been created, such as seals and seams in or near the food contact zones.

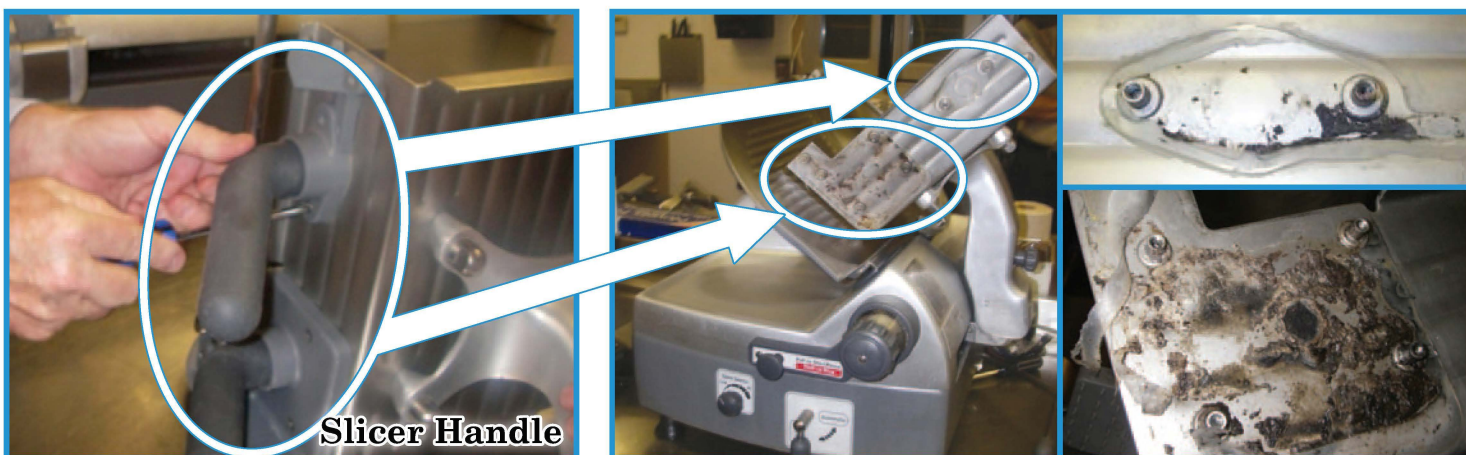
## Examples of commercial deli slicer components inaccessible under normal cleaning conditions



**Figure 1.** Food soil accumulation at the ring guard mount.



**Figure 2.** Food soil accumulation on the inside of the blade guard at the white plastic piece.



**Figure 3.** Surfaces under the slicer handle can accumulate food soil and debris and require monitoring to prevent build-up.