

Micro Market – NAMA Technical Bulletin

A New Innovation in Automatic Merchandising

Introduction

Technology is making possible great changes in the food and beverage vending industry. Today you can purchase a Latte or a Cappuccino from a hot beverage machine and enjoy many of the new bottle drinks from a glass front beverage dispenser. You can also make your purchase using a credit/debit card in addition to using bills or coins.

However, the biggest change has been the introduction of the Micro Market. A Micro Market is a self-checkout retail food establishment that replaces a bank of vending machines. In a Micro Market a customer picks up a product from an open rack display, a reach-in refrigerated cooler or freezer or open air cooler, than scans the UPC bar code or an RFID tag for each product at a payment kiosk. The customer pays with a single payment, be it cash, credit card or stored value card. Another unique feature of the Micro Market is that it operates without an employee present, just like vending machines. All Micro Markets are equipped with a 24 hour a day security system monitoring customers as they make their selections and checkout. Micro Markets are designed to be in “closed locations.” This refers to a business that has a moderately secured facility for a known group of employees where the Micro Market can be located in a designated area away from heavy public traffic.

Micro Market Products Available

In a typical Micro Market you will find:

- Fresh crisp salads and fruit
- Deli sandwiches, subs, soups and meal options
- Premium beverages, sparkling drinks and juice varieties
- Popular snacks, candies, gum and mints
- Low-calorie, low-fat healthy alternatives
- Breakfast sandwiches, pastries and cereals
- Ice cream and other frozen treats
- Some over the counter medicine and sundry items

Micro Market Equipment

To merchandise all the products available in a Micro Market you will typically find:

- Shelving, be it wall or free standing for popular snacks, candies, gum, mints, low-calorie, low-fat healthy alternative snacks and sundry items
- Single or double door glass front reach-in refrigerators for premium beverages, sparkling drinks and juice varieties
- Single door glass front reach-in refrigerator or open air cooler for fresh crisp salads and

fruit; deli sandwiches, subs, soups and other meal options; breakfast sandwiches, pastries and cereals

Single door glass front reach-in freezer for ice cream and other frozen treats.

Equipment Specification for Handling Potentially Hazardous Foods

All glass front reach-in refrigerators and freezers and open air coolers shall be Listed by the National Sanitation Foundation.

How a Micro Market Works

A Micro Market is serviced on a pre-set schedule by a route driver. The route driver arrives at a location, checks the equipment to be sure it is working correctly, cleans the equipment on a set schedule, check products to be sure they are still “in date” and will be until the next service date, pulls any products that will be “out of date” and then stocks the product shelves and refrigerated and/or freezer units with new product. Through the use of on-line software, the route driver brings only what products are actually needed. The “out of date” products are returned to the warehouse for accountability and proper disposal at the end of day.

Today, government agencies at all levels along with businesses are requesting or mandating that healthier food options be available to their employees. Traditional vending has come a long way to improve its’ offerings but is still very limited by column or shelf space size and selections as to what items can be sold in a typical vending machine. A Micro Market expands the number of products that can be sold in the same floor space a typical bank of vending machine would occupy. In addition, a customer can read all the nutrition information on the label of a food product because they can hold it before purchasing.

Public Health Safeguards

Food Safety - Since Micro Markets sell potentially hazardous foods reach-in refrigerated refrigerators maintain a temperature of 41°F and reach-in freezers maintain a temperature of 0°F. All refrigeration equipment have self-closing doors to help maintain the correct temperatures. In addition all refrigeration equipment are equipped with automatic shut-off controls that prevents the equipment from selling food by locking the door when there is a power failure, mechanical failure or other condition that results in an internal temperature greater than 41°F for longer than 30 minutes. Only an authorized service technician or the route driver has the ability to reset the equipment after it is has been determined what caused the temperature failure.

Food Security - Micro Markets are designed to be located in a closed location serving a known set of employees. As mentioned earlier, Micro Markets operate without an employee present. To prevent theft and tampering of food products Micro Markets are equipped with 24/7 surveillance cameras. The time and date products were purchased can

be traced back and matched to the person who made the purchase.

General Sanitation - To perform routine cleaning of the Micro Market the route driver does have access to potable water and a sanitation kit consisting of a cleaning pail, disposable towels, detergent in a spray bottle, sanitizer in a spray bottle and window cleaner.