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ASIA

World Food Safety Day 2026: Why the Future of Food Safety Will Be Defined by Technology, Not Just Compliance

09 June 2026 | News

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As the world marks World Food Safety Day on June 7, food safety is emerging as a business imperative that goes far beyond regulatory compliance. In an era of increasingly complex supply chains, large-scale food operations, and evolving consumer expectations, organisations are rethinking how food safety is managed, from periodic audits and inspections to real-time monitoring, digital traceability, and predictive risk management.

The need for this shift is undeniable. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), unsafe food causes an estimated 866 million illnesses and **1.5 million deaths globally every year**, while foodborne diseases lead **to over $310 billion in lost productivity annually**. These figures underscore the need for smarter, more proactive food safety systems.

Technology is now playing a transformative role in addressing this challenge. Across the global food industry, artificial intelligence (AI), machine vision, predictive analytics, smart sensors, and digital compliance platforms are helping organisations identify risks earlier, strengthen traceability, and improve operational visibility.

For large-scale food service providers, the opportunity lies in creating what can be called the "next-generation kitchen" an environment where food safety is continuously monitored, data-driven, and predictive rather than reactive.

Compass Group India, which serves over **1.2 million meals daily across 45 cities**, offers a glimpse into how this transformation is taking shape. The company has invested in a technology-enabled food safety ecosystem that combines AI, digital monitoring, and real-time compliance management to strengthen food safety across its operations.

"Compass Group India's approach to food safety has never been about meeting the minimum. It has been about setting the standard. When you are trusted by the country's largest corporates, critical healthcare institutions, and education campuses, there is no margin for anything less than absolute rigour, **says Munish Sharma, COO, Food Services, Compass Group India.** "The next frontier of food safety lies in intelligent systems that provide visibility, predict risks and enable faster decision-making. Technology is helping us build safer, smarter and more resilient food operations at scale."

One of the many examples is Compass Eye, an in-house developed automated sorting machine, is deployed across Compass Central Kitchens. With up to **99.9 per cent detection accuracy**, Compass Eye leverages artificial intelligence to transform ingredient inspection, identifying and removing contaminants and foreign materials in rice and pulses before they reach the kitchenâ??enhancing safety, quality, and consumer confidence. The AI-powered system uses advanced cameras and detection technologies to identify impurities and contamination risks before ingredients enter the production process, strengthening preventive food safety controls while improving consistency and efficiency.

Beyond ingredient inspection, artificial intelligence is also helping drive behavioural compliance in food operations. Compass Group India has piloted **AI-powered video analytics** that monitor critical food safety practices in real time, including headgear usage, handwashing compliance, unattended gas stoves, and monitoring of critical operational areas. Leveraging existing CCTV infrastructure, the solution provides automated alerts and actionable insights that enable immediate corrective action. The pilot delivered an overall **~45 per cent reduction in alerts**, demonstrating measurable improvements in compliance while helping teams proactively prevent risks before they escalate into food safety incidents.

Beyond AI-driven monitoring, digital visibility is becoming equally critical. Compass Group India's INSIGHTS platform digitises food temperature monitoring, hygiene inspections, HACCP documentation, operational checklists, and food waste management across more than 435 sites. Used by over 6,000 team members, the platform enables real-time compliance tracking, helping teams identify and address deviations before they become risks.

Similarly, SHIELD, the company's digital incident management platform, enables faster reporting, escalation, and root-cause analysis of food safety incidents while strengthening supplier compliance oversight. By improving data accuracy and reducing manual intervention, such systems are helping create more responsive and resilient food safety frameworks.

Technology is also strengthening frontline accountability through digital audit and inspection tools that empower site teams to identify hazards, conduct observations, and implement corrective actions in real time. This shift from periodic reviews to continuous monitoring is helping organisations build a stronger culture of food safety while improving operational agility.

As food systems become increasingly complex, the future of food safety will depend on the ability to predict, prevent, and respond to risks faster than ever before. Organisations that successfully combine technology, data, and human expertise will be best positioned to deliver safer food experiences while building trust among consumers, clients, and stakeholders.

On this World Food Safety Day, one thing is clear: the future of food safety will not be defined solely by compliance checklists or audit scores. It will be defined by intelligent technologies that enable organisations to see more, know more, and act fasterâ??creating safer, smarter, and more resilient food systems for the future.

Yet technology alone is not the answer. The most effective food safety systems combine innovation with strong governance, skilled teams, and a culture of accountability. As the industry evolves, organisations that successfully integrate people, processes, and technology will be best positioned to build trust and safeguard public health.

The future of food safety will belong to organisations that can predict risks rather than simply react to them. Because ultimately, food safety is not just about preventing contamination, it is about protecting confidence, one meal at a time.