Purchasing and Handling Module
Activity Sheet

Activity 1

As a possible ice breaker before the class, ask the participants to listen to several scenarios and point out the 3 things that are wrong or questionable in each scenario. The wrong or questionable item/action will be based on proper purchasing and handling practices. Here are several scenarios that can be used. The sentences with numbered superscripts are the wrong or questionable item/action in each scenario with explanations for why they are incorrect below the scenario (the superscripts from the sentence correspond with the explanations).

Scenario 1

Tyler was running some errands after getting out of work early. He decided to go to the grocery store to get dinner and then head on over to the bank before it closed. He went into the grocery store and decided that he wanted to get some frozen fish for another day that week since it was on sale. He finished shopping and went back to the car to head to the bank. He planned on going through the drive-thru at the bank but there was such a long line he decided to go into the bank instead. Once inside he saw there was an even longer line and figured he might as well wait since he was already there. After 30 minutes he was back in the car and heading home[1]. When he got home he put the frozen fish in the freezer for later that week. About a week later, he decided that he wanted the frozen fish for dinner. He took it out of the freezer and left it on the counter to defrost[2]. He decided he was going to stuff the fish and bake it. So, he put it on the cutting board to prepare and stuff it and put toothpicks in the fish to keep it closed then put it in the oven to bake. While that was cooking, he cut up some vegetables on the same cutting board with the same knife[3] and put these in a steamer. When the fish was done baking, he put everything on a serving plate and placed it on the table.

1. Left seafood in the car for a long period of time: Never leave seafood in the car unless packed in ice or in a cooler. Seafood products must be kept cold to ensure peak quality.
2. Defrosted seafood on the counter: Never defrost seafood at room temperature or with hot or warm water. Bacteria on the surface will begin to multiply and cause it to spoil. Defrost fish overnight in the refrigerator. If you forget to take the seafood out ahead of time, place it in the sink under cold, running water to defrost.
3. Didn’t wash cutting board or knife before using again: Always wash the area, cutting board, and any utensils you’ll be using to prepare seafood before and after handling.

Scenario 2

Grace stopped by the grocery store to get something for dinner. Soon after entering the grocery store, she passed by the seafood counter and noticed that snapper was on sale so she decided to get some[1]. She continued her shopping and about an hour later was home with her groceries and putting everything away. Since she would be starting dinner soon, she decided to leave the fish on the counter until she started making dinner[2]. Once she finished putting the rest of her groceries away, she started preparing dinner. She unwrapped the snapper and put it on a dinner plate as she chopped up vegetables for the meal. She cooked the snapper and placed it and the cooked vegetables back on the dinner plate[3] and carried it to the table for serving.

1. Purchased seafood first: Always make seafood your last purchase since it needs to stay cold.
2. Left seafood on the counter: Seafood needs to stay cold and should be kept at 32°F or as close to that as possible. It should be placed immediately in the refrigerator (or freezer if a frozen product) when you get home.
3. Mixed raw juices with cooked food: Serve cooked seafood on clean plates. Never put it back on the plate that held the raw product.

Scenario 3

Lily was driving home from running errands one day and saw a sign for a road-side vendor up ahead saying "Fresh Fish and Clams". This made her crave some clams so she decided to check it out. She stopped and bought some clams and fish fillets[1]. When she got home she put both seafood products in the refrigerator. She decided to have the clams that night and steamed them in a pot. Once the clams were done, she noticed that a couple of them hadn't opened yet but figured they would be fine so just pried open the shell and included them in her meal[2]. About a week later, she remembered that she still had the fish fillets in the refrigerator and so decided to freeze them since she wasn't sure when she'd be cooking them and wanted to save them for another day[3].

1. Purchased from a road-side vendor: Road-side vendors are required to have a Certified Food Protection Manager license and are allowed to sell whole or eviscerated fish and head on or headless shrimp. Ask questions when purchasing and look for products that are clean and cold.
2. Consumed clams that didn't open after cooking: Discard any shellfish (clams, mussels, or oysters) that do not open during cooking. Closed shells indicate they may not have gotten enough heating.
3. Stored fish in refrigerator for over 36 hours: You should plan on using seafood within 36-48 hours after purchase for optimal quality. Fish fillets should only be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 36 hours after purchase. Freezing will only maintain, not improve quality.