



Two Minute Challenge: Not Expired or You're Fired?

You have just been hired at McDonald's in China. You've heard that it is statistically more difficult to be hired by McDonald's than it is to gain acceptance to Harvard University, so this is a great opportunity for you. Plus, your family desperately needs you to keep this job for financial reasons. Your additional income allows your older brother to continue attending college in the United States.

During your second week on the job, your boss approaches you and asks you to change the expiration date on a few packages of meat that had been set aside to be discarded. Your boss says that there is no safety risk to customers and any extra bacteria will easily be killed by the fryer anyway. If you do not use the meat, there will not be enough for the rest of the day, turning customers away and hurting business. He tells you that he trusts you will keep this matter between the two of you. What do you do?

Issues

Economic impact on store's numbers and reflection on all of you who work there

Food safety and health of customer

Your integrity

Job security

Your contributions to your family's finances

Rules and Regulations

Company rules about what to do when running low on supplies (are there any?)

Health regulations

Questions

Are you sure there is no other meat available?

How long has the meat been expired? What are the safety implications?

What if it was expiring that day? The previous day? Previous week? Previous month?

Are there repercussions for the establishment? For the individuals involved?

Will this affect your employment? Would your boss have legal grounds to fire you?

Is this the only job that is available to you? What will be the consequences if you put it at risk?

What if you saw your friend or a family member come into the restaurant, would you tell him/her if you knew the expired meat was being sold?





Resources

Employee Handbook

Ethics Hotline

Suppliers (to try and replenish the supply of meat)

Friends and family; Other employees

Trusted associates within the industry

Options

Change the date and serve the expired meat (and/or warn customers)

Refuse (what will you say?) and be willing to take the consequences

Refuse, redirecting to problem-solving about other ways to get more meat

Call the employee hotline and/or the compliance department at McD's corporate office

Tell a newspaper reporter or popular

Quit and find a new job

Takeaway Lessons:

- 1.) Authority does not give someone a right to violate the rules or ignore health effects .**
- 2.) There are ways to get help**, especially in a large corporation. (Connections: [How to Blow the Whistle...](#))
- 3.) Problems escalate.** It's tough to draw the line and if you do not draw it here, you risk being subject to future "violations" of the rules and your personal code.
- 4.) Consider how your values stack up:** your job, your family, your personal code and beyond.

