



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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‘Be Food Safe’ with reusable grocery bags

*By Kay Blakley,
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FORT LEE, Va. – The popularity of reusable grocery bags among commissary shoppers is huge. Since the bags were first made available in 2007, there were plenty of times when almost the entire selection walked out the front door about as fast as we could get them stocked on our shelves. That means as shoppers, we’re a very environmentally conscious group of people, which is good. But it may also mean we’re putting ourselves at risk of picking up an assortment of pretty grungy germs, some of which could potentially cause foodborne illness. And, that’s not so good.

This is not an issue to be alarmed about – it’s just an area that needs an application of some good common sense. Consider the environment created by a few stray crumbs in the bottom of the reusable bag, mixed with condensation from cold or frozen items and maybe a drip or two from a meat or poultry package. Yuk! Like any other item that gets plenty of wear and tear, reusable grocery bags need regular maintenance, too.

- Keep your reusable grocery bags clean. Put them in the washer with hot water and laundry detergent, if possible and hang to air dry.
- Spot-clean any bag that is not washable with a clean cloth and soap; rinse well with clear water and dry thoroughly before using or storing.
- Store reusable bags in a clean, dry location.
- Dedicate certain bags or totes for groceries only and try to designate one for produce only and another for raw meats and poultry. Use plastic bags provided in the produce

aisle and at the meat case to enclose any raw products before placing them in the reusable bag.

- After emptying your bags at home, wash off the table or counter surface where the bags were sitting.

For more information on how to be food safe, visit <http://www.commissaries.com>, go halfway down the left-hand corner of the site and click on “Food Safety Information” to review the “4 Easy Lessons in Safe Food Handling.”

-DeCA-

Photo caption: Baggers at the Yokota Commissary, Japan, load groceries into reusable grocery bags.
(DeCA photo: Nancy O’Neill)

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*