

Hands On Food Safety

Spring 1999 • Illinois Department of Public Health • John R. Lumpkin, M.D., Director

New Code Requirements for Certified Food Service Sanitation Managers Certification

On October 1, 1998, new requirements became effective for food service sanitation manager certification (FSSMC). All food establishments will be classified as category 1, 2 or 3, according to their risk of causing a foodborne illness.

Category 1 facilities, in most cases, must have a certified food service sanitation manager present at all times potentially hazardous food is handled (for example, during cooling, holding hot/cold food more than 12 hours, reheating, catering, bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods, vacuum packaging, serving immunocom-

promised populations, etc.). There are certain exceptions, however:

- During incidental absences (e.g., short-term illness, brief errands, etc.)
- When food is commercially packaged or when it is prepared and packaged earlier under the supervision of a certified food service sanitation manager
- When the food service facility is in a community integrated living arrangement (CILA)
- When a health care facility has at least one certified food service sanitation manager and all of its food service staff receive five hours of food safety training annually
- When a long-term care facility elects to have food service staff receive training in accordance with the Nursing Home Care Act

Beginning October 1, 1999, renewal of a five-year FSSMC certificate will require at least five hours of continuing food safety education or successful completion of an approved FSSMC recertification examination. Certificate holders will receive a reminder notice one year and again two months before the certificate expires. Many instructors, sponsors, local health departments and other organizations are now developing refresher courses. Contact the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Division of Food, Drugs and Dairies for more information about these refresher courses.

Additional changes include –

- It is no longer possible to take the “challenge” exam to renew an expired FSSMC certificate. A 30-day grace period, during which the renewal fee and evidence of continuing education or retesting must be submitted, has been added.
- Beginning October 1, 1999, approved FSSMC instructors must complete 20 hours of continuing education to renew their instructor certificates.
- An alternate method of training – such as distance learning, interactive computer programs or on-line Internet training – may be used for certification or refresher training, but it first must be approved in advance by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

How Fast Do Bacteria Multiply?

Do you ever wonder how fast bacteria multiply? At room temperature, bacteria, or microbes – both the kind that spoil food and the kind that make people sick – can double in number every 20 to 30 minutes.

Imagine microbes are the size of jelly beans and there are five of them in an un-iced bowl of potato salad on a buffet table. Two hours later, the five jelly beans would have multiplied to where they would fill a one-gallon container. After another 20 minutes, the jelly beans would fill a two-gallon

In This Issue

New Code Requirements for Certified Food Service Sanitation Managers.....	1
How Fast Do Bacteria Multiply?	1
Catering and Food Related Illnesses ..	2
Mix and Match Quiz	2
New Food Labeling for Apple Cider ..	2
Salad Bar Safety	3
Ice Is a Food, Too!	3
Food Allergies	3-4
Answers to Mix and Match Quiz	4

container. Add yet another 20 minutes, and the jelly beans would fill a four-gallon container!!

Consider these facts:

- “Spoilage” bacteria do not make people sick, but spoiled food usually means time or temperature abuse has occurred.
- Bacteria that make people sick – called pathogens – are not easily identified. Even if present in high numbers, these bacteria give off no telltale smell, color or other visible sign.
- Some foodborne pathogens can make people sick even at very low numbers. Therefore, good temperature control at 41 degrees F or less is very important to limit their multiplication. Eggs, cold salads or anything involving hand contact with ready-to-eat food deserve special care.

Catering and Food Related Illnesses

Illinois has experienced several recent outbreaks of foodborne illness associated with catering operations. Literally thousands of people became ill, several of them requiring hospitalization.

The catering events associated with these outbreaks shared several common problems. Foods were improperly cooked, cooled, stored and transported. The following guidelines will help to improve the safety of catered food:

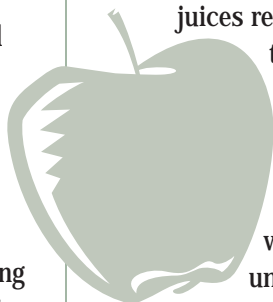
- Make sure adequate cooling and refrigeration capabilities are available, particularly during times of peak demands – for example, holidays and graduations.
- Be sure to use thermometers to monitor food temperatures during preparation, transportation, holding and serving.

- When transporting hot foods, maintain at 140 degrees F or higher; cold foods should be kept at 41 degrees F or colder. Use catering caddies, insulated catering units, etc.
- If using an insulated container for hot foods, be sure the food is 140 degrees F or higher when it is placed in the unit. Remember, these units are designed to hold foods at a given temperature, not to reheat or bring foods up to temperature. The same applies for cold foods. Make sure the food temperature is below 41 degrees F before placing it in a holding unit.
- Instruct employees in the importance of good hygiene, especially good hand washing techniques. Hand washing is one of the single most important means of preventing the spread of disease.
- If customers order catered foods, provide them with instructions for transporting in insulated containers and for keeping foods hot or cold when they pick up the order.

It is obvious from these recent foodborne outbreaks that more attention must be focused on food preparation, temperature control and transportation of catered food.

New Food Labeling for Apple Cider

Commercially processed and packaged apple cider and other fresh juices require a statement on the label warning about possible illness if the cider is unpasteurized. A placard with the warning may be used until the fall of 1999. Cider and other non-pasteurized juices may be contaminated



with *E. coli* 0157:H7. These bacteria are particularly dangerous for young children, older adults and those with compromised immune systems.

Fresh-squeezed or pressed juice made on-site and not packaged does not require a warning label, even if unpasteurized. Any establishment, however, that produces its own fresh juice, such as a juice bar, must use extreme care in choosing wholesome produce and thoroughly cleaning the produce before preparing it. Clean and sanitized equipment also is very important.

Preventing Foodborne Illness

Mix and Match Quiz

Choose the correct answer from the list at the bottom. (Answers are on the back page.)

Questions

1. ____ Ground beef patties and meat loaf must be cooked to this time and temperature to kill *E. coli* 0157:H7.
2. ____ Five gallons of chili will cool down fast enough if immediately placed in a 41 degree F cooler.
3. ____ When food handlers are ill with diarrhea, they must ____.

Answers

- a. Yes, as long as it is covered.
- b. Wash hands and wear disposable gloves.
- c. 165 degrees F for 45 seconds.
- d. No, quick chill methods are needed.
- e. 155 degrees F for 15 seconds.
- f. Be restricted from handling food.

Salad Bar Safety

Salad bars have become increasingly popular in restaurants and other food service facilities. The following recommendations will help to ensure the food on a salad bar is safe.

- Food service staff always should wash their hands before preparing or handling fresh produce or other ready-to-eat foods, even when using disposable gloves.
- All fresh produce should be thoroughly washed when being prepared for a salad bar.
- Keep hot foods above 140 degrees F and cold foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, below 41 degrees F. Metal containers transfer cold to a product more easily than glass, plastic or ceramic containers.
- Whenever possible, do not refill salad bar containers by adding new product to old.
- Do not hold product displayed on a salad bar from one day for use the next day. Unused salad bar items should be discarded at the end of each day.
- Post a sign asking patrons to use a clean plate when returning for a second helping.
- A food shield or “sneeze guard” should be placed to intersect a line drawn between consumers’ mouths and open containers on the salad bar (about 45 inches to 60 inches above the floor). Placement of food shields



for self-service salad bars or cafeteria lines in schools should be adjusted to accommodate shorter individuals.

- Post an individual near the salad bar not only to refill empty containers but to detect potential contamination of food items by customers.

Ice Is a Food, Too!

Since ice, just as other foods and beverages, is consumed, it must meet food safety guidelines. These recommendations will help to ensure a safe ice supply:

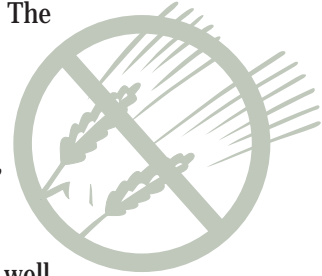
- If the water supply comes from a private or semi-private well, ask the local health department to test the water at least annually.
- Make sure the drain lines from all ice machines and ice storage bins have an indirect connection to the building’s sewer lines. This prevents sewage from backing up into the bottom of the storage bin.
- Do not store any other foods or containers in ice machines, ice chests or ice storage bins. These items can contaminate the ice.
- Do not scoop ice out of an ice machine/storage bin with a glass. If the glass breaks, pieces of broken glass could adulterate the ice. Using a glass also can allow hands to come in direct contact with the ice.
- Store the ice scoop outside the ice bin so the handle will not fall over and come in contact with the ice.
- If ice is made on-site and packaged for sale, the bag requires certain labeling information: a



description of the product (ice cubes, crushed ice, etc.), the establishment’s name and address and the weight of the contents.

Food Allergies

Growing numbers of consumers are concerned about allergic reactions to certain foods. The most commonly involved foods are peanuts, wheat, tree nuts, milk, eggs, fish and soy. Such concern often is well founded since reactions can be severe and life threatening. Even a trace of an allergen can trigger a reaction. Other adverse reactions related to foods, which are similar to allergies, include histamine poisoning, lactose intolerance and celiac disease (reaction to the protein gluten). Some individuals will react to FD&C yellow #5, sulfating agents and monosodium glutamate (MSG).



Symptoms of an allergic reaction to food usually appear minutes to several hours after eating the food. They can include itching around the mouth; tightening of the throat; hives; swollen eyes, lips, hands and feet; nausea, cramps and vomiting; a drop in blood pressure; and loss of consciousness.

Did you know?

- Proteins, the cause of allergic reactions, are released when a food is cooked. Oil used to fry fish will contain fish protein. A grill used to cook eggs will contain egg protein.
- French vanilla ice cream contains eggs. Regular vanilla ice cream does not.

- Asian, Thai and African foods often contain peanuts or tree nuts, which are a common cause of allergic reactions.
- Trace residues of contaminating food, inadequate cleaning of utensils or reusing utensils for different foods may be enough to cause an allergic reaction.

Food service operations need to be aware of the following points:

- Cooks and servers should be

prepared to give a full description of ingredients to customers who suffer from food allergies or intolerances.

- Pay close attention if someone indicates he or she has a food allergy.
- Keep emergency medical service telephone numbers handy in case of an allergic reaction. Be sure the food service's name, address and telephone number are nearby to ensure rapid response by emergency medical personnel.

*Answers to
"Mix and Match" Quiz.*

J '3 P 'Z a '1

Surf the Web.

<http://www.idph.state.il.us> –
Illinois Department of Public Health

<http://www.FoodSafety.gov/> –
FDA link to government food safety
Web sites

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
P.O. X1016686 120M 4/99

Illinois Department of Public Health

Division of Food, Drugs and Dairies
525 W. Jefferson St.
Springfield, IL 62761

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Springfield, IL
Permit No. 101