

Food *for thought*

Summer 2022

A newsletter for Fairfax County food establishment owners and operators and their employees

Summer is Here!

Check and monitor your refrigerators

This time of year, the temperature outside goes up and often the temperature in the kitchen goes up, too. This can put a strain on the refrigeration units in the kitchen. Most refrigerators are designed to run best at room temperatures BELOW 85°F. What are you doing to keep refrigeration properly maintained in your food establishment? Is your food stored at 41°F or below to prevent the growth of foodborne bacteria? Here are three steps to help keep your refrigerators cold and the food at the safe temperature:

1. Service refrigerators and freezers ahead of the hot summer season:

If a refrigerator reads 41°F two hours before opening, it is doubtful that it will keep that temperature during the busy lunch rush. Set the temperature at 35° to 37°F when the refrigerators are not in use. Check refrigerator temperatures first thing in the morning. If refrigerators are set at the correct temperature, they should keep food at 41°F or less, even during the busy times of business.

2. Ensure all refrigerators have a built-in temperature gauge

or an internal thermometer.

Refrigeration units under and across from the cookline can be a challenge because they may have to work harder to maintain 41°F. Check temperatures throughout the day. A temperature log is a good active managerial control that can be used to track refrigerator and food temperatures during the day. Your area inspector can help you set up a temperature log, if necessary. If food temperatures are going up, adjust the refrigerator setting and temporarily move the food to a refrigerator that will cool the food quickly and keep the proper temperature.

3. Refrigerate food right away.

When food is delivered, put it in the refrigerator quickly. When left unrefrigerated, the food temperature will quickly move into the “danger zone” (41° - 135°F). In the “danger zone,” foodborne bacteria can grow more quickly and possibly make people sick.

Proper refrigeration and temperature control of foods are important steps in reducing the risk of foodborne illness.

Are You Using a Specialized Process?

There are many food handling processes which may be used in a food establishment – cooking, cooling, reheating, thawing, cold holding, and hot holding are all examples of typical processes in a food facility. These processes are recognized and controlled in the Food Code. However, there are other types of food handling processes which carry considerable risk if not performed properly. These are referred to as “specialized processes.” The Food Code generally says that specialized processes must be approved by the Health Department to be used in a restaurant. Some specialized processes use in house vacuum sealed plastic bags for cooking or cooling. If you cook or cool any of your foods in an in-house vacuum sealed plastic bag – this is sometimes referred to as reduced oxygen processing – please notify your area inspector. The inspector will review your process to be certain the necessary steps are in place to eliminate the risk for foodborne illness. If you have any questions about specialized processes, please call the Health Department at 703-246-2201.



Temporary Food Establishment Permits

Temporary food establishments are usually operated at fairs, carnivals, festivals, or similar events. **Applications for a permit must be received at least 10 days prior to the event.**

A Temporary Food Establishment is a type of food establishment that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration, including carnivals, fairs, festivals, and other events. A Temporary Food Establishment includes at least one of the following:

- A food establishment with a current and valid Permit to Operate issued by the Fairfax County Health Department.
- A restaurant with a food establishment permit or license issued by a health jurisdiction other than Fairfax County that is participating as a food vendor.
- A firm that is under an inspection program conducted by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS).
- A gourmet food vendor who offers unpackaged samples of their product to the public. (See sampling guidelines at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/sites/health/files/assets/documents/pdf/fairfax-sampling-guidelines.pdf.)
- A mobile food unit.
- A demonstration cooking booth where samples are offered to the public.
- A restaurant that donates or sells food to a 501c3 organization.
- An organization that does not meet tax-exempt status (501c3), whether sponsoring or participating as a vendor in an event.

For more information visit the Permits for Temporary Food Establishments at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/permits/temporary-food-establishment. You can also contact the Health Department at 703-246-2201 if you are not sure your operation meets the definition of a temporary food establishment.

Certified Food Protection Manager Requirement

Food establishments operating in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church **must be under the immediate supervision of a food manager who has taken and passed an accredited exam and has the test certificate available.** Note: As of January 26, 2021, the Northern Virginia Food Manager's card is no longer required for food establishments operating with a Fairfax County Health Department permit.

Obtaining a Certified Food Protection Manager certification: To become a Certified Food Protection Manager, you must take and pass an accredited exam. Note: A Basic Food Handler certificate is not equivalent to a Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate.

What exams are accredited?

- 360Training.com, 888-360-8764, www.360Training.com
- Above Training/StateFoodSafety.com, 801-494-1416, www.statefoodsafety.com
- National Registry of Food Safety Professionals, 800-446-0257, www.nrfsp.com
- Prometric, 800-813-6671, www.prometric.com
- Serv-Safe (National Restaurant Association, LLC), 800-765-2122, www.servsafe.com
- The Always Food Safe Company, LLC, www.alwaysfoodsafecom.com

Read more on Certified Food manager requirements including information on organizations that offer exam preparation courses preparatory courses by visiting www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/certified-food-manager.

Let the Health Department Know

If a restaurant adds new equipment, changes its menu or business hours, or plans to change owners, the Health Department must be notified, in advance. All new equipment must be approved by the Health Department. Health Department permits are not transferrable, and applications are required to be submitted when there is a change of ownership. For more information, call 703-246-2201 or visit our webpage at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/environment.

Active Managerial Control Awards

Congratulations to the food service operators who were recognized with an



Active Managerial Control award over the last three-month period! During their recent inspections, there were no violations cited and it was observed that good active managerial controls were in place. Congratulations to:

Leland Atkinson, *Simplicity Catering*, 6402 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church

Moinuddin Naseem (General Manager) and **Iqbal Bano** (shift supervisor), *Wendy's # 6590*, 6349 Seven Corners CTR, Falls Church

Ivana Custred, *Panera Bread # 705*, 5857C Leesburg Pike, Falls Church

Marcela Gomez, *Noodles and Company*, 5900 Kingstowne Towne Ctr., Alexandria

Marta Melendez, *BeanTree Learning-Westfields*, 5003 Westone Plaza, Chantilly

Floralidia Benavides, *The Gardens at FairOaks*, 4310 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax

See pictures and read details about how they are reducing the risk of foodborne illness in their food establishment on the Health Department website www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/active-managerial-control. If you have questions about active managerial control in your food establishment, please speak to your area Environmental Health Specialist.

STAMP of Approval

The Fairfax County Health Department's recognition program, Safety Through Actively Managing Practices (STAMP), is for restaurants that meet standards of food safety excellence. Congratulations to our latest STAMP enrollees



CHICK-FIL-A FAIRFAX CIRCLE, 9509 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax

CHICK-FIL-A 1494 North Point Village Center, Reston

For a List of STAMP participants visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/stamp/participants.