

Food for thought

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

The Importance of Dating

Date marking is an identification system required by the Food Code for ready-to-eat foods held over 24 hours so you know how old they are. The system helps identify when food is to be discarded. This requirement is largely based on the ability of *Listeria* to grow in refrigerators. Keeping foods cold – below 41°F – is one way to keep foodborne germs from multiplying and making people sick. However, there is at least one foodborne bacteria, *Listeria Monocytogenes*, which grows at the lower temperatures found in most refrigerators. It has been found that after seven days at 41°F or less, *Listeria* will multiply, causing food contamination and leading to foodborne illness. *Listeria* is especially dangerous for pregnant women, the very young and the elderly. Ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food that is prepared in the food facility and held under refrigeration below 41°F for more than 24 hours must be date marked. The food must be marked with the date of preparation and must be discarded if not consumed **within 7 calendar days** from the date of preparation. In addition, commercially prepared ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food that is prepared and packaged by a food

processing plant and held under refrigeration below 41°F must be date marked to indicate the date by which the food must be consumed or discarded - within 7 calendar days from the date the original package is opened or the expiry date on the package whichever comes first.

What foods need to be date marked?

If you answer YES to all five questions below, then the food needs to be date marked.

1. Does the food require refrigeration?
2. If commercially packaged, has the original package been opened?
3. Is the food ready-to-eat? Could this food be eaten just like it is, regardless of temperature? Ready-to-eat foods include cold, cooked roast beef, boiled eggs and cold, cooked macaroni.
4. Is the food potentially hazardous? Will it grow bacteria?
5. Will the food be kept for longer than 24 hours?

If the food will not be used within seven days, it may also be placed in a freezer. Freezing food stops the date marking clock but does not reset it.

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Food Establishment Permit Renewal Notice: Important Changes for 2019

All Permits to Operate a Food Establishment expire on December 31, 2018. Renewal applications for the Permit to Operate are being sent to all food facilities beginning the first week of November. There is no grace period for renewing the permit. On January 1, 2019, a \$10.00 late fee will be added to the original fee of \$40. **After January 1, a food establishment may not operate without a valid Permit to Operate.** Fairfax County Health Department is moving to an online permit renewal system in 2019, so please make sure to read the informational insert in your mailing for additional information. If you have any questions about your permit renewal or you have not received a renewal application, please contact the Health Department at 703-246-2201, TTY 711.



Reminder: No Bare-hand Contact

Bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods can be a contributing factor to the risk of a foodborne illness. Examples of bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat-foods are: mixing salad lettuce with bare hands in the prep kitchen; handling bread and deli meats with bare hands at the sandwich prep line; or placing cooked foods on plates with bare hands. The use of single-use, disposable gloves is a very good means of preventing bare-hand contact. It is also a good practice for employees to use disposable gloves when handling raw foods such as ground beef and chicken. Proper use of gloves and proper changing of gloves can be a big help in preventing cross-contamination. Wash hands with soap and water before putting on clean gloves. Tongs and deli paper may also be used to handle ready-to-eat foods.

When a “no bare-hand contact” policy is combined with effective Employee Health Policy and handwashing procedures, the risk of a foodborne illness is reduced.

Bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food is prohibited by the Health Department.

If an inspector observes bare-hand contact with a ready-to-eat food, he/she will recommend that the food item be voluntarily discarded by the person in charge. The food handler will be asked to wash his/her hands and to use another method, such as gloves, to handle the ready-to-eat food. The inspector will cite the code provision for bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods. If the food is not discarded, the inspector may add a citation for not discarding contaminated food.

Do You Have Enough CFMs?

The Fairfax County Food Code requires that food establishments are under the direct supervision of a Certified Food Manager (CFM). This is an important part of active managerial control. This means that during **all hours** of food preparation, food service and kitchen clean-up there must be a CFM on the premises. A single CFM at a facility may not go to the bank “for fifteen minutes.” Does your food facility have more than one CFM?

Most food service establishments have a full certified food manager (CFM), however, in certain food service operations, only a limited certified food manager (LCFM) is required. Specific information regarding the certification requirements and the testing process can be found on the Health Department website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/certified-food-manager.

A CFM is responsible for training food service personnel in sanitary food-handling techniques and proper methods of food protection, and for ensuring that good public health and food protection practices, sanitary techniques in manufacturing, storing, serving and transporting foods are used at all times on the premises under his/her control. This requires that the CFM put into practice what was learned in order to pass the CFM test. **If a food service establishment is operating without a CFM on site, the Permit to Operate will be suspended and the facility closed.** It is recommended that you have more than one CFM.

If you have any questions regarding the Certified Food Manager requirement in Fairfax County Food Code, please refer to the website or you may call the Health Department at 703-246-2444.

AMC Awardees Recognized

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:



- **Missy Pratt**, Starbucks, 6754 Richmond Highway, Alexandria
- **Glenda Revelo**, Panda Express, 6307 Richmond Highway, Alexandria
- **Luis Hernandez**, Chipotle Mexican Grill #787, 7108 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield
- **Norma Fernandez & Aracely Rivas**, Anita's New Mexican Style Food- 13921 Lee Jackson Memorial Hgwy., Chantilly
- **Glenda Alfaro**, Pei Wei Asian Diner, 4461 Market Commons Dr, Fairfax
- **Jonathan Thompson**, Applebee's Neighborhood Grill and Bar- 12970 Fair lakes Shopping Center, Fairfax
- **Edwin Sorto & Max Fitch**, Glory Days Grill, 2567 John Milton Drive, Herndon
- **Rose Sterling**, Dominion Hospital, 2960 Sleepy Hollow Road, Falls Church

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 inspector.

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So, if a food is stored at 41°F for 2 days and then frozen, it can still be stored at 41°F for 5 more days when it begins to thaw. The freezing date and the thawing date need to be put on the container along with the prep date, or an indication of how many of the original 7 days have been used. Keep *Listeria* from causing foodborne illness. You must date mark all food that will be refrigerated for more than 24 hours. For more information, please call 703-246-2444 or ask your field inspector for more details.