Summer 2016, Volume 8 Issue 1

Food for thought

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

Warm Weather is Here!

Certain foods must be time and temperature controlled for safety (TCS). TCS food must be kept at 41°F or less to prevent bacteria from growing and making people sick. As warm weather approaches and temperatures rise in the kitchen, refrigerators may struggle to maintain 41°F. Most refrigerators run best at room temperatures below 85°F. Now is the time to take steps to keep your refrigerators running properly and to keep your food at a safe storage temperature. 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. The Health Department encourages you to take time now to make sure your refrigerators will get you through the rest of the summer season.

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Active Managerial Control Awardees Recognized

Congratulations to the following operators who were recognized with Active Managerial Control awards! During a recent inspection there were no violations cited and it was observed that good active managerial controls were in place:

- **Roberto Gerbino**, *Il Fornaio, Reston*
- **Monica Cave**, *Chicken Pollo, Annandale*
- **Matthew Evins**, *Ruth's Chris Steak House, Fairfax*
- **Kyle Gragasin**, *Purple Onion Catering, Vienna*
- **Ilias Kanakos**, *Atrium Catering & Design, Herndon*

See pictures and read details about how they are reducing the risk of foodborne illness in their food establishment on the Health Department website. If you have questions about active managerial control in your food establishment, please speak to your area inspector.

Proper Use of Gloves

Bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods can be a contributing factor to the risk of a foodborne illness. **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.

While wearing gloves an employee should be limited to a single task requiring the glove use. Gloves become contaminated just like bare hands. When changing tasks, gloves should be removed and changed if necessary. Do not wash gloves! When gloves are changed, hands must be washed before putting on the clean gloves.

Hands and clean gloves can potentially become contaminated while removing a used pair of gloves. With proper glove use—and, particularly, proper changing of gloves—the risk of foodborne illness through cross-contamination can be reduced.

Food Handler Training is Coming!

Fairfax County Health Department is pleased to announce that beginning in September a training class will be offered for food handlers who are not Certified Food Managers. The ***Food Handler Training*** will introduce food service employees to the basics of safe food handling. Stay tuned for more details, including training dates and registration information.

Lead by Example

When it comes to food safety practices, food service employees learn best from the example set by the Person-In-Charge (PIC). Here are some examples of typical practices the PIC can demonstrate to his or her workers:

- Wash hands frequently and correctly.
- Do not allow bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.
- Monitor safe food product temperatures with a thermometer.
- Promptly refrigerate meats, poultry, dairy and egg products when delivered. Rapidly cool potentially hazardous food.
- Practice efficient date marking.
- Demonstrate the proper use of the 3-vat sink: wash, rinse and sanitize, and air dry.
- Use sanitizer test strips every day.
- Positively reinforce safe food handling techniques.
- Wash hands frequently and correctly.

Are you leading by example?

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