Summer 2015, Volume 7 Issue 1

Food for thought

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

Meet the Most Recent AMC Honorees

Two more food service operators were recognized for active managerial control (AMC) since the last newsletter! The key components of active managerial control are: 1) setting policies for food safety; 2) training food service staff on the policies; 3) monitoring that the policies are being followed, and 4) having corrective actions in place when the policies have not been followed. By implementing AMC practices, these managers have helped minimize the risk of foodborne illness in their food service establishments. Congratulations to both of them!

Rosanna Mahr manages the food service at Burke Health & Rehab Center, 9640 Burke Lake Road in Burke. Managing a facility that serves food to a population which is highly susceptible to foodborne illness requires all employees to understand the importance of reducing the risk of foodborne illness during food preparation. Daily logs are kept of dishwasher sanitizing temperatures. Hot holding temperatures of food are recorded before the food is delivered to the dining rooms. Equipment temperature logs are maintained daily. All but the newest employees are trained as certified food managers. Rosanna has instituted regular training for staff on subjects ranging from proper hand washing to preventing cross contamination. Rosanna's advice on using active managerial control is: "[Be consistent] with practices, be a leader. Be proud of your role and show them (staff) how important their role in food safety is."

Lydia Antwiwaa manages the McDonald's at 6239 Richmond Hwy. in Alexandria. Daily line checks are performed every two hours; temperature logs are kept for review. An alarm system has been implemented to remind employees to wash their hands regularly. Monthly training is conducted on the topic of employee health. A unique AMC process in place under Lydia's leadership is the use of different colored gloves for use with raw (blue gloves) or cooked (white gloves) foods. This re-enforces the importance of preventing cross-contamination. According to Lydia, "AMC is very useful and it is helping us get through inspections without violations."

Note that different active managerial controls are used in different food operations. Perhaps you have something in place which is unique to your operation. What are you doing to actively control foodborne illness risk factors? If you have questions about AMC, contact your area inspector directly or you may call 703-246-2444; TTY 711.

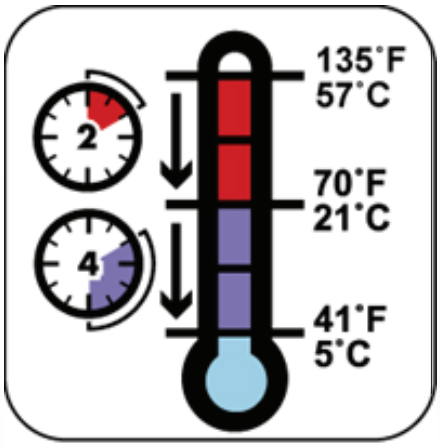
Fairfax County Health Department
10777 Main Street, Suite 111
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-246-2444, TTY 711
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food

A publication of the Fairfax County Health Department, Fairfax County, Va. July. 2015. To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-246-2411; TTY 711; www.fairfaxcounty.gov/HD

Be Cool About *Cooling*

Sometimes it is necessary to prepare foods in advance and store them for later use. This requires cooling! Because cooling from hot to cold takes the food through the "Danger Zone" (135°F - 41°F), certain steps must be followed to prevent foodborne bacteria from growing during the cooling process. Cooling is one of the processes that can lead to time and temperature abuse, which is a risk factor for foodborne illness.

Cooling food properly helps to ensure food safety. Cooling can start on the counter top, but once the food reaches 135°F, the "cooling clock" begins! Foods must be cooled from 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours and to 41°F within a total of 6 hours. Placing hot foods in the walk-in refrigerator overnight is not a good cooling method!



Copyright © International Association for Food Protection

There are many reasons why food does not cool quickly, including:

- **Size of the Food Portion**—A large amount of food will take longer to cool than a small amount;
- **Food Density**—A pan of lasagna, for example, will take longer to cool than a container of broth; and
- **Food Container**—Cooling food in a deep pan of food will take longer to cool than in a shallow pan.

These are some of the methods that may speed up the cooling process:

- Separate the food to be cooled into smaller or thinner portions;
- Place the food to be cooled in shallow pans;
- Use metal storage containers when possible; they transfer heat more rapidly;
- Place the food container in an ice bath; stir foods regularly to reduce heat;
- Add ice as an ingredient to the cooked food; or
- A combination of the above methods.

The most important thing to remember about cooling food is that it must reach 41°F as quickly as possible.

Use a food thermometer to take temperatures of the food regularly as it cools and take measures to speed up the process if it is not cooling quickly enough. When you find a method of cooling which works well in your operation, make it a standard that all employees follow. You should keep a cooling log to track the temperatures over the two-hour and the four-hour cooling periods. A sample cooling log is available on the Health Department's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food/foodtrain.htm.

For more information about proper cooling, visit the Health Department website, call 703-246-2444 or speak directly to your area inspector.

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?

Stay Connected!

Like us on Facebook:
www.facebook/fairfaxcountyhealth

Follow us on Twitter:
www.twitter/fairfaxhealth

A publication of the Fairfax County Health Department
Food for Thought, July. 2015, Volume 7 Issue 1