

Food for thought

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

Spring 2019, Volume 10 Issue 4

Keeping Unwelcome Diners Out

Dealing with unwelcome guests is never fun. Whether it is cockroaches and rodents in the back of the house or in your food storage areas or flies in the front dining area, pests within a restaurant and retail food setting are a major problem. They can not only destroy valuable inventory, but can possibly introduce diseases and cause serious damage to your business.

Along with a professional pest management program in place, you can work with your employees to make sure the basics are being covered on a daily basis.

Entrances & Exits: Eliminating entry points for pests will help keep them out of your establishment. Doors and windows should be kept closed when possible. For certain spaces like receiving areas that are going to be opened frequently or for extended periods, consider installing an air curtain. Doors can also benefit from door screens and a door sweep, which seals gaps between the bottom of the door and the floor for added protection. Seal any cracks and crevices around the building that pests may use to sneak inside.

Inspect Shipments: Pests will often hitch a ride into your kitchen via your supplies and shipment boxes. Before you let any incoming shipments into your restaurant, be sure to inspect it

carefully. If signs of pest activity are present keep the box far away from your facility and contact the vendor.

Proper food storage: Make sure to store and stack food packages and containers appropriately. Keep items away from the floors and inspect stored food regularly to catch signs of pests early.

Practice FIFO: A first in, first out strategy, or FIFO, can help prevent pest infestations. FIFO minimizes the amount of time food stays in storage. Date the food items, and always take the oldest out first before it expires or grows more susceptible to infestation.

Make sure you have routine cleaning policies in place: Remember, all it takes is a small amount of food debris or biological residue on your floors, counters or in your drains to attract pests. Regular cleaning policies are important to keeping your restaurant clean. Your daily cleaning routine should include.

- Sweep and mop floors** — Traces of food left on floors and tables is a magnet for pests. Sweep and mop daily to get rid of any residue.

- Disinfect counters and all kitchen items** — Clean and disinfect all kitchen counters, as well as items used in food preparation, including cutting boards, blenders, grills, stoves, etc.

- Clean and maintain drains** — Pests, particularly flies, are often attracted to the organic matter that gets trapped in drains in restaurant sinks and floors. Make sure these drains are cleaned at least once a day. A drain trap will ensure that organic waste doesn't get trapped in the pipes.

- Line all trashcans and regularly remove waste** — any trash cans inside of your restaurant should always be lined and kept covered. Trash should be emptied regularly, typically several times a day.

- Dumpsters** — Dumpsters should be kept at least 15 feet away from the building. Empty the dumpsters and power wash all dumpsters and the ground around them on a regular basis.

Pests are always on the hunt for **food**, water, and shelter so denying them all those necessities will deter them from entering and staying in your restaurant.

PLUS is on the Way

PLUS, Fairfax County's online portal for food permits, renewals and other Environmental Health transactions, is anticipated to go live in 2019. PLUS allows customers to create and submit applications online, pay fees, track application status, and print a final record all from the convenience of your home or office, 24 hours a day.



A publication of the Fairfax County Health Department, Fairfax County, Va. May 2019. To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-246-2411; TTY 711; www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health



Health Department Stamp of Approval

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

- Wegmans Food Markets, Monument Drive, Fairfax
- Sodexo at PRC Food Court, Colshire Drive, McLean
- Dominion Hospital, Sleepy Hollow Road, Falls Church
- Chipotle, 8066 Rolling Road, Springfield

Contact your inspector if you have any questions or would like help with your application. Food service operators can learn more about the STAMP program and apply for it at:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/food/awards-programs/stamp.



Thermometer 101

One cannot tell if food is at a safe internal temperature just by looking at it. Maintaining a properly calibrated thermometer at your establishment is therefore very important. A **calibrated food thermometer** is to be used to verify foods are properly cooked, cooled, reheated, held hot or held cold. This is essential to preventing foodborne illness.

To calibrate your thermometer fill a large glass to the top with ice, then pour in a little water. The mixture should be approximately 80% ice and 20% water. Immerse the food thermometer stem deep into the ice water. Do not touch the sides or bottom of the glass. Wait until temperature readout stabilizes. The thermometer should read 32°F. If using a dial thermometer and the temperature is not reading 32°F, recalibrate it by adjusting the hex adjusting nut located on the back of the dial. Without removing the stem of the thermometer from the ice, hold the calibration nut with a suitable tool and turn the dial so the pointer reads

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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:

- Jenny Haynesworth; Einstein Bagels, 8317 Old Keene Mill Rd. Springfield
- Aung M. Win; GMU-Akeno Sushi, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax
- Paige Cloven; Starbucks Company, 8060 Rolling Road, Springfield
- Willie Williams; Panera Bread # 1185, 5578 Vincent Gate, Alexandria
- Melissa Sargent; Starbucks, 8971 Ox Road, Lorton
- Maria Falcon-Golushko; Chipotle, 6242 Little River Turnpike, Alexandria
- Hicham Younes; Glory Days Grill, 1400 North Point Village Center, Reston
- Hariklia Prionas; Glen Forest Elementary School, Falls Church
- Allyson Lara; Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads, Falls Church
- Willy Morales; Bowlero Centreville, 13814 Lee Highway, Centreville
- Inhoo Paik & John Park; Breeze Bakery Café, 4125 Hummer Rd., Annandale
- Nelson Cruz, Popeyes, 11850 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston
- Sang Jeong, Gom Shabu Shabu, 13840 Braddock Rd, Centreville
- Maritza Obando, Moe's Southwest Grill, 12950 Highland Crossing Drive, 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 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.

Thermometer 101 con't.

32°F. If using a digital probe thermometer follow the manufacturer's instruction for calibration. **REMEMBER:** The only way to be sure food is properly cooked is to use the calibrated food thermometer and measure the internal temperature.



Refrigerator Maintenance Tips

Summer is coming and with it the heat, putting extra strain on your refrigeration systems. Your restaurant equipment is vital to your daily operations, especially refrigerators and coolers that store food. While you will need a repair technician to take care of the major maintenance and equipment repair, **refrigeration maintenance** is also something you and your staff can participate in. Regular maintenance will keep your foods and customers safe. Here are some tips:

- **MAKE** sure your restaurant refrigerator has enough empty space around it. There should be proper clearance between the refrigerator and walls so air can circulate around the cooling apparatus, ensure no clutter is stored in the space.
- **SET** the defrost frequency and temperature correctly. Your potentially hazardous food is required to be cold held at or below 41F.
- **CHECK** on the hinges, seals, gaskets, latches, and other parts for leaks. The refrigerator door should always be air tight.
- **ENSURE** your establishment has enough refrigerators. Do not overstock the refrigerators beyond their capacity.
- **REGULARLY** clean the inside of your restaurant refrigeration. Refer to the owner's manual for specific cleaning instructions. Never use anything caustic or abrasive to clean it.

You are around your restaurant refrigerators every day, monitor them and don't wait until the equipment breaks down. On-time maintenance and repair will keep both equipment and food safe.

