

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Summer 2012 (June/July/Aug.)



Put a lid on it!

Managing your garbage problem

The Englewood Health Department has been investigating a substantial number of complaints regarding unsanitary conditions around exterior dumpster and garbage storage areas at several retail food establishments within the city. The nature of these complaints varied; however, conditions involving the spillage of garbage containing food wastes and overflowing dumpsters were most commonly reported.

The presence of unsanitary conditions around exterior dumpster and garbage storage areas constitute a public health nuisance and hazard. When improperly maintained, they serve as an attraction for disease-carrying vermin, cause odor problems, and deter patrons from visiting your establishment.

- All garbage containing food wastes must be stored in easily cleanable, non-absorbent, leak-proof, watertight, and vermin-proof waste receptacles with covers.
- All containers and dumpsters used to store garbage must be kept clean on the inside and outside.
- Garbage containers and dumpsters must be stored on an easily washable surface that is kept clean and in good repair at all times.
- All garbage and debris must be removed as often as necessary and in such a manner as to prevent public health nuisances, development of excessive odors, overflow, or the attraction of insects, animals, or rodents.
- All recyclable materials must be stored in a neat manner. All cardboard must be COMPLETELY broken-down and bundled.
- Keep all curbside and exterior areas free of litter at all times.
- All used cooking oil must be placed in easily cleanable, non-absorbent, leak-proof, watertight, and vermin-proof containers with tight-fitting lids. An approved and licensed waste removal company must remove used cooking oil. Please keep receipts and other documentation indicating service by such a company. **Dumping of used oil into storm drains or catch basins is prohibited and will result in legal action.**



How to Chill Out this Summer

Summer is quickly approaching, which means fun in the sun, and high temperatures. This is the best season for food establishments, and making sure your refrigeration systems are operating sufficiently is more important now than ever.

There are a number of different things that can contribute to someone acquiring a food borne illness. A number of factors, including hand washing, safe cooking temperatures, cold and hot holding temperatures, proper methods of reheating and cooling are risk factors, if performed and practiced improperly, most often result in food borne illness and are stressed during routine inspections.



Remember that cold foods must be held at 41°F or below. Foods which are cooked in advance or are potentially hazardous also must be rapidly cooled to 41°F within six (6) hours. Proper refrigeration is very important in the prevention of food borne illness. Here are some helpful hints on how to keep food cold and electric bills low:

- Keep condenser housings, coils, and condensers free of dust accumulation in order to ensure optimum operating efficiency.
- Check door gaskets for flexibility and proper fitting. Remember, that any gasket which is cracked or stiff should be replaced. Gaskets should make firm contact around the entire perimeter of the door. The purposes of gaskets are to insulate the unit so that the cold air stays in and the warm air stays out.
- Have an accurate thermometer provided for each refrigerator and freezer. Make sure these are checked daily to ensure that refrigerators are kept at 41°F or below, and freezers are kept at 0°F or below.
- Do not overstock shelves or line them with paper cardboard. This creates uneven cooling in the unit.
- Have the units serviced on a regular basis.



Remember that routine maintenance performed now can save you hundreds of dollars in costly repairs and wasted energy in the future. Summer is a great time of year, so enjoy it -- but remember: chill out.



Employee Hygiene: *Break Your Dirty Habits*

Sometimes food borne illness can be attributed to poor personal hygiene. Things such as not washing hands, personal cleanliness, improper glove use, and unsanitary behaviors may lead to a serious outbreak which can affect your business and reputation. Learn to spot and correct these deficiencies and protect public health.

Hand washing is a simple but important duty in any food preparation routine. A good, thorough lathering, scrubbing, and rinsing for at least 20 seconds will eliminate the contamination of food through handling. Hand washing facilities should be fully stocked with soap, paper towels and hot water at all times and kept clear and convenient for access, and unobstructed. The hand washing station's single function is for hand washing purposes ONLY. Hands should be washed with the following actions:

- Anytime when entering the kitchen
- Before handling or preparing foods
- After handling money
- After touching parts of the body (face, hair, nose, etc.)
- After using the restroom
- After smoking
- After eating



Eating, chewing gum or tobacco, and smoking are prohibited within the food preparation area. These actions can possibly contaminate food products accidentally by way of smoke and ash, food particles, or the gum itself. In addition, saliva on the fingers of smokers and gum chewers can introduce huge numbers of bacteria into a food product or on food preparation equipment.

Clean attire is a must for any food service operation. For instance, a dirty uniform or apron can spread pathogens to an employee's hand. In addition, an untidy appearance may make patrons think twice about eating in your establishment. Whenever work attire becomes heavily soiled, have a fresh set on hand.



Also remember... Employees that are visibly sick (coughing or sneezing) or have open wounds should refrain from working with food. It can unnecessarily expose food to bacteria. Instead, assign the worker(s) in question to other tasks. They can resume their regular responsibilities when they have fully recovered from their condition.

Reminders



Make sure all doors and windows to your establishments are properly closed. Only doors & windows that have proper screens or air curtains can remain open.



Keep hot foods HOT. All foods in hot holding must have a temperature of at least 135°F.



Keep cold foods COLD. All cold foods should be kept at 41°F or below.

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