

Food Service Quarterly Newsletter

October - December 2007



The LMAS District Health Department is proud to present this quarter's newsletter. Inside you will find information on ServSafe Certification and recertification courses, National Food Safety Education Month, avoiding contamination from employee's hands, and a True/False quiz on purchasing and receiving. We hope that you find the following information beneficial.



ServSafe Certification & Recertification



If you are interested in taking the ServSafe Certification examination or if your certification has expired (certification is good for 5 years) and you would like to recertify please call the Mackinac County office at (906) 643-1100. The LMAS District Health Department is currently organizing ServSafe Certification courses for the spring of 2008. Those of you who wish to recertify and not take the full day course may also schedule a date to take the examination. We hope to hear from you soon.

National Food Safety Education Month

This past September marked the thirteenth annual National Food Safety Education Month sponsored by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. This year's theme was "Viruses: They're in Your Hands." The month long event was broken down into five weeks, concentrating on a different aspect of foodborne viruses and prevention in a food service facility each week. Week one concentrated on Foodborne Viruses: Know the Facts, week two on Norovirus: Know the Answers, and week three concentrated on Hepatitis A Virus. While week four covered Preventing the Spread: Handwashing, week five brought the month long event to an end with Preventing the Spread: Employee Illness. Although the month of September and National Food Safety Education Month are over it is never too late to work on training with your staff. Short, easy activities to help educate about foodborne illnesses and reinforce proper handwashing and employee illness practices are available on the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's website at www.nraef.org/nfsem. Use these activities as handouts for employees to do on their own time, or as a quick activity before or after a shift, or create a contest among all shifts and offer a prize for the shift that gets the most right throughout the five weeks of activities. Be creative and make it fun for all who get involved!

All activities are based off of the NRAEF's ServSafe[®] food safety training program.



Avoiding Contamination from Employee's Hands



Statistics show that improper food handling by a food employee is one of the most common causes of foodborne illnesses. Even an apparently healthy person may be hosting foodborne pathogens. When employees touch ready-to-eat foods, any contamination that is on their hands is highly likely to go into a consumer's mouth. The human hands are a great vehicle for transporting bacteria and viruses. Food handlers must pay careful attention to what they do with their hands since simple acts such as running their fingers through their hair or wiping their hands on their apron can contaminate food. Proper hand washing along with avoiding bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods must always be practiced. Alternatives to an employee using their bare hands to handle ready-to-eat foods may include the use of suitable utensils such as:

- Deli tissue
- Spatulas
- Tongs
- Single use gloves
- Dispensing equipment

Remember though, gloves must never be used in place of handwashing. Hands must be washed before putting on a pair of gloves and when changing to a fresh pair. Gloves used to handle food are for single use only and should never be washed and/or re-used. It is very important to use gloves correctly in order to protect against contamination of food products. Food handlers should change their gloves:

- As soon as they become soiled or torn
- Before beginning a different task
- At least every four (4) hours during continual use, and more often when necessary
- After handling raw meat and before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food.

Improper glove use has the same negative health effects as bare hand contact. It is important to remember that management plays a critical role in the effectiveness of handwashing and bare hand contact practices in an establishment. By establishing a program that includes specific policies, and by training and enforcing those policies, managers can minimize the risk of causing a foodborne illness.

Test Your Knowledge

Purchasing and Receiving



Check to see how much you know about the concepts of Purchasing and Receiving. Circle the correct answer for each statement.

1. True or False: Upon arrival, a delivery of fresh fish should be received at an internal temperature of 41°F or lower.
2. True or False: Turkey should be rejected if the texture is firm and springs back when touched.
3. True or False: You should reject a delivery of frozen steaks covered in large ice crystals.
4. True or False: If a sack of flour is dry upon delivery, the contents may still be contaminated.
5. True or False: A supplier that is in compliance with local, state, and federal laws can be considered to be an approved source.

ANSWERS:
1. True 2. False 3. True
4. True 5. True