



The Facts About Food

DECEMBER 2010
WINTER QUARTER NEWSLETTER

Food Worker Class

Washington State Food Code requires that all food workers have food safety training before handling food served to the public. Food workers who attend a food safety training class and pass the State of Washington exam on food safety basics are issued a Washington State Food & Beverage Worker's Card. Kitsap County Health District offers the food safety class Monday through Friday at various times and locations. Please check the Food Worker Card class schedule on-line at www.kitsapcountyhealth.com or call (360) 337-5235. Holidays or inclement weather may cause some classes to be canceled.

You will **soon** be able to take the Food Worker Card **class and test online**. Watch the Kitsap County Health District website for updates www.kitsapcountyhealth.com.

UNAPPROVED ONLINE Food Worker Class

The online Food Worker Card class to be offered by the Health District and approved by the Washington State Department of Health should not be confused with several other companies that offer food cards that are not approved by the Washington State Department of Health. The companies are very clever in their wording about what they offer. The card offered at the end of their training is **NOT** issued by a Washington State Local Health Department; and therefore is not acceptable as the required Food Worker card. The unapproved online programs may or may not provide valuable food safety training. Examples of **UNAPPROVED** online programs include www.efoodhandler.com or www.wafoodhandlers.com.

scammers

Posing As Health Inspectors Are Calling Restaurant Operators.

WATCH



This past summer restaurants in Washington were the target of a scam. This scam sometimes involved more than one call to set up an in-person restaurant inspection, and the caller typically identified himself as a health inspector and threatened fines if the restaurant did not cooperate. The purpose of the scam apparently was to set up accounts with a national online auction service and other fraudulent purposes.

Restaurant and store operators need to know that Kitsap County Health District inspectors have photo identification and do not announce their visits. Business owners who believe they may have been victims of this scam should file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov. For more information on this scam, go to the Washington State Attorney General's website at www.atg.wa.gov/pressrelease.aspx?id=25920

Food Worker Class Schedule on website at www.kitsapcountyhealth.com

Thermometers At Food Establishments

Temperature abuse of potentially hazardous food is one of the leading causes of foodborne illness outbreaks. In other words, it is important to keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Warm temperature allows bacteria to grow rapidly and can lead to food poisoning. Inadequate cooking of raw meat is also a major cause of foodborne illness. These are the reasons why all food establishments must have a thermometer to monitor food temperatures. However, two of the most common violations found during inspections is not having a thermometer or the thermometer is not accurate.



When Purchasing A Thermometer, There Are A Few Things To Consider.

1. What temperature range do you need on the thermometer? Some thermometers are only for cooking meat and have a high temperature range. They would be no good for monitoring temperatures in a refrigerator. Some dial thermometers have a wide range (e.g. 50 to 550 degrees), and it is hard to take precise temperature when the dial is small.
2. How fast the thermometer gives accurate reading is also important. It is okay to use an inexpensive dial thermometer for taking a temperature of soup in a soup warmer. However, if you want to take the cooking temperature of meat, and you want to cook the meat to the correct temperature, but not overcook it, then a dial thermometer is too slow. You will need to spend a little more by purchasing a digital thermometer that can read temperatures in seconds.
3. Lastly, how thick (thin) is the food? Again, a cheap dial thermometer does not do a good job of taking temperature of thin food like a hamburger patty. With a more expensive digital thermometer, the sensor is right at the tip of the probe, and you can take a very localized temperature.

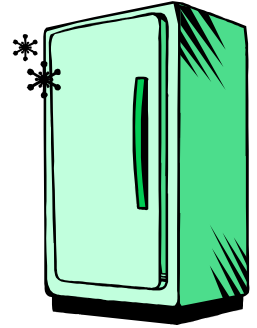
Other Things To Consider Are;



1. Do not trust the thermometer built in a unit like a refrigerator or a hot case. Even if it is calibrated, it is taking air temperature, not the food temperature. Use a thermometer with a probe to be sure.
2. Calibrate your thermometer regularly. Many thermometers allow you to calibrate them. Read the owner's manual and calibrate them accordingly. If your thermometer cannot be calibrated, at least make sure that it is reading accurate temperatures. You could put the thermometer in ice water with plenty of ice (ice touching the bottom) and see if it reads 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Prevent Foodborne Illness—Keep Hot Foods Hot & Cold Foods Cold

IT'S WINDY AND THE POWER WENT OUT, IS MY FOOD SAFE?



Freezers as well as refrigerators full of food are a major investment. Now that we have had a taste of winter this would be a good time to go over procedures in case you lose power to your freezer and or refrigerator. Here are few helpful reminders.

- ⇒ If you are expecting stormy weather, turn down the temperature of your units. This way you have a chance at getting both the food and unit cooler in case you lose power.
- ⇒ Make sure to have a thermometer in each unit. This way you can see how warm your unit has gotten. Knowing the highest temperature that food has reached is the most important factor to determine whether or not the thawed food in your freezer is safe.
- ⇒ **KEEP THE DOORS CLOSED!!!** Opening and closing doors of the unit will allow the cool air to escape.
- ⇒ Locate a source of dry ice or regular ice in advance in case you will need it.
- ⇒ Set up an alternative source of power such as a generator. If you do have a generator give it a test run before the storm season starts to make sure it works.
- ⇒ If you are purchasing a new freezer, investigate models that have an alarm when temperatures rise significantly.
- ⇒ When the power comes back on and your food items are 41°F or less they are still safe for consumption. If the food items have been 46°F – 55°F over 12 hours discard, 56°F – 69°F over 4 hours discard, 70°F or more for over 2 hours discard. If you are not at or over these time periods for food items (46°F - 69°F), place them in a unit that is 41°F or less to cool them as quickly as possible to 41°F. Also remember if the food item is safe to eat, it's safe to refreeze. For example: the frozen pizza reached 40°F in the outage it would be safe to refreeze it. Hopefully this winter will not bring any power outages your way, but if it should, please make sure to be prepared!

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Welcome New Food Safety Specialists

Jim Zimny joined the Food Safety Program last May. Jim has a Bachelor of Science degree from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. His past experience includes working in the Recreational Shellfish program for the Kitsap County Health District and he has many years experience working as a line cook.

Dave Zollweg joined us in December. Dave has a Bachelor of Science degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. His past experience includes seven years in the Navy as an Environmental Health Specialist conducting food inspections.

Goodbye and Goodluck

We had positions to fill after we said goodbye to **Junichi Naotsuka** and **Anne Fowler**. Jun and his family are moving to Australia to seek other opportunities. Anne Fowler is still at the Health District but is now working in the Pollution Identification Program. Good luck to them in their new adventures.



Be prepared for winter storms and power outages.

'Tis the Season ...

Norovirus (also known as “stomach flu”) is more common during winter months. Norovirus is very often transmitted from an infected person to another victim through food. The virus is shed in the infected person’s feces, and it gets onto their hand or other surfaces. An infected person may or may not show symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea. So it is very important that employees who handle food wash their hands thoroughly and regularly, especially after using the bathroom. There are three things you can do to dramatically reduce the chance of spreading norovirus.

1. **Do not work when you are ill with vomiting and/or diarrhea.** Many people tell us that they already know this rule. And still working when sick is one of the top reasons for outbreaks to occur in Washington. If you are throwing up or having diarrhea (loose stool), know that you could be shedding literally millions of viruses in your feces every time you use the bathroom and very possibly contaminating your hands with them.
2. **Wash hands thoroughly and often.** Since you could be infected with virus but not showing symptoms, you need to wash your hands thoroughly even if you feel healthy. Washing hands thoroughly does **not** mean getting your fingertips barely wet and dry them on your apron. It means you get your

hands and wrists wet with hot water, use enough soap and scrub for 10 to 15 seconds, rinse well with hot water, and dry with paper towels. You do this especially after using the bathroom.

3. **Use gloves or utensils (Do not touch food with bare hands).** We use a term called “ready-to-eat food”. It means food that is not going to be cooked any further. When you handle ready-to-eat food, you **must** use gloves or utensils so you don’t touch the food with your bare hand. Even thoroughly washed hands can still have some virus left on them. Before you touch food with your hand, you have to ask yourself “Is this food going to be cooked after this?” If the answer is no, then you must avoid bare hand contact with it. Very often people use their bare hand to handle ice for drinks, nuts sprinkled on salad, bread, etc. Remember that you are not using gloves to protect your hands from getting dirty, you are using them to protect the food from getting “dirty” from your hands.

Remember norovirus is very common and very contagious. Doing the three things listed above will remove the biggest cause of foodborne illness outbreaks from your restaurant. As a food worker, don’t work when you’re sick, wash your hands after going to the bathroom and don’t touch food with bare hands; you will cut the chances of having an outbreak from your restaurant, and you will protect your business, your employees and your customers.

Food Worker Class Reminders



- * Cards are \$10.00, **cash** only.
- * Classes start on time and there is no late entry.
- * Bring identification.
- * Class schedules are subject to change due to holidays or weather. Please call (360) 337-5235 to check on class.
- * If renewing a card within 14 days of the expiration date, please bring your card with you for a three-year renewal card. (You must still attend the class)



FOOD PROGRAM STAFF

To reach an inspector...
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or dial direct.

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Check out our website at www.kitsapcountyhealth.com