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We're A Tobacco Free Zone



To protect the health of **everyone**  
at CDHD, no use of tobacco or vaping  
is allowed anywhere on our property.  
**Thank you for your cooperation.**



## Compliance for Refilling Returnable Containers

Growler Stations and Kombucha Tea Taps are examples of products new to our area.

When it comes to self-serve taps for beer, tea, and other beverages, the major food safety factor that needs to be considered is the potential for cross contamination.

Cleaning and sanitizing the container and the dispensing apparatus is required to prevent cross contamination of potentially harmful micro-organisms.

The Idaho Food Code addresses dispensing equipment, dispensing product, refilling returnable containers, and cleaning containers and equipment.



## What you need to know:

- A plan review and approval is required prior to installation for establishments that require a health department food establishment license.
- Refilling returnables shall be a contamination-free process.
- Returnables are to be clean before refilling.
- Thoroughly wash hands before refilling.
- Proper plumbing and waste drainage shall be provided.
- Hot and cold water shall be supplied from an approved source.
- Hand sinks shall be centrally located, visible, and directly accessible. Hand sink is strictly for hand washing.
- Fill lines shall be made of approved food grade materials.
- Have an approved three compartment sink for proper cleaning. Sink may be used for rinsing containers with hot water.
- Fill tubes can cross contaminate from one container to the next.
  - A clean fill tube is to be used for each refill. Have spare fill tubes available for the next refill.
  - Fill tubes are food contact surfaces and are required to be washed, rinsed, sanitized and air-dried to assure a contamination-free process.
- Be prepared to explain your contamination-free refilling procedure at your next inspection.

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*Food Review is sent biannually, free of charge to all licensed food establishments in our health district. We hope to include news of interest and importance. Topic ideas or articles written by the readers are welcome to be sent to: Editor, Food Review, CDHD, 707 N. Armstrong Pl., Boise, ID 83704. Extra copies of the newsletter are available at your local Health Department office.*

# Date Marking Ready-To-Eat Foods

*Idaho Food Code 3-501-17 & 3.501.18*

## Why should you date mark Ready-To-Eat Potentially Hazardous Foods (RTE-PHF)?

Refrigeration prevents food from becoming a hazard by significantly slowing the growth of most harmful bacteria (microbes), but does not kill the microbes.

*Listeria Monocytogenes* (LM) is one bacterium of many nasty culprits that make date marking extremely important, because it does grow at cold temperatures.

### How long is RTE-PHF kept?

Based on the growth of LM, ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous food (time/temperature control for safety of food) must be kept at 41°F or below and **not more than 7 days**. This does not include the time the food was in a freezer. Day one is the day the food is prepared.

Once a commercially packaged Ready-to-Eat food is opened, the seven day count begins.

### How to date mark RTE-PHF's?

A date-marking system must be used which places dates on the food container. The system must be consistent and clear to all employees. Use stickers or plastic wrap on the food container, which identifies the first day of preparation or alternatively, may identify the last day that the food may be sold or consumed on the premises.

### Exempt from date marking: Deli salads prepared in a food processing plant according to 21 CFR 110 (FDA rules)

- Potato salad
- Ham salad
- Egg salad
- Pasta salad
- Macaroni salad
- Chicken salad
- Seafood salad



### Examples of food that needs to be date marked:

- Fresh cut leafy greens
- Deli meats (lunch meats)
- Cooked rice
- Hot dogs
- Cooked baked potatoes
- Salsa
- Cooked soups
- Cooked meat (pulled pork, chicken, steaks)
- Some soft cheese such as Feta cheese
- Cooked beans
- Mashed potatoes
- Cooked sauces

### Examples of food that is exempt from date marking:

#### Hard cheeses:

- Asadero
- Abertam
- Appenzeller
- Assiago medium or old
- Bra
- Cheddar
- Christalinna
- Colby
- Cotija Anejo
- Cotija
- Coon
- Derby
- Emmertaler
- English Dairy
- Gex\*
- Gloucester
- Gjetost
- Gruyere
- Herve
- Lapland
- Lorraine
- Oaxaca
- Parmesan
- Pecorino
- Queso Anejo
- Queso Chihuahua
- Queso de Prensa
- Romanello
- Romano
- Reggiano
- Sapsago
- Sassenage\*
- Stilton\*
- Swiss
- Tignard\*
- Vize
- Wensleydale\*

\*blue-veined

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## Date Marking Ready-To-Eat Foods

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Examples of food that is exempt from date marking:

### Soft cheeses:

- Asiago soft
- Battlemat
- Belemay\*
- Blue
- Brick
- Camosum
- Chantelle
- Edam
- Fontina
- Gorgonzola\*
- Gouda
- Havarti
- Konigskase
- Limburger
- Milano
- Manchego
- Monterey
- Muenster
- Oka
- Port du Salut
- Provologne
- Queso de Bola
- Queso de la Tierra
- Robbiole
- Roquefort\*
- Samsoe
- Tilsiter
- Trappist

\*blue-veined

### Cultured Dairy Products

- Yogurt
- Sour cream
- Buttermilk

## Compliance for Refilling Returnable Containers *Continued from page 1*

### Idaho Food Code

#### 4-204.13 Dispensing Equipment, Protection of Equipment and Food.

In EQUIPMENT that dispenses or vends liquid FOOD or ice in unPACKAGED form: (A) The delivery tube, chute, orifice, and splash surfaces directly above the container receiving the FOOD shall be designed in a manner, such as with barriers, baffles, or drip aprons, so that drips from condensation and splash are diverted from the opening of the container receiving the FOOD; (B) The delivery tube, chute, and orifice shall be protected from manual contact such as by being recessed; (C) The delivery tube or chute and orifice of EQUIPMENT used to vend liquid FOOD or ice in unPACKAGED form to self-service CONSUMERS shall be designed so that the delivery tube or chute and orifice are protected from dust, insects, rodents, and other contamination by a self-closing door if the EQUIPMENT is: (1) Located in an outside area that does not otherwise afford the protection of an enclosure against the rain, windblown debris, insects, rodents, and other contaminants that are present in the environment, or (2) Available for self-service during hours when it is not under the full-time supervision of a FOOD EMPLOYEE; and (D) The dispensing EQUIPMENT actuating lever or mechanism and filling device of CONSUMER self-service BEVERAGE dispensing EQUIPMENT shall be designed to prevent contact with the lip-contact surface of glasses or cups that are refilled.

#### 3-304.17 Refilling Returnables.

(C) Personal take-out BEVERAGE containers, such as thermally insulated bottles, nonspill coffee cups, and promotional BEVERAGE glasses, may be refilled by EMPLOYEES or the CONSUMER if refilling is a contamination-free process as specified under 4-204.13(A), (B), and (D).

#### 4-603.17 Returnables, Cleaning for Refilling.

(A) Except as specified in (B) and (C) of this section, returned empty containers intended for cleaning and refilling with FOOD shall be cleaned and refilled in a regulated FOOD PROCESSING PLANT.  
(B) A FOOD-specific container for BEVERAGES may be refilled at a FOOD ESTABLISHMENT if: (1) Only a BEVERAGE that is not a POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD is used as specified under 3-304.17(A); (2) The design of the container and of the rinsing EQUIPMENT and the nature of the BEVERAGE, when considered together, allow effective cleaning at home or in the FOOD ESTABLISHMENT; (3) Facilities for rinsing before refilling returned containers with fresh, hot water that is under pressure and not recirculated are provided as part of the dispensing system; (4) The CONSUMER-owned container returned to the FOOD ESTABLISHMENT for refilling is refilled for sale or service only to the same CONSUMER.

## Idaho Food Code Proposed Rule Changes in 2016

The Idaho Food Protection Program Manager with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare is chairing a committee that is preparing for Idaho Food Code rule changes that will be brought before the 2016 Idaho Legislature. The committee consists of retail food sole proprietors, farmer's market coordinators, retail food corporations, state agencies and local health departments from across the state.



The current Idaho Food Code is very similar to the 2001 FDA Model Food Code. Current food safety science is lacking, making Idaho's food safety rules due for an update. Between 2001 and 2013, new studies and research in food science have progressed. The most current food safety science will be included in the updated rules. Idaho will use the 2013 FDA Model Food Code as a reference in this process. However, the changes proposed will not be identical to the 2013 FDA Model Food Code because not all of the rules in this document work for Idaho.

View the 2013 FDA Model Food Code at: [www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/ucm374759.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/ucm374759.htm)

# Most Common Violations

The most common major risk factor violations that Central District Health Department Environmental Health Specialists observe while conducting food safety inspections are #19: Cold Holding, #12: Food Surfaces Clean (Sanitizing), #7: Handwashing Facilities and #20: Date Marking. When these major risk factors are not controlled, there is an increased risk of a foodborne illness outbreak. By having procedures in place that include monitoring and record keeping, we can prevent foodborne illness in the community.

**Cold Holding violations** are most common. Bacterial growth and toxin production can occur if time and temperature control are not monitored. The temperature danger zone is between 41°F and 135°F. Bacterial growth increases with an increase in temperature in this zone.

## What to do:

- Use a reliable and accurate thermometer to check the temperature of food that require temperature control for safety. This is a valuable tool to control this major risk factor.
- Monitor and record refrigeration equipment in several locations, especially a unit that is not consistent in keeping food 41°F and below.
- Monitor open tabletop preparation units. Equipment that meets NSF/ANSI Standard 7 after 1997 are designed to keep food in these units below 41°F. Even during busy times these units are designed to keep food cold if they are used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Designate an employee to monitor using an accurate thermometer to probe the internal temperature of food.

## Food Surfaces Clean is the second most common violation.

### What to do:

- Dishwashers not sanitizing is the most common observation. Daily monitoring of the sanitization rinse cycle in your machine will increase compliance with this requirement.
- Have a chart near your dishwashing machine where designated employees can record the sanitizing concentration or sanitization temperature.
- Have the correct sanitizer test papers or heat sensitive tape available. Your chemical supplier or dishwasher maintenance company will have these items or know how to obtain them.
- Follow the correct procedure to clean food contact surfaces.

**Handwashing Facilities** that are supplied with soap and paper towels will allow food service employees to wash their hands correctly.

### What to do:

- Good handwashing practices will reduce the risk of food contamination that may cause a foodborne illness outbreak.
- Hand soap and paper towels must be at each handwash sink.
- Review your hand washing policy with employees and constantly remind your staff to wash their hands to reduce food safety risk for your customers.
- Designate certain staff to check the supply of soap and paper towels at the handwash sinks.



**Date Marking** is required for all foods that require temperature control for safety (TCS) or are potentially hazardous. Seven days is the maximum number of days this type of food can be held in the refrigerator at 41°F or below.

### What to do:

- Have a date marking system that employees understand.
- Be consistent in the application of your date marking system to prevent unsafe food from being served to a customer.
- Review the date marking rule in the Idaho Food Code 3-501.17. and 3-501.18.



Visit the CDHD website for posters and PDF-format forms that will be useful in your daily operations:  
[www.cdhd.idaho.gov/eh/food/active.htm](http://www.cdhd.idaho.gov/eh/food/active.htm)

## Testing Backflow Prevention Devices

What is backflow? Backflow is the reversal of the flow of water in the plumbing system. It can occur when the pressure in the water main or the building's plumbing changes.

A backflow prevention assembly is a device that is a mechanical barrier to the backflow of water.

Have you checked the date on the tags of the backflow prevention device(s) in your food establishment? These devices protect the water supply from potential contamination should a back siphonage or backflow occur. The Idaho State Plumbing Code and the Idaho Food Code (IFC) require inspection and testing of these devices.

According to **IFC 5-204.12** Backflow Prevention Device, Location: A backflow prevention device shall be located so that it may be serviced and maintained.

**IFC 5-205.13** Scheduling Inspection and Service for a Water System Device: A device such as a water treatment device or backflow preventer shall be scheduled for inspection and service, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and as necessary to prevent device failure based on local water conditions, and records demonstrating inspection and service shall be maintained by the person in charge.

### **Idaho Plumbing Code General Requirements 603.3.3.**

The premise owner or responsible person shall have the backflow prevention assembly tested by a certified backflow assembly tester at the time of installation, repair, or relocation, and at least on an annual schedule thereafter or more often when required by the authority having jurisdiction.

# Vacuum Packaged Food and Botulism

Reduced Oxygen Packaging in Retail Food Establishments requires approval from the health department because of the inherent danger of creating a perfect environment for harmful bacteria to grow and multiply.

Both *Clostridium botulinum* and *Listeria monocytogenes* are organisms that can cause illness and death. Vacuum packaging food creates a reduced oxygen environment that is favorable for *c.botulinum* growth.

Depending on the type of food, a variance and hazard analysis and critical control point plan are required.

The barriers to the growth of harmful organisms must be identified in detail to assure the vacuum packaged food is safe. The Idaho Food Code section 3-502.12 describes the requirements for vacuum packaging food to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

The process of "reduced oxygen packaging" involves the reduction of oxygen and replacement of it with another gas or combination of gases; otherwise controlling the oxygen content to a level below the 21 percent oxygen level ordinarily found in the atmosphere.

### **Reduced oxygen packaging includes:**

**Vacuum packaging** — Air is removed from a package of food and the package is hermetically sealed so that vacuum remains inside the package.

### **Modified atmospheric packaging** —

Atmosphere of the package of food is modified so that its composition is different from air, but the atmosphere may change over time due to the permeability of the packaging material or the respiration of the food. Modified atmospheric packaging includes: reduction in the proportion of oxygen, total replacement of oxygen, or an increase in the proportion of other gases such as carbon dioxide or nitrogen.

### **Controlled atmospheric packaging** —

Atmosphere of a package of food is modified so that until the package is open, its composition is different from air, and continuous control of the atmosphere is maintained, such as by using oxygen scavengers or a combination of total replacement of oxygen, non-respiring food, and impermeable packaging material.

Contact your health inspector if your process has not yet been approved by the health department or if you have any questions.





**Central District Health Department**

Environmental Health  
 707 N. Armstrong Pl.  
 Boise, ID 83704-0825



# Keep Your Kitchen Safe

## Two Food Safety Certifications Offered Through Central District Health Department

**Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Course**

- 4 hour classroom format
- Cost: \$38 per student

**National Restaurant Association's ServSafe® Certification Course**

- 8 hour classroom format
- Cost: \$120 per student

For 10 or more students in either course, we will send an instructor to Boise, Elmore and Valley counties, by appointment.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

All classes are held at the Central District Health Department  
 707 N. Armstrong Place, Boise

**Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Course**

Class time is 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**National Restaurant Assoc. ServSafe® Certification**

Class time is 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 22	Thursday, Jan. 29
Wednesday, Feb. 18	Thursday, Feb. 26
Thursday, March 19	Wednesday, March 18
Thursday, April 16	Thursday, April 23
Wednesday, May 20	Thursday, May 21
Thursday, June 25	Wednesday, June 24

**TO REGISTER: CALL 208-327-7499**

**For more information on these and other food safety courses and videos, visit [cdhd.idaho.gov](http://cdhd.idaho.gov)**