

The Food Review

Back Issues of this publication are available on our website: cdhd.idaho.gov

In This Issue:

The Inspector Just Showed Up, Now What?

Spanish Language Food Safety Course

Allergens

What Can Happen When Things Go Wrong

District 4 Reported Hepatitis A Cases

The Inspector Just Showed Up, Now What? by Jerry Davis

Environmental Health Specialists (EHS) receive a lot of different responses when they show up to conduct routine food establishment inspections. There is no right or wrong response; the only requirement is that access be provided for the inspection. Section 8-402.11 of the Idaho Food Code states:

“After the Regulatory Authority presents official credentials and provides notice of the purpose of, and an intent to conduct, an inspection, the Person In Charge shall allow the Regulatory Authority to determine if the Food Establishment is in compliance with this Code by allowing access to the establishment, allowing inspection, and providing information and records specified in this Code and to which the Regulatory Authority is entitled according to Law, during the Food Establishment’s hours of operation and other reasonable times.”



All legal wording aside, this means that once the EHS presents proper credentials you have to provide reasonable access for the inspection.

Typically, the inspection process goes like this:

The EHS will arrive at the front counter and ask to speak to the Person In Charge. The Person In Charge doesn't have to be the owner, simply the most responsible person at the establishment at that time. The EHS must show official identification before you grant access. The credential can be a business card with the Central District Health Department logo or a photo identification badge. It's a good idea to be 100% certain that the person you're granting access to works for the health

- continued on next page



Spanish Language Food Safety Course

Many Treasure Valley food establishments employ workers who do not speak English. This can create an enormous barrier when trying to train employees in safe food handling practices. Ask yourself if your Spanish-speaking employees have been trained on proper cold and hot holding temperatures, personal hygiene, cooking, cleaning and sanitation. If they haven't you might want to enroll them in the new Spanish Language Basic Food Safety Course.

The two-hour Basic Food Safety course is now being offered in Spanish once a month. This course has been in high demand and is helping Spanish-speaking cooks, dishwashers and servers who need training, but have a difficult time understanding important food safety principles when presented in English.

The next class will be offered March 27, 2006 from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Call Central District Health Department at 208-327-7499 for more information and to register. The cost is \$15.00 per student.

Ada and Boise County
707 N. Armstrong Pl.
Boise, ID 83704-0825
Tel. (208) 327-7499
Fax (208) 327-8553

Rob Howarth - Director
rhowarth@cdhd.idaho.gov

Mike Reno - Supervisor
Land Based Programs
mreno@cdhd.idaho.gov

Tom Schmalz - Supervisor
Facility Based Programs
tschmalz@cdhd.idaho.gov

Beth Norberg
bnorberg@cdhd.idaho.gov

Bob Mayer
bmayer@cdhd.idaho.gov

Bud Fulleton
bfulleto@cdhd.idaho.gov

Chad Waters
cwaters@cdhd.idaho.gov

Frank Isenberg
fisenber@cdhd.idaho.gov

Deb Carney
dcarney@cdhd.idaho.gov

Bob Jue
rjue@cdhd.idaho.gov

Jerry Davis - Boise County
jdavis@cdhd.idaho.gov

Elmore County:
520 E. 8th North
Mtn. Home, ID 83647
Tel. (208) 587-4407
Fax (208) 587-3521

Marty Jones
mjones@cdhd.idaho.gov

Valley County:
703 N. 1st,
McCall, ID 83638
Tel. (208) 634-7194
Fax (208) 634-2174

Jeff Lappin
jlappin@cdhd.idaho.gov

department. People have tried to pose as health department employees to get into the back areas of restaurants.

The inspector may start by asking the Person In Charge some general questions about training, menu items and employee illness policies before beginning the actual inspection. Once the inspection begins, the inspector's first stop should be at one of the hand washing sinks. The sink must be accessible, have hot and cold running water, hand soap and paper towels. With clean hands, the inspector is ready to begin the inspection.



It's a good idea for the Person In Charge to follow the EHS during the inspection. This allows the inspector to ask questions about procedures and practices. It also gives the Person In Charge insight into the processes and facilities the inspector is focusing on. The Person In Charge may have duties that prevent him from tagging along. If that's the case it's OK to allow the inspector to conduct the inspection unassisted.

With or without the Person In Charge, the EHS will be asking questions of cooks, waitresses, dishwashers and other staff members to determine if proper food safety procedures are being followed. The EHS will also be watching the food service employees to witness their food handling and hygienic practices.



EHS Deb Carney goes over the results of her inspection with Jaker's Manager Shawn Pierce

When the inspection is complete, the EHS will want to spend some time with the Person In Charge to discuss the findings. During this closing interview it is extremely important for the Person In Charge to ask questions and ensure they have complete understanding of the inspection findings. If violations are documented, the EHS will list a correction date on the inspection form. These items must be corrected by that date.

If any violations are considered Risk Factor Violations (those items marked on the pink portion of the inspection form), the EHS will do one of two things: Provide follow-up inspection date, or give the Person In Charge a Violation Correction Report (VCR). If you are left with a VCR, you must return the form to Central District Health Department within five days after the correction date specified, outlining the action you took to correct the violations.

Professional courtesy and cooperation between the EHS and operators can go a long way toward protecting public health. Serving safe food is the common goal we share. Understanding the inspection process and developing an open dialogue with your EHS will insure we're doing all we can in meeting that goal.

(Special thanks to Shawn Pierce & Jaker's Restaurant for allowing us to take pictures during a restaurant inspection.)

Food Review is sent quarterly, 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.

Allergens

Even though the Idaho Food Code (based on the FDA 2001 Code) does not address allergens we should be aware of customer allergies as they can be life threatening.

What is an allergic reaction? The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) writes, "A food allergy is an immune system response to a food that the body mistakenly believes is harmful." The immune system will make antibodies and the next time the person eats that food, the body can release many chemicals, including histamine, to protect itself. The allergic symptoms can affect the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and cardiovascular systems and the skin.

Typical symptoms can occur within minutes or up to two hours after eating the offending food.



Skin: hives, eczema, swelling of lips and face, itching.

Respiratory: swelling of the throat or mouth, difficulty breathing; stuffy nose; itchy, watery eyes; runny nose, wheezing and repetitive coughing.

Gastrointestinal: abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea.

Cardiovascular: Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening allergic reaction with drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, death.

The FDA 2005 Code includes requirements for the person-in-charge to be aware of food allergens:

(9) Describing FOODS identified as MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS and the symptoms that a MAJOR FOOD ALLERGEN could cause in a sensitive individual who has an allergic reaction.

The Code also requires labeling of packaged foods to state:

(5) The name of the FOOD source for each MAJOR FOOD ALLERGEN contained in the FOOD unless the FOOD source is already part of the common or usual name of the respective ingredient (Effective January 1, 2006).

What are the eight major allergens causing 90% of the reactions? They are

- wheat
- soy
- milk
- eggs
- peanuts
- tree nuts
- fish
- shellfish

What should the manager know?

- The manager should be the point person for food allergy questions.
- The manager should set up food allergy procedures for the staff.
- Procedures should clearly define how to handle menu selection, meal preparation, and serving methods.
- Written instructions for handling an allergic reaction must be developed.
- Food allergy training must be reviewed periodically.

What should the cook know? - INGREDIENTS CHANGE!

- The ingredient labels must be checked when a patron has an allergy.
- Manufacturers can change ingredients in a product.



For example, in December 2005 FAAN was notified that Proctor and Gamble's *Pringles* will contain rice! In November 2005, Interstate Brands Corp (IBC) said they have added milk and soy to all breads and buns.

More info at: <http://www.foodallergy.org/ingredients.html>

Learn more about FAAN at: <http://www.foodallergy.org>

Posters: http://www.foodallergy.org/downloads/FA_RestaurantPoster.pdf

<http://www.foodallergy.org/downloads/FoodAllergiesSpanish.pdf>

FOOD LABELING: FALCPA (Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act) requires packages labeled after January 1, 2006 to have allergens listed in the ingredients or clearly labeled.
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/alrgqa.html>

FALCPA requires food manufacturers to label food products that contain an ingredient that is or contains protein from a major food allergen in one of two ways.

1. The first option is for food manufacturers to include the name of the food source in parenthesis following the common or usual name of the major food allergen in the list of ingredients. This also applies in instances when the name of the food source of the major allergen does not appear elsewhere in the ingredient statement. For example:

Ingredients: Enriched flour (*wheat flour, malted barley, niacin, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid*), sugar, partially hydrogenated soybean oil, and/or cottonseed oil, high fructose corn syrup, whey (*milk*), eggs, vanilla, natural and artificial flavoring) salt, leavening (sodium acid pyrophosphate, monocalcium phosphate), lecithin (*soy*), mono-and diglycerides (emulsifier)

2. The second option is to place the word “Contains” followed by the name of the food source from which the major food allergen is derived, immediately after or adjacent to the list of ingredients, in type size that is no smaller than the type size used for the list of ingredients. For example:

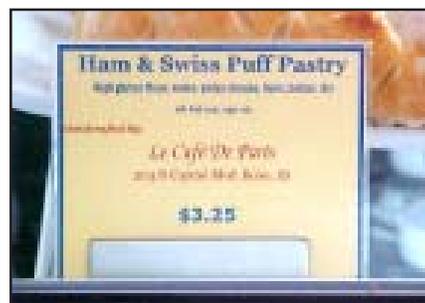
Contains Wheat, Milk, and Soy

Specific types of tree nuts, fish and shellfish must be listed. For example, the label must say walnuts, pecans, bass, mackerel, or crab, shrimp, etc.

Any ingredient or additive or spice made from one of the eight major allergens must be on the label in plain language to identify the allergen.

Foods not properly labeled for these eight allergens are considered adulterated and subject to recall and removal from retail shelves.

Examples of food labeling:



A Brief Reminder of What Can Happen When Things Go Wrong by Jerry Davis



Hanging above my desk at the Central District Health Department (CDHD) is a pink frisbee I found while inspecting a rural solid waste disposal facility. The promotional frisbee bears the name of a restaurant that closed about a decade ago after suffering through an outbreak of Hepatitis A (Hep A). The frisbee is a subtle reminder of the constant diligence required of food establishment operators and managers in preventing the transmission of foodborne illness to customers.

Most responsible food handlers know they shouldn't be handling food if they are ill, but Hep A can be tricky. Hepatitis A has an incubation period (length of time before symptoms appear) of 15-50 days after exposure. However, it is possible to be infectious (spread the virus to others) up to two weeks BEFORE symptoms appear. This means a person exposed to the virus can spread the illness to others long before they know they are ill.

In late January 1996 CDHD realized there was a serious Hep A problem. We learned of a food worker at one of our licensed restaurants who had tested positive for Hep A. We also learned this food worker handled ready-to-eat foods such as lettuce, buns and condiments with bare hands. Ready-to-eat foods are those foods that are not cooked prior to consumption.

By the time the dust settled, CDHD had sent out multiple press releases, lawyers got involved and lawsuits followed. The health department administered 190 immune globulin shots to customers of the restaurant (the shots are often paid for by the suspect restaurant). For some people the shots were too late, and we ended up with five confirmed Hepatitis A cases among the customers of the suspect restaurant.

Hepatitis A is a viral liver disease transmitted via the "fecal-oral" route. Quite simply, you must ingest (put into your mouth) food contaminated with the virus from someone infected with Hep A. In most cases the infected person failed to wash his or her hands after a bowel movement. In this modern age you'd think all food handlers would be diligent about washing their hands after using the bathroom. The rapid spread of Hepatitis A here is proof that it is not always the case.

After a three-year run of above average Hepatitis A cases in Idaho (1994-1996) the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare instituted the **No-Bare-Hand-Contact Policy**. The policy is now part of the Idaho Food Code (section 3-301.11 (B));

"Food employees may not contact exposed, ready-to-eat food with their bare hands and shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single-use gloves, or dispensing equipment."

I never knew for sure if the restaurant closed because of the negative publicity surrounding the outbreak, because of the many lawsuits, or some other reason. I do know it closed for good in 1997.

Foodborne illness is serious business with serious, sometimes fatal consequences. It is the responsibility of the owners, operators and all food service employees, in cooperation with the health department, to ensure the safe preparation and service of food. The **No-Bare-Hand-Contact Policy** helped reduce the incidence of Hep A in Central District. (see graph) **No-Bare-Hands** must be followed by everyone who works in your establishment without exception. Your business and the health and safety of your customers are depending on it.

(see back page for District 4 Reported Hepatitis A Cases)

