

**The Food Review**

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**Risk - Based Inspections**

**Consumer Advisory / Employee Health  
Demonstration of Knowledge**



The new Risk-Based Inspection is designed for the operator and the health inspector to focus on the critical food safety factors that most often cause foodborne illness. It is designed to promote discussion between the food establishment operator and the health inspector. Remember, we are in the business of food safety together. The health department's objective is to help the food establishment operator have a better understanding and awareness of where food safety can be compromised or out of control in the daily operation. We want you to know the correct

action to follow when food is found to be in a state that promotes bacterial growth or is contaminated.

There are three food safety risk factors that we are focusing on more than we have in the past because of their importance in preventing foodborne illness.

**Consumer Advisory, Employee Health and Demonstration of Knowledge.**

**Consumer Advisory, 3-306, Idaho Food Code**

A consumer advisory notification is required when serving a customer raw or undercooked food that is potentially hazardous. You have 3 options to be in compliance with this regulation. Any one of these methods of notification can be used.

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During the Spring quarter of 2005, several outbreaks of norovirus were associated with food establishments. As part of your response to customer complaints keep in mind that you can refer them to this website [www.reportfoodpoisoning.com](http://www.reportfoodpoisoning.com). We will receive the information we need to begin an investigation. Or, you can help yourself by getting as much information as possible and informing Central District Health Department of the situation (327-7499). The Idaho Food Code requires the Person In Charge (PIC) to notify CDHD of employee illnesses. (2-201.15)



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1. Include on your menu a statement similar to “Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions.” or “Eating thoroughly cooked potentially hazardous foods such as meats, poultry, fish, eggs, or shellfish will reduce your risk of foodborne illness”.

2. Post a consumer advisory at a highly visible location for your patrons to read.
3. Verbal notification at the time an order is taken if undercooked potentially hazardous food will be served. If your policy is to advise the consumers verbally, a written script of what the server will say to the consumer may be asked for during an inspection. Or the health inspector may ask you to do this to demonstrate that you are in compliance with this rule.

## Employee Health, 2-201, Idaho Food Code

Did you know that four foodborne illness outbreaks this year involved establishments that had ill employees handling food?

Food workers must know what diseases and symptoms of illness to report to the Person In Charge (PIC). Certain symptoms of illness can indicate an individual has a communicable disease and the appropriate restrictions or exclusion from food service work do apply.

Diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat with fever, and lesions containing pus on the hand, wrist or an exposed body part are to be reported to the Person In Charge.

If a food service worker is diagnosed with a communicable disease such as typhoid fever (*Salmonella Typhi*), Shigellosis (*shigella* spp.), Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* infection (*Escherichia coli* O157:H7), or Hepatitis A (Hepatitis A virus) the disease must be reported to the Person In Charge, and the health department. The Person In Charge must exclude the food service worker until the danger of transmission does not exist.

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*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.*

## Demonstration of Knowledge, 2-102, Idaho Food Code

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Knowledgeable staff that understand when food is safe and not safe is an effective way to reduce your chances of having a foodborne illness outbreak. That is why we are emphasizing food safety training during our inspections. Contact Beth Norberg R.E.H.S. at 327-8526 for information on food safety training opportunities that we provide. We provide basic training in food safety and manager certification courses. All food service workers must be adequately trained in food safety for the job or duties they are responsible to do. The person-in-charge is the person who needs to demonstrate to the health inspector that they understand food safety and foodborne illness prevention.

There are four ways to be in compliance with the requirement to demonstrate knowledge in food safety.

1. Compliance with the Idaho Food Code by not having any critical risk factor violations at the time of the inspection.
2. Being a certified food protection manager Person In Charge who has passed a food safety course that is part of an accredited program.
3. Responding correctly to the inspector's questions as they relate to the specific food operation. See Idaho Food Code section 2-102.11.
4. Completion of the Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Manual and exam or an equivalent course designed to meet the same training as the Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Manual.

For those of you who have seen the new Risk-Based Inspection form, please call your health inspector or Tom Schmalz at 327-7499 and express your comments. We would like to hear your thoughts.

### Sushi

#### Three important points to keep in mind:

- 1) Sushi is considered a ready-to-eat food even though it is often raw or under-cooked. Persons handling the sushi are required to do so with gloved hands following the No Bare Hand rule of the Food Code. (3-301.11)
- 2) A consumer advisory about the dangers of eating raw or undercooked food is also required. (3-603.11)
- 3) Salmon served raw or marinated must be made parasite-free by having been previously frozen for the proper time and temperature to kill parasites. The Person In Charge must record that time and temperature and keep those records for 90 days beyond the sale of service of that fish. (3-402.11)



### Ceviche

Ceviche is raw fish or shellfish marinated in citrus, usually lime juice. The juice's acid changes the protein in the fish much like cooking does. Thus the fish is often described as being "cooked" in lime juice.

This marinating does not eliminate the risk of bacteria and parasites as cooking with heat can. The Food Code requires that any fish to be eaten raw must first be frozen for 15 hours at 31 degrees below zero Fahrenheit to eliminate the risk from parasites that may be in the fish. The freezing does not kill any bacteria present.

The raw fish must be stored, thawed, and prepared to prevent more bacterial contamination. If you serve or eat raw fish, be aware of these dangers. (See article on Consumer Advisory)

### Cake Batter and Cookie Dough Ice Cream recall and precaution.

A recent nationwide recall of certain ice creams was the result of adding a packaged cake mix to ice cream. The cake mix required baking before use and was not intended by the manufacturer to be used as it was. Several cases of salmonella infection resulted. REMEMBER: recipe modification or development requires your HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) review.

## Are Your Numbers Down?

### Check These Factors (Hospitality News, 2002)

We're all quick to blame the economy when business starts to slip. But there are a few factors that should be checked right in your operation. If you're losing customers check for the following:

- Poor or dirty restrooms
- Dirty menus, silverware, tables, furniture, dishes
- Untrained employees
- Poor ventilation
- Overpriced products
- Poor marketing and advertising
- A poor reputation with suppliers, landlords, media
- Not keeping up with the trends
- Premises in poor repair
- Failing to meet service and food quality expectations of customers
- Not knowing your competition
- Not constantly surveying your customers, suppliers and employees for information you need
- Arrogant management
- Poor understanding of the value of soap and water and pest control
- Operating with short funds
- Failure to plan
- Not reading industry publications and keeping abreast of new trends and techniques
- Not attending association functions to further your education and to provide opportunities to network with your peers
- Not hiring the right people.



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**[Editor's Comment:** You should know that the suppliers and service persons are seeing the back of the house (kitchen) and they will spread by word-of-mouth what they see going on. Also, it might mean something if your employees do not eat or shop at your restaurant/store. Management should not ignore customer complaints. See next article.]

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### A Mistake Has Been Made – Now What?

Believe it or not, a mistake that gets caught is good for you! You've just found a problem that, when corrected, will make you better than your competition. Your first action requires a sincere "thank you." After that:

- Admit the mistake at once and take action to correct it.
- Accept the blame; don't shift it to someone else.
- Offset the bad with some kind of goodie. (A free dessert; a coupon for a free appetizer on a future visit.)
- Ask what else you can do to set things right.
- Your company's great reputation wasn't achieved by thumb twiddling. This is the time to shine in the eyes of your customer. You can come out heads above your competition by making things right immediately.
- Document the problem, the date, the person who found it and what corrective action was taken.
- Alert supervisors.

## Short Order Topics

### Who Are We???

The Office of Environmental Health section of CDHD has merged with the Office of Public Health Preparedness and we are now called **Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness (EHEP)** at CDHD.

### Are your mouse traps in working condition?

Fall is when mice (and flies and snakes, according to one caller) look for warm environments to spend the winter. They find easy entry into food establishments through doors propped open while garbage is taken out or supplies are brought in. Having traps properly positioned on either side of the doorway is as important as having all entry points closed and tight fitting. Traps should be placed against the wall. If you are using box traps the opening into the box should be parallel to the wall, not against the wall. Snap traps should have the bait against the wall. Glue boards should be along the wall and protected from foot traffic.



### Rodents can spread disease.

Recently Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus (LCMV) caused the illnesses and death of three of the four people who were organ transplant recipients from the same donor. LCMV is a rodent-borne arenavirus endemic in house mouse (*Mus musculus*) populations worldwide. Pet rodents (e.g., hamsters and guinea pigs) can become infected with LCMV after contact with wild rodents at a breeding facility, pet store, or home. The prevalence of LCMV in pet rodents is not known. Although other animals could possibly become infected with the virus, documented infections in humans have occurred only after exposure to infected mice, guinea pigs, and hamsters.

### Preventing Foodborne Illness In Customers.

To keep your food safe for your customers, nothing is more effective than good handwashing at appropriate times and excluding ill employees from handling food.

### Preparing for a Loss of Water (or Electricity)

Downtown Boise businesses have experienced loss of water supply when a water main has burst. How do they cope without water? The Idaho Food Code says it is the responsibility of the permit holder to immediately discontinue operations and to notify the Health Department if there is an imminent health hazard. (8-304.11(E)) An extended interruption of electrical or water service is considered an imminent health hazard. (8-404.11(A))

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### **Coping without electricity.**

Electrical outages can literally plunge the operation into the dark. Refrigeration, cooking equipment, cash registers, computers, lights will cease operation and usually cause the business to close. Do you have a backup plan? Keep refrigerators and freezers closed. Food above 41°F for 4 hours is considered adulterated and must be discarded. Dry ice can be used to maintain temperature. Be cautious, as dry ice is carbon dioxide and can create a hazard in a closed walk-in by replacing the oxygen. It also can freeze skin instantly. Protect your hands. Placing the dry ice above foods is generally more efficient as the cold air drops down over the food. Large quantities of food may be moved to another working facility or rented refrigerated truck.

### **Working without water.**

You cannot count on using bottled water. If no dishwashing is available, disposable plates and utensils must be used. Effective handwashing is difficult. Sanitizing wipes and alcohol-based gels provide some cleansing but do not replace running water and soap. Also toilets don't flush without water.

How would you cope if you were in a post-disaster situation? Start planning. Then test the plan. Remember to begin that plan with your family.

References: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/foodwater.asp>  
[http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0\\_239\\_00.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_239_00.html)