

**Environmental
Health**

Central District Health Department

The Food Review

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**Driving The Porcelain Bus and Disease Reporting?
(Food Code 2-2 Employee Health) by Bob Jue, REHS, Senior**

The Idaho Food Code requires that food establishment employees report to the Person In Charge (PIC) and the PIC report to the Health District, certain diseases: Salmonella typhi, Shigella, toxin producing E.coli, Hepatitis A. In addition the following symptoms must be reported: jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), diarrhea, fever, vomiting, sore throat with fever, or any lesion or open wound that is draining or contains pus.



In 2005, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) added norovirus to their Food Code disease list. This year the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, Office of Epidemiology and Food Protection added norovirus to the list that health care providers must report.

We encourage all food establishment operators to report to the Health District any employees having norovirus or living in households with others having norovirus. This allows us to more rapidly recognize and reduce the spread of foodborne illness associated with this infection. Norovirus is considered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be the most common cause of foodborne outbreaks nationwide.

What Are Noroviruses?



An electron micrograph of the Norovirus, with 27-32nm-sized viral particles. Norwalk viruses (and related caliciviruses) are important causes of nonbacterial gastroenteritis in the United States. An estimated 181,000 cases of this type of food poisoning occur annually. Photo courtesy of CDC.

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause the “stomach flu,” or gastroenteritis (GAS-tro-en-ter-i-tis), in people. The term norovirus was recently approved as the official name for this group of viruses.

Viruses are very different from bacteria and parasites, some of which can cause illnesses similar to norvirus infection. Viruses are much smaller, are not affected by treatment with antibiotics, and cannot grow outside of a person’s body.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of norovirus illness usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping. Sometimes people additionally have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness. The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick. The illness is usually brief, with symptoms lasting only about one or two days. In general, children experience more vomiting than adults.

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What is the name for this illness?

Illness caused by norovirus infection has several names, including:

- Stomach Flu - this “stomach flu” is **not** related to the flu (or influenza) which is a respiratory illness caused by influenza virus.
- Viral gastroenteritis – the most common name for illness caused by norovirus. Gastroenteritis refers to an inflammation of the stomach and intestines.
- Acute gastroenteritis
- Non-bacterial gastroenteritis
- Food poisoning (although there are other causes of food poisoning)

Are noroviruses contagious?

YES! Noroviruses are highly contagious and can spread easily from person to person. Both stool and vomit are infectious. Particular care should be taken with young children in diapers who may have diarrhea.

How long are people contagious?

People infected with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to at least three days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for as long as two weeks after recovery. Therefore, it is particularly important for people to use good handwashing and other hygienic practices after they have recently recovered from norovirus illness.

Restrictions:

During a norovirus outbreak, the health department requires ill employees to not work until 48 hours after symptoms stop.

More information can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus-foodhandlers.htm>

If You Knew Sushi, Like I Know Sushi

by Bob Mayer, REHS
CDHD Food Safety Management Consultant

The New Idaho Food Code (in effect since April 2005) requires some procedures to be followed for the safe serving of raw fish in Sushi-type operations. These new parameters are based upon the Idaho Legislature adopting the requirements of the federal Food And Drug Administration (FDA) Model Code (a guidance document) for local regulatory agencies for safe food handling.

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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.

CDHD Classes Help Reduce Food Safety Problems

by Beth Norberg, REHS

Think back and try to remember when you or your employees were last trained in food safety practices. One comment I often hear from managers and employees is that they “just took a class...uh...about a month or two ago.” However, upon further review, I find that “just a month ago” was actually five or more years ago! Time flies in this industry, and whether you are a seasoned veteran, or still pretty green, one thing is certain-food safety and sanitation is ever-changing and requires constant renewal of knowledge. How much do you really know about time and temperature abuse, hygiene and cross-contamination?



Your inspector has probably told you there is training and certification available through Central District Health Department-and you may have told yourself (and your inspector) that you really want to get the latest food safety information. So what are you waiting for? Now is the time to refresh knowledge of food safety.

In the past year, we have trained and certified over 650 food service managers and employees. However, with almost 2,200 food establishments in Ada, Valley, Boise and Elmore counties, there are still a lot of you out there that could benefit from some kind of training.

Before you decide what you want to do, let me answer some common questions that managers and operators ask about food safety training and certification.

1. Do I have to be certified?

- a. **No.** The Idaho Food code gives you four options for **Demonstration of Knowledge**. They are:
 - i. Zero Critical Risk Factor Violations at time of inspection.
 - ii. Passing a certification course approved through the state of Idaho.
 - iii. Completing the Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Manual and exam.
 - iv. Correctly answering questions about food safety as it applies to your operation.

Most managers and operators prefer certification as a helpful educational tool.

2. What is the difference between training and certification?

- a. **Training** is usually specific to employees and **certification** applies mostly to managers and operators. To be certified means that the course has been approved by the State of Idaho, but training is acceptable in any form as long as the instructor is knowledgeable and the materials used for the training are accurate and current. One of the best situations is for the manager to attend the certification course and then go back and train the employees on what they learned.

3. What classes does Central District Health Department offer?

a. Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Course

The Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation course is a four-hour class that is approved by the state of Idaho as a food safety certification course. Certification is valid for five years and can be used anywhere in Idaho. The course is designed for food service managers, but is open to all food employees interested in a certification. Cost: \$30.00 per student. Classes can be offered onsite with 10 or more students.

b. ServSafe® Manager Certification Course

ServSafe® is an eight-hour course approved by the state of Idaho as a food safety certification course. This is also national certification through the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. The course is designed for food service managers, however it is also open to food service employees. Certification is valid for 5 years and can be used

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anywhere in the United States. Cost: \$85.00 per student and this includes lunch. Classes can be offered onsite with 10 or more students. Please contact instructor for more information.

c. Basic Food Safety

The Basic Food Safety course is usually a two-hour training class, but can be adjusted to fit the needs of a specific establishment. If you have 10 or more employees, onsite training is available. Topics covered are time and temperature control, hygiene, cooking, cross-contamination and food source. Cost: \$15.00 per student. This course is for **training** purposes only and does not provide certification.

4. Is Central District Health Department the only place to take classes?

- a. **No.** There are many people and organizations in the area that offer training and certification. Ensure that the certification has been approved by the State of Idaho and that the trainer is knowledgeable in current food safety information.

Now that you have the information you need, it is time to act! Where you get the information is less important than ensuring it is correct, current and applicable. Remember the cost of foodborne illness is a lot more expensive and time consuming than actively practicing food safety through proper training, certification and regular self-inspections. Good luck, and remember your responsibility to the public is to provide the safest food possible. The best way to do that is through reliable equipment and a well-trained staff.

For information call 327-7499 or go online to the CDHD website at www.cdhd.idaho.gov.

Date Mark is Use By Date

by Deb Carney, REHS

Most everyone in food service is familiar with first-in, first-out (FIFO) date marking. However, there is a new twist to FIFO. The **Idaho Food Code** now requires a “use by” (UB) date on potentially hazardous (PH) ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. These PH ready-to-eat foods include on-premise prepared foods, such as PH dressing, salads, sandwich spreads; and commercially processed food like luncheon meats, pizza meats, salads and dressings.

The use by (UB) date can be a maximum of seven days when the foods are held at 41° F or below whereas a four-day UB date is required when held between 45° and 41° F. If all food is used within 24 hours, then no UB date is required.

Day one of the UB date starts on the day of preparation on-premise or the day the original commercial container is opened. These UB dates cannot exceed the manufacturer’s use by date.

There is an exemption in the 2005 FDA Food Code that exempts deli salads (ham, chicken, egg, seafood, pasta, potato, etc.) prepared and packaged in a food processing plant. Scientific evidence shows they contain sufficient acid and preservatives to prevent the growth of Listeria monocytogenes.

In addition, the 2005 Food Code exempts cultured dairy products and certain types of hard and semi-soft cheeses because as processed, these products contain organic acids, preservatives, competing microorganisms, pH, water activity, or salt concentration that control the growth of Listeria monocytogenes.



See Idaho Food Code 3-501.17 for more details.

For sushi the following rules now apply:

1.) Freezing of fish for parasite (nematode, i.e., worms) destruction. (*Idaho Food Code 3-402.11(B) & 12(A & B) pp.56 & 57*). “(A) Except as specified in (B) of this section, before service or sale in ready-to eat-form, raw, raw-marinated, partially-cooked or marinated-partially cooked FISH other than molluscan shell-fish shall be: frozen and stored at -4 degrees F or below for 168 hours (7 days) in a freezer - OR - frozen and stored at -31 degrees F for 15 hours.”

2.) Records, Creation and Retention. Except as specified in 3-402.11 & 12(B) of these sections, the above categories of fish if served in ready-to-eat form, the **PERSON IN CHARGE** shall record the freezing temperature and time to which the FISH are subjected and shall retain these records at the food establishment for 90 calendar days beyond the time the fish is served or sold. The operator may access the Health Department Temperature Log sheet from our web site: www.cdhd.idaho.gov, stop by the Environmental Health office, request that a form be mailed to them - OR - design their own form that meets the time/temperature requirements.

3.) If the fish are frozen and provided by a supplier. A written agreement, letter or statement from the supplier stipulating that the FISH supplied are frozen to the required time/temperature necessary, must be kept on-site for the 90-day period.

These are the only options for the service and sale of raw or undercooked FISH. The reason for these stringent rules is that if worms get into the human body they can cause numerous insidious, pervasive, and invasive problems as they burrow into internal tissue and organs. It may become necessary to attempt to remove the worms by surgery. Overall worst-case results may cause permanent damage or even death.

4.) Consumer Advisory. *Idaho Food Code 3-603.11 (01. & 02.) pp.68 & 69* requires a consumer advisory (either verbal or written) telling the customers of the health risks associated with eating raw or undercooked foods.

5.) Preventing Contamination by Employees. *Idaho Food Code 3-301.11 p. 45.* details the prevention requirements for contamination from hands. Except when washing fruits and vegetables, FOOD EMPLOYEES may not contact exposed READY-TO-EAT FOOD with their bare hands - and - shall use suitable utensils such as deli tissue, spatulas, spoons, tongs, SINGLE-USE GLOVES, or dispensing equipment. This means when handling sushi ingredients, GLOVES MUST BE WORN! The most important reason for the no-bare-hand-contact of ready-to-eat food rule (including handling sushi ingredients) is for preventing noroviruses from being transferred via the fecal-oral route from a person's hands to the food. It's important to remember that unlike bacteria which grow in the food, viruses do not grow, but merely get placed on the food (sort of like fingerprints!) and are then passed on to the consumer.

6.) Sushi rice held in the danger zone (41 - 135 degrees F). If vinegar is mixed into the rice prior to holding and service to make sushi rolls, the rice may be held in the danger zone during these times. However, it is recommended that the hold/service time is no longer than 4 hours. The reason for this allowance is that the high acidic content of vinegar (provided it is at least 4.6 on the acid/base scale, or less) retards or prevents the growth of bacteria.

If the rice mixed with vinegar does not have a pH of less than 4.6, then the product is to be kept no longer than four hours without refrigeration or proper hot holding. Written procedures for this situation must be kept in the food establishment and available for review by the health department.



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Food Inspection Area Changes

In Ada County only, the Registered Environmental Health Specialist who inspects your food establishment changed effective August 1, 2006 when the CDHD staff rotated inspection areas. The staff and the zip codes they will cover for inspecting food establishments are as follows:

Deb Carney :	83704, 83705,
Bud Fulleton:	83706, 83709, 83712,
Chad Waters:	83702, 83703, 83716
Frank Isenberg:	83616, 83642, 83646, 83725
Beth Norberg:	83669, 83713
Bob Mayer:	83714
Bob Jue:	83634

We all are looking forward to meeting new people and renewing old acquaintances.

SCAM ALERT - Hand Washing Posters

The FDA has alerted us that several states, including Idaho have reported that food establishments have received a letter from the "Food Service Compliance Center." The letter correctly cites sections of Idaho and FDA Food Codes that do require hand washing signs or posters and correct hand washing procedures. However, in Idaho Food Code there is no section 8-811.10. The Code does not specify the wording on the sign nor does it require that you purchase a sign from this company.

To see the Food Code go to: www.foodsafety.idaho.gov . You may contact the Central District Health Department food staff (see page 2 of this newsletter) or contact the Idaho Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Unit 334-2424, or Better Business Bureau at 342-4649.