



COWLITZ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Volume 3

THE LOADED TABLE

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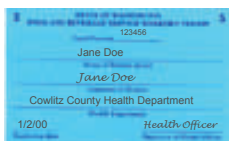
360-414-5599

Remember Those Food Worker Cards

Here is a reminder to check those food worker cards.

- Are they current?
- Any new employees?
- About to hire new employees?

All Employees must have a current Washington State Food Worker Card. New employees are required to have them the first day they start.



If the employer provides food safety training and documents the training, a new employee may have 14 days to obtain a health card from start date.

For additional information review article in Volume 1 Issue 2 of The Loaded Table Newsletter. Back issues are available online.

Customer Survey

We appreciate your input and comments. We would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete and return the enclosed customer survey. Please return it however is most convenient for you by mail, fax 360-425-7531 or email Melissa at Hiltsm@co.cowlitz.wa.us.

Food Advisory Committee



We are recruiting to fill vacancies so please consider serving on the Food Advisory Committee. It is an opportunity for input into a variety of programmatic concerns including fees, enforcement procedures, food safety education for industry and the public to name a few.



The committee is an advisory committee to the Board of Health. Its mission /goal is to promote and protect the health, safety, and well being of the public and prevent the spread of disease by food.

The committee is scheduled to meet quarterly for one hour at the Health Department.

Please contact Vickie Musgrove at the Commissioners office (360-577-3020) for information on how to apply or the application can be found at <http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/commissioners/Applications/Application.pdf>

Planning for Emergencies



Winter storms present challenges to everyone. Recent storms are fresh in our minds and can present challenges including power outages, water shortage and/or boil water advisories.

Preparation can make the experience easier, less stressful and provide the most safety to your customers. This office recommends developing an emergency action plan manual for your facility. Electronic documents are good but during power outages having hard copies as well make sense.

Some things to include might be

1. A list of names and phone numbers of necessary contacts such as Health Department, water/sewer utility, PUD, and supplier numbers, and any others that might apply to your facility or operation
2. Please find attached a couple of useful documents that might help get you started in developing an emergency manual:
 - Washington Department of Health Fact Sheet: Power Outages,
 - Washington Department of Health Fact Sheet: Emergency Water Supply Guidelines for Food Service Establishments, and
 - FDA's information sheet for Restaurants and Grocers Reopening After Hurricanes and Flooding.

In previous newsletter articles Imminent Health Hazards and your responsibilities in those situations have been provided. Your response to those hazards (such as lack of hot water and sewage backups) would also be valuable to have identified and handy.

The more you plan now the less you will have to do when circumstances require action.



Signs, Signs, Signs

The following signage is available at no cost for any Cowlitz County food establishment. Ask your inspector, visit our web page, or ask at the office.

Cool it Quickly

Cooling hot foods rapidly is important to keep bacteria that can cause illness from growing in food.

Keep it COLD

The food in this unit must be kept at or below

Keep it Healthy

Germs are easy to spread. Sick food workers may not work with food or food-contact surfaces.

Keep it HOT

The food in this unit must be kept at or above

Keep Them Clean

Employees must wash their hands:

Keep it Untouched

Bare hands may have germs that can spread to food. Ready-to-eat foods may not be handled with bare hands.

Keep it Hot or Cold

Bacteria may grow in potentially hazardous foods. Keep potentially hazardous foods out of the Danger Zone (41°F - 140°F) for safety.

Keep it Separate

Cross contamination is the spread of bacteria from raw meat to other foods.

Keep Your Hands Off My Food!

Be a Germ-Buster... WASH YOUR HANDS!

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF's) - What Are They?

Several people have asked "What are potentially hazardous foods?" In the Food Code Section 1-201.10(65):



"Potentially Hazardous Foods" means a food that is natural or synthetic and that requires temperature control because it is in a form capable of supporting:

- The rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms;
- The growth and toxic production of *Clostridium botulinum*; or
- In the raw shell eggs, the growth of *Salmonella Enteritidis*

"Potentially Hazardous Foods" includes an animal food (a food of animal origin) that is raw or heat treated; a food of plant origin that is heat treated or consists of raw seed sprouts; cut melons; fresh herb-in-oil mixtures and garlic-in-oil mixtures unless modified in a way that results in mixtures that do not support growth as specified under Subparagraph (a) of this definition.

For Potentially Hazardous Foods the Following Temperatures Apply:

- Keep cold PHFs Cold41°F or below
- Keep hot PHFs Hot 140°F or above
- Reheat PHFs to 165°F in 2 hour or less
- Know your cooking temperatures
 - Poultry, stuffed foods, casseroles..... 165°F or above (for 15 seconds)
 - Hamburger, sausage..... 155°F or above (for 15 seconds)
 - Eggs and Fish, Beef, Pork..... 145°F or above (unless otherwise specified to be (for 15 seconds) cooked to a higher temperature such as ground beef)
 - Vegetables for hot holding..... 140°F or above



Cool PHFs in walk-ins at 2" depth; top shelf; uncovered in refrigerators at 41° F or below.



Thaw PHFs in properly working refrigerators or under cool running water.

Deadlines Approaching

When the new food code became effective May of 2005 a new cold holding temperature also became effective. The cold holding temperature requirement was lowered from 45°F to 41°F.

There was recognition that some existing equipment may not be constructed to meet the 41° temperature. So time was allowed for existing facilities to replace existing equipment which could meet the previous 45° F but which were not capable of holding foods at 41°.

May 2010 is the deadline for all equipment to meet the 41° temperature.



Any equipment that is not capable of maintaining a temperature of 41°F or less must be replaced with NSF approved equipment that is able to maintain food at 41°F or less. If you have equipment that is unable to maintain this new temperature you have until May 2010 to have it replaced. If you have any questions/ concerns about your equipment; ask your inspector.

