

News Time 2010



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Foodborne Illness and Catering

Contact Us:

Champaign County
Public Health Department

201 W. Kenyon Road
Champaign, IL 61820

Phone: 217.363.3269
Emergency: 217.531.3386
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Hours:
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Monday – Friday

Wash Your Hands!

Thorough hand washing is the most effective way to stop the spread of illness.



**Spread the word,
not the germs!**

The health permit for your fixed food service establishment (on-site) often is not valid for off-site food service. Please call our office at (217) 363-3269 to obtain proper permits for off-site catering and other food events.

Although most outbreaks in Illinois (1997-2007) are associated with food prepared in restaurants (62%), the next most frequent site is caterers (8%). Catering and other off-site food service activities have many of the same food safety risks as fixed site food services, however, they may have additional risks. To provide safe food, there are some simple concepts that you should be aware of in order to help protect your customers and business from foodborne illness. For example, the food is being transported to various locations. At these locations, is water provided for proper hand washing and dishwashing? Is electricity available to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold? Do you have the proper equipment to protect food from contamination and maintain temperatures? Are you trying to do too much, e.g., prepare too many kinds of food, use complex food operations or serve more persons than your catering equipment can support?

For both on-site and off-site events, other risks include:

1) Improper temperatures – improper cooking, hot and cold holding, 2) Inadequate hand washing – both lack of hand washing supplies and poor personal hygiene, 3) Unapproved food sources, such as food prepared at home, and 4) Lack of sanitizer and metal-stem thermometers

Simple, easy steps can help eliminate many of these risks before they happen. For example, if you are going to a site that is lacking water, take a water supply. Provide an adequate hand washing station supplied with soap and sanitary towels. Simply providing it may not be enough to ensure that employee hands are getting washed. You must train your staff to use the hand wash station and monitor what they do!

Another easy step to avoid foodborne illness is to take temperatures. Use the thermometer to monitor the cooking and holding temperatures of food. Verify that employees are cooking foods to at least the minimum cooking temperatures and times. Remember, color is not an indicator of food safety. If you find the food has gone over 41° F. or has fallen



below 135° F. and has been out for more than two hours, throw it away.

Finally, prepare the foods in the kitchen of your establishment as much as possible, then serve at the event site. Catering and off-site service is not intended to be a full-service restaurant in someone's backyard. There is absolutely no reason why your staff should be chopping lettuce, fruits, stuffing mushrooms, making hamburger patties or doing other preparation of any food under an oak tree or tent. Eliminating the need to handle the food extensively at the site does help to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Off-site food service can be difficult. However, with some planning and attention to detail, you will be able to reduce the risk of foodborne illness associated with your business.

Food Service Security System

Many of you may have heard about the poisoning case involving President Victor Yushchenko of Ukraine a few years ago. It is alleged that the opponents of Mr. Yuschenko had contaminated his food with Dioxin, hoping to end his presidential campaign. The incident was not fatal but left Mr. Yuschenko disfigured and in pain. Investigators and those familiar with the case reported that Dioxin levels as much as 1,000 times the safe limit could easily be added to a bowl of soup.

During the same month (Dec. 2004), Mr. Tommy G. Thompson, the outgoing Secretary of Health and Human Services, publicly expressed his concerns regarding the security of the food industry.

For the most part, our country has not had our food supply intentionally tampered with. However, in the post-9/11 world and globalization of food markets, the entire food industry faces new challenges. Chief among these challenges is recognizing the need for a Food Service Security System, a defensive system that allows operators in all levels of the food industry to main-

tain vigilance in protecting their consumers. Operators must be able to trace the origin of all food products in their facilities and the chain of operations for each product to the last procedure. In addition, all those involved in every level of food production or service must be trained on the security aspects and held accountable for communicating any violations in the security chain. Whether this task is monitoring a self-service buffet line at a busy event, working in a kitchen prep area, or hiring unscreened staff for food production, every aspect of food operations should be examined for potential vulnerability.

The design of this system must match the needs of each operation. A school cafeteria serving children, a resort hosting major functions, a produce farm, a water bottling or meat processing plant each may have different processing steps, yet they face similar security concerns. Security hazards and critical controls involving your operation can be addressed. Once this system is in place, monitoring and auditing the integrity of the system should be of the highest priority.

Government, trade publications, your suppliers and your professional associations are good resources to assist you with self-education on the subject and to help you with designing your food service security system.

A How do you ASSURE that the supplies and ingredients you use are from safe and secure sources?

L How do you LOOK after the security of the products and ingredients in your facility?

E What do you know about your EMPLOYEES and people coming in and out of your facility?

R Could you provide REPORTS about the security of your products while under your control?

T What do you do and who do you notify if you have a THREAT or issue at your facility, including suspicious behavior?

For more information about the ALERT initiative, see the FDA's website at:

<http://www.fda.gov/food/fooddefense/training/alert/default.htm>

Flu Shots

Make it your business to fight the flu!



The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

CCPHD is offering flu shots during our regular business hours. For more information, visit our website at:

<http://www.c-uphd.org/flu-information.html>

What Do You Do?

- When an employee reports to work or calls in with the symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, sore throat with fever, skin lesions with pus, or an infected wound that is open and draining, what is your response? (Recently, CCPHD has been investigating a number of outbreaks that could have been prevented simply by keeping ill employees out of establishments). What do you do?

If you have any questions, please contact your inspector at (217) 363-3269.

Revenue Sources

Revenue Sources for County Food Protection Program
Fiscal Year Budget 2011 Total = \$172,057

