



# Food (Safety) for Thought

Summer 2009

## Health Inspection Do's & Don'ts

In the foodservice industry, effective food safety and sanitation programs are an essential element of every successful operation. The relationship you build with your local health inspector can be of great benefit to your food safety and sanitation programs and thus help you please your customers. Spending a little quality time and effort to improve communication with your health inspector can be very beneficial to your business and can help eliminate costly misunderstandings. The primary role of a health inspection is to ensure the protection of the dining public, which in turn helps the restaurant operator get the customer's seal of approval.

The ultimate goal of a health inspection is to protect the public and prevent people from becoming ill. Neither the Health Department nor the restaurant ever wants a customer to become sick. It's not good for the restaurant or the Health Department. Therefore, the goal of health inspections is NOT to get somebody into trouble, but to prevent illness.

Since this is clearly a common goal shared by both entities, the next step is to assure effective communications and build a strong relationship in order to make that goal a reality together. The process begins before the inspection with preventative measures such as safe, clean practices in the operation day in and day out. It also involves developing avenues of clear communication and a mutually respectful relationship with the people who work for the Health Department.

### Be polite

There is a reason why "first impressions are lasting impressions" is a popular expression. It is very important that you treat your health inspector with respect from the very beginning. In return, you will be treated with respect. Those first few minutes help to set the tone for the next hour and for many inspections to come. For this reason, it is important to greet your inspector professionally and give him/her respect, even if you are busy. You should treat the inspector as you would any other guest in your establishment.

When the inspector arrives, greet him or her pleasantly and ask to see his or her credentials. It is important that you establish the basis for the inspection and the authenticity of the inspector from the very beginning. Be professional, cooperative, friendly and open. You should receive the same treatment from your inspector in return. Don't offer any favors or food, and don't be argumentative or defensive.

If there's a problem, try to work it out with the inspector in a

professional manner and don't take the inspector's observations or violations personally. If you can't work it out during the inspection or during the post inspection discussion, remember you can always call the inspector's supervisor and ask for clarification later.

### Accompany your health inspector

After you greet your health inspector; show him/her that you take a great interest in providing your customers with safe and high quality food by accompanying him/her during the inspection.

It is nice when the person in charge is able to go around with the inspector during an inspection. If not the manager or the assistant manager, then at least one of the staff should accompany the inspector. Because inspectors usually show up unannounced, it is perfectly understandable if restaurant operators are too busy to accompany us. Accompanying the inspector during the inspection shows the inspector that you're interested in the process and in correcting any problems immediately.

Observing the inspection allows you to better understand the basis for the recommendations that are being made. Having violations physically pointed out gives you a better understanding of the problem because the inspector is able to show why something is a violation. It also allows you to answer any questions your inspector may have when he or she comes across a particular scenario. As you walk around your facility with your inspector, there are several things that you can do to demonstrate that you take public health seriously. To begin with, bring a note pad and write down any observations that your health inspector makes.

This allows you to have your own record of the recommendations for later reference. It also shows your inspector that you are serious about implementing the necessary changes over the long term and not just while the inspector is there.

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# Congratulations to the Following ServSafe Certified Managers!

The following people have completed the 16 hour ServSafe Manager Certification program through the Michigan State University Extension program and have passed the accompanying exam.

Congratulations!!

## **Alpha Koney Island**

- Mrwan Al-Rabie

## **Amanda's Kitchen**

- Amanda Fisher

## **Ann Arbor Golf and Outing Club**

- Jason Yonkin
- Jacqueline Walter

## **Bella Italia**

- Jim Millan

## **Briarwood Dollar Movies**

- Jennifer Eschelbach

## **Broken Egg**

- Carol Hopp

## **BTB Burrito**

- Aaron Russell

## **Café Verde**

- Tom Delooze

## **Chelsea Comfort Inn**

- Matt Lanth

## **China Star**

- Xiu Min Lin

## **Chuckie Boy's Roasted Corn**

- Chuck Majeske

## **City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation**

- Jason Nealis
- Cheryl Saan

## **Classic Cup Cafe**

- Roxanne Sprunk

## **Dave Frost**

## **Drowsy Parrot**

- Scott Buster

## **Emanuel United Church of Christ**

- Jay Jacobs

## **Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

- Patty Gardner

## **Espresso Royale Cafe**

- Peter Ludt

## **Family Fried Chicken**

- Moon Yu

## **Fortune Tommy's Ice Cream Shoppe**

- Tom Mathes

## **Four Points Sheraton**

- Jim Koen

## **Haifa Falafel**

- Ali Usman

## **Hazel's Home Cookin'**

- Denise Livingston

## **Hershey's Ice Cream & Blue Spoon Grill**

- Lisa Shir-Shekar

## **Hungry Howie's**

- Alex Rule

## **James L. Crawford Lodge**

- Raymond Parks

## **Jungle Java Ann Arbor**

- Barb Cole

## **Kay's Wings or Things**

- Marcus Allen
- Katryna DeGuzman

## **Lake Forest Golf Club**

- Michael Fouty

## **Lotus/Marnee Thai**

- William Berry II

## **Lucas Coney Island**

- Jan Taylor

## **Marnee Thai**

- Kurt Burke

## **Megha International Co.**

- Mitaliben Verndhi

## **Melody S. Overkleef**

## **Michigan Ability Partners**

- Jehan Haward

## **Mickey's Pizza**

- Justin Starfield

## **Milan Free Methodist Church**

- Christine Okler

## **Mis Saigon**

- Thury Le

## **Mitch's at Hidden Harbor**

- Michelle Morris

## **Old Town**

- Stephen Pawlicki

## **Oriental Express**

- Zhong Zhou

## **People's Food Co-op**

- Kristen Gelino

## **Prickly Pear Cafe**

- Brian Johnson

## **Putterz**

- Billl Chrysan

## **Rod's Diner**

- Jiweon Park

## **San Fu Oriental**

- Linda Wang

## **Sbarro**

- Bianca Marion

## **Seitz's Tavern**

- Randall Seitz

## **Sidetrack Bar & Grill**

- Jessica Jane French

## **St. Andrew Catholic Church**

- Nancy Carter

## **St. Joseph Catholic Church**

- Grace Bommarito

## **St. Thomas the Apostle Church**

- Judi Booms

## **Stucchi's Ice Cream**

- Kevin Philps

## **Subway**

- Amnetbil Patel

## **Subway (Chelsea)**

- Ali Beydoun

## **The Book Nook Beanery**

- Sharon Levier

## **Theo's Bar & Grille**

- George Tangelakis

## **Travis Pointe Country Club**

- Keith MacBride

## **Tuptim Thai Cuisine**

- Kris Vilassakoanong

## **Washtenaw Head Start**

- Ann Etchison

## **Wendy's**

- Matthew Bailey
- Cari Brososky
- Kim Choucair
- Chris Dotson
- Tara Doyle
- David Esterline
- Amanda Frelin
- Brenda M. Griessel
- Stephanie Lane
- Troy McCracken
- Nichole Mobley
- Jolene Markiewicz
- Tina Rajabi
- Cindy Seleska
- Justin Sondershafer
- Don Sunkle Jr.
- Dominique Wagner
- Veronica White

## Health Inspection Do's & Don'ts, Continued

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If you don't understand something that your inspector says, or why something is a violation, question the inspector immediately. Open communication is the best way for you to understand the regulations and what you can do to fully comply with them. It also is a good way to become educated and show him/her that you want to improve your knowledge of food safety and regulations.

### Know the rules

Even though at times the rules seem to change ever so quickly, and the interpretation of the individual health inspector may be a little different than the previous one, there are some effective means to ensure a clean restaurant, which will lead to a satisfactory inspection. First, it is very important to know what the health inspector is looking for when conducting an inspection. To gain a better understanding of what is expected, get a copy of the regulations from your local health agency and make an effort to learn the requirements. Also, utilize the knowledge of your health inspector and ask questions where you may be uncertain on how they may interpret the regulation. Open communication and training will better prepare you for inspection day and help you to better understand how the inspector is evaluating your restaurant.

### Correct mistakes

One way an inspector gets the impression

that he or she is dealing with an irresponsible operator is when the inspector sees that no efforts have been made to correct code violations, even after repeated violations are observed. Do not leave this impression with an inspector. As soon as he or she states a violation, do what you can to correct it or start corrective actions immediately.

For example, if a health inspector cites that the three compartment sink's sanitizing solution does not meet the minimum concentration requirement, don't just nod your head in agreement and write it down. Instead, have someone immediately drain the sink and prepare the sanitizing solution at a proper concentration in order to sanitize equipment properly and correct the observation. This shows your inspector that you are conscientious about the recommendations he/she gives and that you want to correct them as soon as possible.

### Open up communication

After your health inspector has completed his written report, take the time to sit down with him or her to go over what was observed during the visit. Open communication is extremely important, so do not be afraid to ask questions. Your professional demeanor will facilitate that communication. This is a perfect time to impress on your health inspector that food safety is a top priority for your operation. This is the opportunity to learn from each other to meet our shared objective of protecting the public.

### Health Inspection Do's & Don'ts

#### Do

- \* Be polite and professional
- \* Ask questions
- \* Provide employee training
- \* Correct violations promptly
- \* Accompany your health inspector
- \* Understand key food safety issues
- \* Make effort to learn requirements
- \* Utilize the food safety knowledge of your inspector
- \* Demonstrate knowledge

#### Don't

- \* Offer favors or food
- \* Be argumentative
- \* Be defensive
- \* Take the inspection personally



Content from this article was originally printed in Hospitality News, August 2001

## Update on Manager Certification

June 30, 2009 was the deadline for all food service establishments to train a manager in a certified food safety course. The Michigan Department of Agriculture has developed rules to enforce this regulation, and local health departments anticipate these enforcement guidelines to be finalized this fall.

Washtenaw County has been collecting information on certified managers for nearly 2 years, and will be sending a letter directly to those restaurants that do not have a certified manager listed in our database.

According to our records, there are still a number of establishments that will

need to have a staff member complete a course and pass an exam to comply with this requirement. Over the past several months, classes have been filling up quickly, sometimes 1-2 months in advance. See page 4 of this newsletter for upcoming ServSafe Courses in Washtenaw County. If you need to sign up for this course, please do so early.

**A list of restaurants that do not have a certified manager in our database as of August 14, 2009 has been compiled and was sent electronically with this newsletter.** If your restaurant is on this list, we ask that you assist us by sending your certified manager information.

**Send a fax to 734-222-3930 and include:**

- the name & address of the restaurant
- a copy of the certified manager certificate.

Alternatively, mail the above information to:

**Washtenaw County  
Environmental Health  
Food Service Program  
705 N. Zeeb Road  
PO Box 8645  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645**

## Washtenaw County Environmental Health

705 N. Zeeb Road  
PO Box 8645  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

Phone: (734) 222-3800  
Fax: (734) 222-3930  
Email: [schweigk@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:schweigk@ewashtenaw.org)

Visit us on the web at:  
<http://foodsafety.ewashtenaw.org>



**World Class Service**

*Washtenaw County Environmental Health's mission is to enhance the safety of food, water, air and surroundings through education, regulation and advocacy in partnership with a knowledgeable industry and informed public. We provide regulatory oversight of food service establishments in accordance with state and federal mandates, investigate consumer complaints related to food service establishments, including complaints of foodborne illness, and continually strive to increase availability of food safety information to both the industry and public.*

If you have a suggestion for a topic in a future edition of this newsletter, please [email us](#) and let us know!

This email list was generated from the email listed on your food service license. You can subscribe or unsubscribe to these messages by visiting our [Food Safety Updates website](#).

## ServSafe Certification

Food safety training is a commitment, a mindset and a smart business practice for every restaurant and food service operation. ServSafe is a training program that can provide resources to help keep food safety an essential ingredient in every meal.



This 16-hour certification program provides food managers with thorough training in all areas of food safety relevant to a food service establishment. Upon successful completion of an exam, managers will receive a certificate verifying that they are a certified ServSafe Food Protection Manager.

ServSafe was developed by the National Restaurant Association. It is taught by Michigan State University Extension staff at Washtenaw County's

Western Service Center in partnership with Washtenaw County Environmental Health. The course is taught each month as a 16-hour program. The fee for the course is \$210, which includes a course book and test. Upcoming course dates include:

- September 16 & 23
- September 29 & October 6
- November 3 & 10
- December 1 & 8

Due to a change in the registration process, a \$25 late fee will be applied to all registrations not received 14 business days prior to class start date. A ServSafe Manager Certification is valid for 5 years, and meets the new Michigan Food Law Requirement of having a certified manager by June 30, 2009.

**To register, call Joan Miller at (734) 222-3956  
or register online at:**

**<http://web2.canr.msu.edu/servsafe>**