

VINELAND'S

FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

February 2008



PRODUCED BY THE VINELAND HEALTH DEPT- May be copied!

What is the proper way to clean dining room tables?

Dining room tables may be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria and viruses. If your customers have to place silverware directly on your tables (no placemats), please keep this in mind. A recent study showed that tables in a food court had higher levels of bacteria than ATM buttons and water fountain handles. The **best way to clean a dining room table** is to first clean the table with a mild detergent solution to remove all food particles and grease, rinse the table off with a clear water solution, then spray or wipe with a sanitizing solution. The sanitizer must be applied to a clean surface or it won't kill any germs. **Use a second cloth and bucket to wipe off seats.** There could be urine or worse on the seats!

DID YOU KNOW...?

- Foodhandlers are not allowed to wear **fingernail polish** unless wearing disposable gloves, even for raw foods that will be cooked later. Jewelry must be limited to wedding bands only.
- If you smell **strong sewage-like odors** in your establishment, look for drains that are not used. Floor and sink drains have water in the “traps” that will dry out and allow odors and methane gas to enter your building. To prevent or correct this, pour water down unused drains once a week or have them properly sealed by a licensed plumber.
- The “**No Bare Hand Contact with Ready to Eat Foods**” rule is designed to stop/reduce the incidence of Norovirus, our number one foodborne illness in this country.
- Shelf-stable **canned goods** are designed to be stored up to 86° F and still be safe. Higher temperatures in a stock room may allow the heat loving bacteria (thermophillic) inside the cans to start growing in the food. Thermophillic bacteria can cause the can to explode!
- **Foodborne illnesses** can have **lifelong consequences** to the victim. For example, Salmonella can lead to arthritis. Norovirus has triggered genetic defects to initiate. E. coli can leave you with permanent kidney damage. Hepatitis can cause chronic liver disease. Don't allow this to happen to your customers! Learn how to prevent these!
- One incident of **projectile vomiting can spread 30,000,000 Norovirus particles** into the surrounding environment. It only takes 10 to 100 Norovirus particles to make us ill.
- For good guidelines and information on handling and preventing **food allergies**, check out www.foodallergy.com.

FOOD SAFETY CLASSES AVAILABLE

FOOD SAFETY –PART I (THE BASICS)

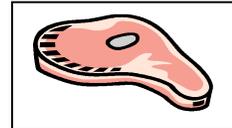
March 10th and 11th, 2008 – 6:00 to 9:00 pm (both days)
March 31st and April 1, 2008- 1:00 to 4:00 pm (both days)
April 28th and 29th, 2008- 1:00 to 4:00 pm (both days) in Spanish

This food safety class is highly recommended for anyone directly involved in food preparation! Classes focus on the causes of foodborne illness and how to protect your establishment from the financial disaster and embarrassment associated with an outbreak. After successfully completing this 6-hour course, a certificate will be issued that is good for 3 years. (Instructor: Jeanne Garbarino for all three classes, along with Emma Lopez, Health Educator for the class in Spanish)

HOW TO REGISTER

This course costs only \$5.00 per person, a real bargain. Successful completion of this class helps your eligibility for **Vineland’s Five Star Award** in Food Safety. This class does not count towards the new training requirement for Risk Type 3 Facilities. To register, return the enclosed application to the address listed. For more information, please call Jeanne Garbarino at 794-4131. **All courses are held at Cunningham Park at 1676 N. West Ave in Vineland.** Confirmation and directions will be sent upon registering.

What does the color of beef tell you?



The color of meat indicates more than just freshness. The color of meat is affected by the following aspects:

- √ type of muscle meat
- √ age of the animal (the younger, the brighter)
- √ curing process, if any (usually dulls colors)
- √ quantity of “myoglobin” -naturally occurs in meat- stores oxygen, makes meat redder
- √ packaging- retail plastic wrap allows oxygen to penetrate and meat will stay brighter
 - vacuum packaging denies oxygen to the meat and causes duller colors
- √ vitamin E fed to animal prior to slaughter will increase redness
- √ activity of bacteria- the more bacteria, the duller or browner the color
- √ poor lighting- yellowed light bulbs will make the meat appear brown to green
- √ storing meat at or above 36°F will increase the rate at which the meat turns brown

Meat that is slimy or odorous is a definite indication of excessive bacterial presence and must be discarded. Store fresh meats at 41° F or below for no more than 7 days for safety.

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New Inspection Check Sheets

This year, you will see a check sheet along with your inspection report. Items 1 through 24 cover those issues that directly cause foodborne illnesses. These are the items that an operator of a retail food establishment needs to control in order to keep customers safe. The check sheet will advise you when you are in compliance as well as out of compliance. This is different from the old way of reports where you only hear about the out of compliance issues. For more details, ask your inspector or go to www.vldhealth.org. (There is a lot of information on food safety at our website, as well. Check it out!)

TEST YOUR FOOD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE!

What comes to mind when you think of a “safe” kitchen? Clean floors? Spotless counters? They can help, but a truly “safe” kitchen is one that relies on more than just looks. It also depends on safe food handling practices. Let’s see how well you do!

- 1) What is the maximum temperature that a refrigerator should hold?
 - a) 41° F
 - b) 45° F
 - c) 50° F

- 2) How long can some types of Norovirus survive in the environment (such as on a door handle, faucet or counter)?
 - a) 24 hours
 - b) 1 to 2 weeks
 - c) 3 to 6 weeks

- 3) Under what conditions may food prepared at home be served at a retail food establishment?
 - a) Retail food establishments can serve food prepared at home at anytime.
 - b) Retail food establishments can never serve food prepared at home.
 - c) Under some conditions, retail food establishments can serve food prepared at home.

- 4) What are the typical symptoms of foodborne illness?
 - a) Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
 - b) Flu-like symptoms
 - c) Coughing, sneezing, nasal congestion

- 5) What is the minimum temperature foods in a steam table or other hot holding equipment should reach?
 - a) 135°F
 - b) 140°F
 - c) 165°F

ANSWERS:

1. a and b. New refrigerators and existing refrigerators that are capable are required to hold a maximum of 41° F. Older units that cannot maintain 41° F are allowed to hold a maximum of 45° F until January 2, 2012.
2. c. Certain types of Norovirus can persist on non-living surfaces for at least 3 to 6 weeks. If your hand touches the virus, you will pick it up and transfer the virus to whatever you touch next. Handwashing with soap is the only way to effectively remove the virus from your hands. You will have no way of knowing if you have virus particles on your hands. Always assume they are there!
3. b. Under the State Law, no food made in a residence may be served or offered at a retail food establishment. Religious or charitable organizations are allowed under the same code to hold “bake sales” where only non-potentially hazardous foods (i.e., foods that do not require refrigeration) are offered. A placard must be posted advising the public that the items came from a kitchen not inspected or regulated by the Health Department.
4. a. Foodborne illnesses usually affect your gastro-intestinal system and cause nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea. If your employees have these symptoms, they pose a threat to your food safety. Send them home! There can be other symptoms depending on the illness. Go to www.vldhealth.org for more information on foodborne illnesses, their symptoms, onset times, etc.
5. a 135° F is the minimum temperature that any potentially hazardous food must be hot held. This is lower than the previous law allowed. Disease-causing bacteria start to grow at 131° F. Check periodically with a clean stem-type thermometer, thermistor or thermocouple.

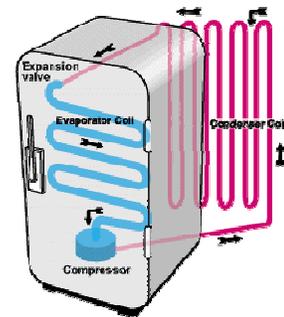
Cut the Operating Cost of Refrigeration!!!

By Gary Simpson of Simpson Refrigeration

It's the beginning of a new year and of course, our economy is driving the prices of everything up. Now is the time to start planning for ways to cut operating costs. The old adage that, "if it's not broke-don't fix it" isn't the best way to go anymore. Your refrigeration equipment doesn't like to be ignored and when it is, it breaks and usually a costly repair or replacement follows.

A few simple checks can be made to remedy a problem:

- ✓ Do daily temperature inspections of the equipment. Look for changes.
- ✓ Check for the operation of all fan motors, ice build-up on evaporator coils, unit excessive noise, or excessive unit cycling.



The most common cause for a compressor failure is extreme discharge temperature. The cause of this is generally a dirty condenser coil, preventing adequate air flow through the coil. This will cause the compressor and the condenser fan motor to overheat and fail.

The simple cure for this is to inspect the condenser coils on your self-contained refrigerators and freezers monthly. The units may be located on the top or bottom or rear of the cabinets. They can be cleaned with a few careful strokes with a wire bristle brush on the finned coil.



The other issue is to make sure that all doors on your refrigerated cabinets close and seal properly for the most efficient operation. When working out of your refrigerators, be sure to close the door each time you enter or exit the cabinet or box.



In closing, the most important thing that you can do to help your equipment is to clean the condenser coils regularly. The dirty coil causes the unit to run longer (higher electric usage), generates more heat in the space (your air conditioning has to run more), and shortens the life of the compressor.

In the event that you have a problem that you can not remedy or identify, don't hesitate to shut down the power to the refrigerator or freezer and call a professional.