

# Culinary Chronicles

## Code Corner Reminders



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### Handwashing Sign Requirements

Our current food service code, Article II, requires food establishment owners to post hand washing signs at all hand washing sinks that will be used by food employees. The Food and Drug Administration Code, as adopted by Thurston County, reads as follows:

**6-301.14, Handwashing Signage.**

A sign or poster that notifies food employees to wash their hands shall be provided at all handwashing lavatories used by food employees and shall be clearly visible to food employees.



*“Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection” - CDC*

### Consumer Advisory Requirements

Article II requires food establishment owners to provide a consumer advisory to the public if an animal food, shellfish, or juice of a fruit or vegetable is raw, undercooked, or otherwise not sufficiently processed to eliminate pathogens.

The Food and Drug Administration Code, as adopted by Thurston County, reads as follows:

**3.603.11, Consumption of Animal Foods and Juices of Fruits and Vegetables that are Raw, Undercooked, or Not Otherwise Processed to Eliminate Pathogens.**

Except as specified in 3-401.11 [C] and Subparagraph 3-4-11 (D) and under 3-801.11 (D), if an animal food such as beef, eggs, fish, lamb, milk, pork, poultry, or shellfish or a juice of a fruit or vegetable is raw, undercooked, or not otherwise processed to eliminate

pathogens and offered in a ready-to-eat form as a deli, menu, vended, or other item; or as a raw ingredient in another ready-to-eat food, the permit holder shall inform consumers by brochures, deli case or menu advisories, label statements, table tents, placards, or other effective written means of the significantly increased risk associated with certain especially vulnerable consumers eating such foods in raw or undercooked form.

Example Menu:

#### MENU

#### Hamburgers\*

- ~ Jr. Burger ~ Cheeseburger
- ~ Bacon Cheeseburger
- ~ Deluxe Burger

\* Can be cooked to order. Consuming raw or undercooked meats may increase your risk of foodborne illness.

# High Profile Food Borne Outbreaks 2006~2007

During 2006-2007 there were some large food borne illness outbreaks in the United States that are important to review to help understand how they might have occurred, what organisms were responsible for the outbreak and any prevention strategies that might be learned to reduce the risk of them happening again.

## US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) News

On November 3, 2006 the FDA announced the results of an illness investigation by state and Center for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) investigators, which found consuming tomatoes in restaurants as the cause of illness in a *Salmonella* Typhimurium outbreak. At the time the article was written 21 states reported 183 cases to the CDC. The outbreak peaked in late September 2006 with the states of Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Connecticut reporting clusters of illness cases.

The article did not describe how the tomatoes were exposed to the salmonella bacteria, but it is widely known that salmonella are found in the intestinal tract of infected domestic and wild animals and humans. As intestinal organisms, they are excreted in feces from which they may be transmitted by insects and other living creatures to other places. As intestinal organisms, they may also be found in water, especially polluted water. This leaves a variety of possibilities that may have caused the outbreak.

As a follow-up to the outbreak investigation, the FDA made a number of recommendations that help to reduce the risk to consumers from produce such as tomatoes. They include the following:

**Buying Tips:** Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged; When selecting fresh cut

produce choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.

**Storage Tips:** Certain perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) can be best maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 degrees F or below; All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated within two hours to maintain quality and safety. Keep the refrigerator set at 40 degrees F.

**Preparation Tips:** Many pre-cut bagged produce items are pre-washed and the information is noted on the package. These can be used without further washing. All unpackaged fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly washed before eating. Wash under running water just before eating, cutting, or cooking. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.



**Separate for Safety Tips:** Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods, such as raw meat, poultry or seafood and from utensils used for those products.

## US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) News

On March 2, 2007 the FDA re-

leased information about an ongoing investigation linked to eating oysters harvested from San Antonio Bay, Texas. At the time the article was written, there were 25 individuals ill from eating raw oysters at a festival in Maryland. The test results from the ill individuals indicated they were positive for norovirus.

People who are exposed to norovirus often experience low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping. Most people show symptoms within 48 hours of exposure.

Cooking destroys the virus, eliminating the risk to the public. The current Washington State Food Service Code requires cooking oysters to 145 degrees F for a minimum of 15 seconds to reduce the risk of illness. If a food service establishment offers raw oysters on its menu the consumer must be informed, usually by menu advisories, that there is a significant increased risk associated with eating the food in a raw or undercooked form.

## Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)

In November 2006, public health officials at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and state health departments noted a large increase in the reported cases of *Salmonella* Tennessee. The illnesses were strongly associated with eating peanut butter. Two commercially produced brands were identified and a recall of the products was initiated. New cases decreased after the recall. As of May 27, 2007, 628 persons from 47 states were determined to be ill. At the time the article was written the source of the peanut butter contamination was unknown. (continued on page 3)

## Food Handler Classes



We hold classes at the Thurston County Courthouse in building 1, room 152 during the following times:

- Tuesdays at 3:20 & 5:20pm
- Thursdays at 8:20am
- 1st Thursday of every month at 7:00pm
- 3rd Saturday of every month at 10:00am

Classes are also held in Yelm at the Yelm Senior Multi-purpose Center, located at 16530 ~ 103rd Avenue SE during the following times:

- 2nd Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm
- Last Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm

(In November & December we will only be having one class each month due to the holidays. Classes will be

held on the 3rd Wednesday of November and December.)

Classes begin promptly at the times listed. Parking can be limited, so please plan ahead.

The cost for the food handler class is \$10.00, payable by cash or check (all returned checks will be charged a \$15.00 service fee.) Visa and MasterCard are accepted at the Tuesday 3:20pm class and the Thursday 8:20am class. Identification is required at all classes to obtain one's permit.

For more information on our classes or to discuss requirements and fees for scheduling a class for your employees please contact Dawn Peebles at (360) 754-3355 x7392 or Krista Brock at x7386.



## 2008 Food Establishment Operating Permit Billing

On November 1st the Thurston County Environmental Health Department sent out the annual billing statements for the 2008 Food Service Establishment operating permits.

**Please remember that the annual permit fees must be paid by December 31, 2007.** A late fee is assessed on all bills that are not paid by that date.



Food establishments that are found operating past January 15, 2008 without a valid permit are subject to further enforcement action. **Avoid the late fee by promptly submitting your permit fees before the deadline.**

If you have any questions regarding your bill please contact Krista Brock at (360) 754-3355 x 7386.

## High Profile Food borne Outbreaks 2006~2007

*(continued from page 2)*

This is the first reported *salmonella* food borne illness caused by peanut butter consumption in the United States, however, there have been other outbreaks reported from Australia in 1996 and in four countries associated with peanut butter coated snacks produced in Israel.

Peanuts can become contaminated during growth, harvest, or storage. The organisms that may be on the product have shown the ability to survive in a high fat, low water activity environment. Even though peanut butter typically goes through heat treatment,



such heating may not always destroy *salmonella*. Additionally, processed peanut butter may be contaminated by *salmonella* that are introduced into the production environment, such as on raw peanuts, animals, containers, humans who carry the disease to work in the plant, or other ingredients used to make the peanut butter.

## 2008 Certified Food Manager Renewal Class Schedule

Thurston County will be offering two Certified Food Manager Classes in 2008. Classes will be held:

**Wednesday, April 9th**

~ 5 PM to 9 PM ~



**Saturday, October 11th**

~ 10 AM to 2 PM ~

The classes are an opportunity for those Certified Food Managers (CFM) with expired (or soon to be expired) cards to renew them. This is also a chance for people who

have current ServSafe certificates to participate in Thurston County's Certified Food Manager Program. Bring your ServSafe Certificate to class with you and you will receive your CFM Card.

The class will last four hours and will cover emerging issues and regulation changes. We will also cover the process and requirements for participating in Thurston County's Certified Manager Program. This will provide you with an opportunity to gain additional information in completing facility inspections and to ask questions. The cost for the class is \$32.00 and upon completion of the

class you will receive a 5 year Washington State Food & Beverage Worker's Card, as well as a Thurston County CFM card. Please bring with you to the class:

- Your expired CFM card or your ServSafe certificate
- \$32.00 fee
- Some form of identification

To reserve your place or ask questions, please contact Krista Brock by e-mail at [brockk@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:brockk@co.thurston.wa.us) or by phone at (360) 754-3355 x 7386.

## Certified Food Establishments

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those facilities that have submitted all their self-inspections and met the program requirements so far for 2007. Based on the facility submittals we have received, it appears that there still may be some confusion in regards to the program requirements. So we thought we would highlight a few key requirements for participating in the program. They are as follows:

- Each participating establishment must employ a "Certified

Food Manager" who holds a valid "Certified Food Manager Card" issued by Thurston County.

- A sanitation self-inspection form must be completed and submitted every month (even during months when our staff have been there to inspect the facility.) The certified managers must sign their name to the inspection report prior to submittal to our office.
- The Certified Food Manager can only inspect one food

service facility.

We understand that it can be challenging to get the self inspections in to us every month, that is why we have a variety of ways you can submit them.

**Fax** (360-754-4118, Attn: Dawn)

**Mail** (Address on back page)

**Drop off** (Address on back page, Bldg 1, 2nd floor, M-F, 8-5)

To obtain a full copy of the rules and regulations, please contact our office at (360) 754-3355 x 7392.

## Food Establishment Change of Ownership

If your facility will be changing ownership at any point during the year, our office must be notified. A new application will need to be completed, updating us on any changes.

In order to transfer the permit to the new owner, a transfer form must be completed.

There is a fee of \$25.00 for ownership transfer. When the application and transfer form are received in our office, your file will be updated and a new permit will be mailed to the new owner.

If you have questions regarding this process or need to request forms please contact our office at (360) 754-3355 ext. 7386 or 7392.

Be sure to sign your permit and post in your facility.



## Clean Indoor Air Act Reminders ~ Q & A for Food Establishment Operators

In some of our previous newsletters we have published information that provided food establishment operators with current information about the Clean Indoor Air, commonly known as I-901. Once again, we want to take this opportunity to revisit the issue and provide you with the information that will help you meet the requirements.

**Q** What is the Clean Indoor Air Act?

**A** The Clean Indoor Air Act (RCW 70.160) is a state law that prohibits smoking in public places and workplaces to protect employees and the public from secondhand smoke.

**Q** Does the law apply to me?

**A** The current law became effective on December 8, 2005. It prohibits smoking in public places or places of employment. Public place means any place used by and open to the public. Place of employment means any area under the control of a public or private employer through which employees are required to pass during their course of employment.

**Q** What does the law require employers to do?

**A** The law requires the person in charge of any public place or place of employment to prohibit smoking in their facilities. The law requires "No Smoking" signs to be posted conspicuously at each building entrance. In addition, smoking cannot be allowed within 25 feet from any entrances, exits, windows that open, and ventilation intakes.

**Q** How do I deal with people who want to smoke?

**A** Develop a policy that clearly outlines how your business will enforce both your new smoke-free policy and the 25-Foot Rule. If a patron is attempting to smoke indoors, you or your staff must remind them of the law and explain that they must step outside and away from openings that allow smoke to come indoors.



**Q** What if I choose not to ask customers to stop smoking?

**A** If you fail to comply with the law an employee or member of the public may contact the health department to file a complaint.

**Q** How is the law enforced?

**A** Compliance with the Clean Indoor Air Act is the responsibility of the owner, manager, operator, or another person in charge of an area open to the public or place of employment. Local health jurisdictions will enforce the Clean Indoor Air Act for businesses, including bars and restaurants. Local law enforcement agencies have the responsibility for enforcing the law as it applies to individuals violating the law.

**Q** What are the penalties for individuals and businesses?

**A** A civil fine of up to \$100 can be imposed on those individuals who violate the law by smoking or destroying a sign required by the law. Businesses will receive an initial warning serving as a notice of violation for correction, but then can

be fined up to \$100 per day as long as the infraction continues. In addition, the local health jurisdiction can call upon the city, town, or county prosecuting attorney to file a court injunction to enforce the law and to assess and recover civil penalties for the violation.

**Q** What is the 25-foot "rule" and can it be changed?

**A** The law states that smoking must be prohibited "within a presumptive reasonable distance of 25 feet from entrances, exits, windows that open and ventilation intakes that serve an enclosed area. An owner or operator of a public place may seek to rebut the presumption that 25 feet is a reasonable minimum distance by making application to the director of the local health jurisdiction to change that restriction. The applicant must show "clear and convincing evidence: that, given the unique circumstances present at the facility, smoke will not enter the building." The application for rebuttal can be obtained by contacting Dawn Peebles at (360) 754-3355 x 7392 or online at [www.co.thurston.wa.us](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us)

**Q** Are there provisions for exemptions and waivers?

**A** There are no exemptions or waivers allowed to the main intent of the law. All public places and places of employment are required to be smoke-free, the exception being the rebuttal of the 25-foot rule.





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Visit us on the web!

[www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehfood](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehfood)



## Thurston County Food Establishment Owners / Operators

Thurston County Public Health and Social Services is making efforts to prepare for the event of an emergency. We are currently working to implement a system that will FAX important information in an emergency to all of the food establishments in Thurston County. Please provide a fax number for us to contact your establishment. If there is not currently a fax line available, please note that below.

Please complete the bottom portion of this form and return it to our office. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Krista Brock at (360) 754-3355 x 7386 or Dawn Peebles, x 7392.

Name of Establishment: \_\_\_\_\_

Location Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ ~ \_\_\_\_\_

There is currently no fax number available to contact this facility.

**Please Return To:**  
Thurston County Environmental Health  
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Bldg 1  
Olympia, WA 98502