



January 21, 2016

Important Food Rule changes effective March 1st:

Dear Food Operator:

Recently the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Agriculture notified all local health departments that there will be changes to the State of Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code that will become effective March 1, 2016. Below is a summary of the major changes they discussed with the local health departments at a recent meeting Health Department staff attended.

Level 3 and 4 facilities:

- *Training:* Improvements to the code include requiring *all Level 3 and 4 food facilities* have at least one manager that has Level Two Certification in Food Protection (Manager training) within one year of the effective date of the rule. If you are unsure of what Level your food facility is considered, it is listed on your enclosed food license application near the bottom of the page under "category". We feel this training will be very beneficial to you in helping you better prepare food safely to the public. The Darke County Health Department has found that The Ohio State University Extension office out of Auglaize County already has the approval and the experience necessary to present this two day training. For your convenience, they have set up dates for these trainings at The Ohio State Extension offices located *in Darke, Mercer, and Auglaize counties*. See enclosed brochure. Please note the brochure also mentions Level 1 trainings provided by the extension. Level 1 Training has been required since March 1, 2010 for all new facilities that started operation after March 1, 2010. If your facility is a Level 3 or 4, you will need the Level Two Certification in Food Protection "Manager" training. Also, please note the Health Department will be receiving no money for this training provided by the OSU Extension.

All facilities:

- *Written procedures:* operations will have to have written procedures for employees to follow when responding to vomiting or diarrheal events. If an incident occurs, it is very important that you know what to do to properly clean and disinfect the area. The Health Department is working on developing a template of the document needed to fulfill this requirement that you can adjust to your particular facility. This template will be available on our website prior to March 1st: www.darkecountyhealth.org.
- *Verifying employees are informed of requirement to report illnesses:* Employers must be informed if a food employee is sick with a disease that is transmissible in food so that the facility can take proper precautions and possibly exclusions. The food employee is required to report

these applicable illnesses to the employer. The employer is responsible for informing the food employee or any potential employee of this requirement. Examples of how this can be done is by creating a form with the information that the employee signs that they have received the information or including the information in your procedure manual with employee signature. The Health Department has developed a document that you can use as a template to fulfill this requirement. This document will also be available at www.darkecountyhealth.org prior to March 1st.

If applicable to your facility:

- *Mechanical dishwashers* that use hot water to sanitize will have to measure and record temperature to ensure proper sanitizing of equipment and utensils. This can be done by purchasing test strips that measure the temperature of the water or purchasing a special thermometer designed for this purpose. Many of you may have seen the Health Department use these test strips when inspecting your facility. You would keep a log of the test strips or a log of the temperatures recorded from the thermometer.
- *Labeling requirements:* Prewrapped items available for self-service in a food service operation will now have to have ingredient labeling. An example would be deli sandwiches, salads, hamburgers, or cookies wrapped and laid out or put in a display for self-service by the consumer. Many of the grocery stores are accustomed to this type of labeling. Please note if you are physically handing the item to consumer, this code is not applicable because it would not be considered self-service. It is also not applicable *for bulk food items* such as candies and donuts that are held in display for consumer self-service; however, these items are still required to have ingredient lists available to customers for review.
- *Food delivered during non-working hours:* If food is delivered to the operation when no employees are present, the person in charge must ensure that employees are verifying that the foods delivered are from approved sources and are placed into appropriate storage locations at the required temperatures, protected from contamination, unadulterated, and accurately presented.
- *Reduced oxygen packaged frozen fish:* The fish must now be removed from the reduced oxygen packing prior to placing under refrigeration or initiating thawing procedures. The reason being when the fish was frozen the bacteria did not have the opportunity to grow; under refrigeration or during thawing, the bacteria would have the opportunity to grow due to the warmer reduced oxygen environment.

Please note this is just a summary of the current major changes to the code and not a complete list of all the changes made to the code as of this date. We are still waiting on the final code document to be released by the State. After the code document is released, the State has informed us to anticipate additional changes that got delayed and were therefore not included in the code effective March 1st.

The Darke County Health Department will keep you informed as we receive the additional code changes. For additional information, please visit our website at www.darkecountyhealth.org or contact our food program inspector, Megan Kaiser, SIT, at 937-548-4196 ext. 206.