

# FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

1-27-12

## Level 1 Certification in Food Protection

- If a facility falls into the required categories below then one person must be on staff at all times who has the certification.
- Required for all newly opened facilities after March 1, 2010.
- Required for all facilities changing ownership after March 1, 2010.
- Required if a facility has been documented to have repeated violations and has been through enforcement proceedings.
- Required if a facility has been implicated in a foodborne disease outbreak.

## COOLING AND REHEATING

Cooling and reheating continue to be a large issue in food facilities. Cooling must occur from 135°F to 70°F in two hours or less and completely from 135°F to 41°F in a total of six hours. Many times the soup is left on the counter to cool or is placed in the walk in cooler in a large pot with the lid on it. Neither of these methods is acceptable. Acceptable methods for cooling include:

- Use an ice bath. Place the pot in a sink or container full of ice. Stir the food to help it cool more quickly.
- Use a Rapi-Kool device to stir the food and cool it quickly.
- Add ice to the food.

This is especially useful in instances where water is added later anyway, such as in the case of a thick soup. This is also good for pasta.

- Break the food down into smaller portions in shallow pans..

It will be considered a violation if hot food is found in a cooler with the lid on it in a large container. When placed in a cooler in this manner it will not properly cool.

When reheating foods, they must not be reheated in a steam table, un-

less the food can be monitored to ensure the food heats to 165°F in two hours or less. The food must be reheated properly prior to serving. Cold foods must not be placed in a steam table an hour prior to lunch and expected to be heated to the proper temperature. When microwaving a pan of time/temperature controlled for safety food to



reheat, be sure to stir it and use a thermometer to measure the temperature to ensure it reaches 165°F prior to placing in the steam table or serving.

## ALLERGENS AND LABELING

If your facility repackages bulk foods such as nuts, snack mixes, or chocolates, OR if your facility packages sandwiches or other food and places them in a self serve cooler, then the packaging must have the proper labeling which must include:

1. The common name of

the food

2. A list of ingredients in descending order of predominance by weight.
3. The name and place of business where it was packaged.
4. A list of the allergens. If the allergens are already

listed in the ingredients then they may be placed in bold on the ingredient label. Allergens are milk, egg, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, and soybeans.

If the ingredients are made up of more than one ingredient then the list of sub-

ingredients must be placed in parenthesis after the main ingredient name. For example for a ham sandwich the ingredient label cannot just say bread, ham, cheese. It will have sub-ingredients for each of the individual ingredients.

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## DATE MARKING

Just a reminder that all time/temperature controlled for safety foods made at the facility are required to be dated to be used or discarded within seven days of preparation or opening. If a food is used within 24 hours of preparation then it is not required to be dated. Items such as commercially prepared deli salads, hard cheeses, semi-soft cheeses, yogurt, and sour cream are not required to be dated.

Deli meats must be dated the day the packaging is opened. If the remainder of the meat is used to make sandwich spread, the spread must still be used within seven days of the date the deli

meat was originally opened.

If foods are frozen, the seven day rule is suspended until the food is removed from the freezer. It must then be dated again and the amount of time it was refrigerated prior to being frozen needs to be counted. For example if soup is prepared and frozen the day of preparation, when it is removed from the freezer it has six days remaining.

The date marking system used in facility needs to be consistent and understood by all employees. The date placed on the food can be the date made or the date of expiration, as long as it is consistent. When figuring the seven day

allowance, be sure to count the day of preparation.

Date marking labels can be as simple as a piece of tape, but ensure that they can be removed from containers easily and that employees are not leaving them on storage containers or lids so when the next food is placed in the container the dates are not confused.

Date marking is a common violation and many facilities do not think it is necessary, it can help prevent waste and ensure proper rotation of foods.

## CROCK POTS AND NON-COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT

Lately there has been a lot of non-commercial equipment showing up in licensed food service operations and retail food establishments. While this equipment may be cheaper and easier to obtain, it is not made for use in a commercial kitchen. Equipment such as slow cookers, home-style fryers, and home-style griddles are not permitted in a licensed food service operation. Many slow cookers only have high and low settings and are difficult to use to regulate proper hot holding temperatures. Non-commercial equipment is not made to be used as rigorous-



A 3-crock slow cooker made by GE® that has become popular in FSOs and RFEs.

ly as it is in a commercial kitchen setting. It is also not made to be as easily cleanable as commercial equipment.

When purchasing equipment for hot or cold holding or cooking, ensure that the equipment has the approval of a commercial testing agency such as NSF or UL Sanitation. The Van Wert County Health Department does not allow any refrigerators that are non-commercial. Freezers however, are not required to be commercially rated. There are a few exceptions to the commercial equipment rule. Items such as microwaves and toasters are not

required to be commercially rated. As mentioned earlier, freezers are also not required to have commercial rating, but keep in mind that commercial cooling and freezing equipment holds up better and recovers from temperature changes faster.

If you have any questions before you purchase a piece of equipment please do not hesitate to contact me to ensure that the equipment is approved.



An example of a commercially rated hot holding unit.