

August 18, 2006

To: All Food Service Operations and Retail Food Establishments
From: Britt C. Menchhofer
Re: Thin Probe Thermometer

Operators:

On March 1, 2005 the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code made certain rule changes effective. A summary of these rule changes were sent out to all operators with renewal. One of the changes involved types of thermometers. The rule is in 3717-1-04.2 (G). This section states that "food temperature measuring devices shall be provided and readily accessible for use in the ensuring attainment and maintenance of food temperatures as specified under Chapter 3717 of the Administrative Code." Many of you have thermometers, thus satisfying this requirement. The second section of that rule states that "a temperature measuring device with a suitable small-diameter probe that is designed to measure the temperature of thin masses shall be provided and readily accessible to accurately measure the temperature in thin foods such as meat patties and fish filets." When this rule change occurred many operators balked at the idea of a thin-probed thermometer because they thought that the only solution would be a costly thermocouple thermometer.

The FDA states that bi-metal, bayonet style thermometers are not suitable for accurately measuring the temperature of thin foods such as hamburger patties because of the large diameter of the probe and the inability to accurately sense the temperature at the tip of the probe. Small-diameter probes that have a 1.5mm or smaller probe diameter are suitable for measuring thin masses.

As time passed other thin-tipped thermometers have become available and more widely advertised. Two types of thermometers that will satisfy this requirement are included with this letter. A thermistor thermometer is one example, specifically a PDT 300 Pocket Digital Thermistor Thermometer. The other type is a Super-Fast Therman. These are two models that I have found that have a thin-tip as required. You, as the operators, may purchase any type of thermometer that satisfies the requirement; you are not limited to these examples. The Van Wert County Health Department does not endorse either of these thermometers. The PDT 300 is sold by multiple companies; a quick Internet search will prove this. The Therman is sold by ThermoWorks exclusively.

This letter serves as a reminder that if you are cooking thin foods and do not have one of these thermometers it will be listed as a violation.

Also included with this letter is a copy of the latest food safety newsletter.

Thank you and if you have any questions feel free to call me at 419-238-0808 ext. 105.

Sincerely,

Britt C. Menchhofer