

VAN WERT COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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Person in Charge

In section 2.4 of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code it states that the license holder shall be the person responsible for the food service operation or retail food establishment. The license holder may be the person in charge or shall designate a person or persons in charge and **shall ensure that a person in charge with applicable knowledge is present at the food service operation or retail food establishment during all hours of operation.**

The person in charge must be able to demonstrate knowledge of certain practices and principles during inspection and upon request. Listed below are brief descriptions of some questions that a person in charge may be asked to demonstrate.

1. Describe the relationship between the prevention of foodborne disease and the personal hygiene of a food employee. Frequent and thorough hand washing is one of the most important duties of a food service or retail food worker. Many foodborne illness outbreaks are caused by improper hand washing. It is critical that your staff wash their hands after using the toilet, working with raw meats, emptying the garbage, eating, smoking, taking a break, etc.
2. Explain the responsibility of the person in charge for preventing the transmission of foodborne disease by a food employee who has a disease or medical condition that may cause foodborne illness. Section 3717-1-02.1 of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code goes into more detail regarding employees and exclusions and restrictions at work. In general the person in charge must require food employees and applicants for employment to report information about their health and activities as they relate to diseases transmissible through food. If the employee has a foodborne illness or has been exposed to a foodborne illness then the employee must be excluded from work. If an employee is diagnosed with a foodborne illness then the Health Department must be notified.
3. Describe the symptoms associated with the diseases that are transmitted through food. Common symptoms include diarrhea, nausea, headache, body aches, chills, vomiting, and fever. While incubation period can range from several hours to a month or more, the most common types of foodborne illnesses have incubation periods ranging from six to forty-eight hours. Employees with symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and sore throat with fever must not be allowed to work with food. An employee illness policy can help employees understand when they should and should not work with food.
4. Explain the significance of the relationship between maintaining the time and temperature of potentially hazardous food and the prevention of foodborne illness. By holding potentially hazardous food products at 41°F or below and 135°F and above you can reduce the growth rate of bacteria to relatively safe levels. Reducing the amount of time that food stays in the zone between 41°F and 135°F will also limit microbial growth in most cases. Thawing foods properly is also a way to keep foods out of the “danger” zone. Thawing food at room temperature allows parts of the food to reach high temperatures while other portions are still frozen. Thaw foods in the cooler at 41°F or below, under cold running water, in the microwave, or while cooking to keep food out of the “danger” zone. Thermometers must be available in all cold storage units and a metal stem thermometer must be available to check hot or cold holding temperatures as well as cooking temperatures. Also ensuring that all ready-to-eat, potentially hazardous foods are dated to be used within seven days can help to prevent foodborne illness.

5. Explain the hazards involved with the consumption of raw or undercooked meat, poultry, eggs, and fish. Most of the meats that we purchase have some bacteria present when they arrive from the supplier or store. Cooking is needed to destroy the bacteria that are naturally found in the product. Eating raw or undercooked potentially hazardous foods puts the consumer at a significant risk of foodborne illness.
6. State the required food temperatures and times for safe cooking of potentially hazardous food including meat, poultry, eggs, and fish. Section 3717-1-03.3 of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code addresses this in more detail and should be viewed. Some of the common cooking temperatures include:
 - 135°F --- canned foods, fruits and vegetables
 - 145°F --- raw eggs for immediate service, seafood, beef, pork (whole cuts)
 - 155°F --- comminuted meats (hamburger, sausage), injected meats
 - 165°F --- poultry, reheated foods, stuffed meats, stuffing containing meatsA metal stem thermometer must be available to check these temperatures. This thermometer must be calibrated regularly to ensure a proper reading.
7. State the required temperatures and times for safe refrigerated storage, hot holding, cooling, and reheating of potentially hazardous foods. After reaching the proper cooking temperature all foods that are going to be held hot should be maintained at or above 135°F. All cold foods must be held at 41°F or below. Cooling is one of the most important steps in food safety and must occur from 135°F to 70°F in two hours or less and must cool completely to 41°F in a total of six hours. Putting food in shallow pans, leaving lids cracked, ice baths, and Rapi-kool devices are all steps to help cool properly. All previously cooked foods must be reheated to at least 165°F.
8. Describe the relationship between the prevention of foodborne illness and the management and control of the following:
 - Cross contamination-** Storing foods properly by placing raw foods under ready-to-eat foods and washing utensils, surfaces, and hands between preparing raw foods and ready-to-eat foods are two ways to help prevent cross contamination.
 - Bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods-** Bacteria and viruses can be easily passed from an employee's hands to foods that are already cooked. A good balance of handwashing and glove-use are ways to prevent contamination from the hands. Ensure employees are washing their hands thoroughly and wearing gloves properly to help prevent contamination from the hands.
 - Cleanliness-** Keeping your facility clean is one of the basic requirements of any good operation. A clean and orderly restaurant contains fewer bacteria and insects, shows dedication by staff, and creates an atmosphere that promotes good food safety practices.
9. Explain the correct procedures for cleaning equipment, dishes, and work surfaces. Work surfaces, tabletops, and counters should be cleaned and sanitized after each use. Using wet wiping cloths stored in sanitized water to wipe these surfaces is an acceptable means to clean and sanitize surfaces. Cutting boards need to be washed, rinsed, and sanitized regularly, especially after using them with raw foods. Equipment and utensils must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized in a three-compartment sink or washed and sanitized with a sanitizing mechanical dishwasher. Sanitizing solutions whether in a three-compartment sink or a chemical sanitizing dishwasher must be the proper concentration. Chlorine or bleach must be used at 50-100ppm, quaternary ammonia must be used at 200-400ppm, and iodine must be used at 12.5-25ppm. Sanitizer test strips must be available to test the concentration at all times. If a high temperature dishwasher is used then the dishwasher must be reaching 160°F at dish-level.

These items are only a brief summary and description of the person in charge requirements and aspects of food safety. The Van Wert County Health Department has many other tools for education including videos, power point presentations, and handouts. The website contains a wealth of information and handouts available for you to view and print. The website is www.vanwertcountyhealth.org. Keep this information available to your employees. Please call with questions or concerns.