



**Delaware General
Health District**

Dedicated to your health.

Food Protection & Public Safety NEWS

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1 W. Winter St., Delaware * 740-368-1700*

www.delawarehealth.org

Do You Know the Most Common Food Allergies?

There are many people in the United States who have an allergy to one or more types of food. A food allergy causes a negative reaction in the allergic person's body when they are exposed to the food to which they are allergic. Keep in mind that ingestion of the allergen is not the only way someone can be exposed. Airborne proteins that are inhaled can also cause allergic reactions. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include hives, shortness of breath, itching around the mouth, face or scalp, and tightening in the throat. Some allergic reactions are severe enough to be life threatening. For that reason, it is extremely important to be aware of the most common food allergies and how to best serve a food allergic patron.

The following list represents the most common food allergies, in no particular order:

- *Milk and Dairy Products
- *Fish and Shellfish
- *Wheat
- *Soy and Soy Products
- *Eggs and Egg Products
- *Peanuts and tree nuts, such as pecans and walnuts.

Your first line of defense when dealing with allergens that you handle in your facility is education. Wait staff need to be knowledgeable about the dishes that are served, and should be trained to take food allergies seriously. They should always consult with management and kitchen staff to ensure that the

food-allergic consumer's needs are met. When it comes to food allergies, there is no such thing as a "secret ingredient"—ALL ingredients in a dish must be revealed upon request. Wait staff can be trained to suggest simple menu items such as steamed vegetables and grilled meat, rather than complex items such as casseroles and soups. Complex menu items can be difficult to describe to consumers and it may be unlikely that even the chef will remember all of the ingredients.

Kitchen staff also need a heavy dose of education on food allergies. They will be the ones responsible for ensuring that allergens are not transferred from other sources to the meal served to the food-allergic consumer. They must be aware that cooking does not "kill" the allergen and it is very easy to accidentally spread allergens to other foods. Proteins from the allergen can be left behind and contaminate other foods. For example, cooking many different types of food in the same fryer oil or putting food on surfaces that have touched allergens can introduce an allergen to a food that does not normally contain it. It is helpful to designate equipment to be used when preparing food for a food allergic customer. For example, a separate fryer could be designated for seafood and another for french fries. And, as always, kitchen staff must appropriately wash their hands and change gloves.

There is a lot of information on food allergies available on the web. One website that may be useful is www.foodallergy.org. You are also welcome to contact Food Protection Staff with questions.

Date Marking-A Quick Explanation



Knowing how old refrigerated foods are is important for preventing bacterial growth. In the past, there have been foodborne illnesses associated with ready-to-eat foods such as deli meats and soft cheeses that have been held under refrigeration for an extended period of time. The growth of some bacteria, such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, is significantly slowed **but not stopped** by refrigeration. Over a period of time, bacteria that grow slowly under refrigeration can reach a level that causes illness.

Food which is prepared and held, or prepared, frozen, and thawed must be controlled by date marking to ensure its safety based on the total amount of time it was held at refrigeration tem-

perature, and the opportunity for *Listeria monocytogenes* to multiply, before freezing and after thawing. Specifically, ready-to-eat foods that are TCS (time/temperature control for safety food) and held longer than 24 hours are required to be date marked.

While there are several exemptions to date marking (some hard or semi-soft cheeses, deli salads prepared in a manufacturing plant or cultured dairy products) most foods that are TCS and ready-to-eat are required to be dated to track their age. Once the food is prepared or opened, the food must be sold or consumed within 7 days when the food is stored at 41 degrees F. or less. Food left over after the 7 day timeframe will need to be discarded.

Mandatory Training Rule Effective March 1, 2010

Effective March 1, 2010 the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code will include specifications for two levels of Food Safety Training. Level One is a Basic Food Handler's Course, and Level Two is a Manager's Certification course, similar to the ServSafe class.

The new rule requires the minimum Level One training for at least one person per shift of a food establishment if: you are a new establishment; your operation is linked to a foodborne illness outbreak; or if your establishment has a failure to maintain sanitary conditions. This training is also open to anyone who wishes to attend.

All Level 1 and Level 2 courses must be approved by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), so if you want to teach your staff on your own you will need to get approval from ODH. In order for a course to be approved, there are specific requirements for course content and instructor qualifications that must be met.

The Delaware General Health District is currently working on developing a Level 1 training and we are exploring options for how to effectively deliver that training. As soon

as we have an approved course to offer, we will do so! We will continue to offer the ServSafe class twice a year. The fee for this two day class is \$150.00. The next ServSafe class will be held in May 2010. Keep watch for a mailing or contact the Food Unit Staff to get your name added to the list.



Also, remember that Food Protection staff are available for FREE educational presentations that can be done right in your facility and tailored to your specific questions. These free trainings are a GREAT accompaniment to other trainings that you may also receive. Please take advantage of this opportunity by contacting us at 740-368-1700 to request training.

Reduced Oxygen Packaging (Vacuum Sealing)

On occasion, we get questions about Reduced Oxygen Packaging. Reduced Oxygen Packaging (R.O.P) is a process during which air is removed from a package of food and the package is hermetically sealed. This results in a vacuum inside the package and keeps air out.

Some establishments use this packaging method to extend shelf life of packaged food and to provide more consistent quality; however, there are health concerns associated with this type of packaging. One of the most serious health concerns, since there is a lack of oxygen in the packaging, is the growth of *Clostridium*

botulinum bacteria, and thus the formation of the botulism toxin. Due to the health concerns inherent in R.O.P, there are additional code requirements for this process. You need to have a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan in place and, depending on the type of food you wish to R.O.P, may need a variance from the state.

If you are considering doing vacuum sealing in your food establishment, please call us at 740-368-1700 for information and requirements.

E-Mail?

Want to receive this newsletter via e-mail? Want to receive information on recalls? If you answered yes, then send us your email address and we will forward you the latest news on recalls, changes in the food code, and upcoming trainings. If you would like to be added to our list, please e-mail Stephanie DeGenaro at sdegenaro@delawarehealth.org. **Also, you can now follow DGHD on Twitter! Keep an eye out for our new Question of the Month!**



Fees Have Changed—Time to Renew Licenses

On December 1, 2009 the Delaware General Health District Board of Health met in regular session. During this meeting they voted to approve changes in fees charged by the Health District.

Outlined below are the New Fees that became effective on January 1 of this year. Listed next to the new fee is the fee that was charged last year. The new fees represent an increase of roughly 3%. The District Licensing Council, which is made up of representatives from the regulated community, including Food Service Operations and Retail Food Establishments, advises DGHD and our Board of Health regarding license fees. In order to avoid large increases in license fees every couple of years, smaller increases are instituted on a yearly basis.

Please also note that these amounts represent only the local license fees, and do not include the state portion of the fee. **To see the total amount that you must remit to DGHD, please refer to your enclosed food application.**

All food applications and license fees must be remitted to the Delaware General Health District no later than March 1, 2010. This means that your application and payment must either be received in our office or postmarked no later than March 1st. If you are late you will be charged a late penalty of 25% of the local license fee.

	New Fee	Old Fee
Food Operations		
Commercial Level 1<25,000 sq.ft.	\$267.00+ State Fee	\$258.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 2<25,000 sq. ft.	\$296.00+ State Fee	\$286.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 3<25,000 sq. ft.	\$543.00+ State Fee	\$525.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 4<25,000 sq. ft.	\$673.00+ State Fee	\$650.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 1>25,000 sq.ft.	\$362.00+ State Fee	\$350.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 2>25,000 sq.ft.	\$372.00+ State Fee	\$360.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 3>25,000 sq.ft.	\$1273.00+ State Fee	\$1,230.00+ State Fee
Commercial Level 4>25,000 sq.ft.	\$1345.00+ State Fee	\$1,300.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 1<25,000 sq. ft.	\$133.50+ State Fee	\$129.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 2<25,000 sq. ft.	\$148.00+ State Fee	\$143.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 3<25,000 sq. ft.	\$271.50+ State Fee	\$262.50+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 4<25,000 sq. ft.	\$336.50+ State Fee	\$325.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 1>25,000 sq.ft.	\$181.00+ State Fee	\$175.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 2>25,000 sq.ft.	\$186.00+ State Fee	\$180.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 3>25,000 sq.ft.	\$636.50+ State Fee	\$615.00+ State Fee
Non Commercial Level 4>25,000 sq.ft.	\$672.50+ State Fee	\$650.00+ State Fee
<i>*Non commercial Fee is 50% of Commercial Fee</i>		
Temporary (No State Fee)		
	Commercial	\$75.00
	Non-Commercial	\$37.50
Mobile	\$135.00+ State Fee	\$130.00+ State Fee
Vending	\$49.00+ State Fee	\$49.00+ State Fee
SERVSAFE	\$150.00	\$150.00
	Retest	\$50.00
Plan Review (No State Fee)	50% of local license fee	
	Remodel	\$50.00

Risk Levels Explained

In order to help alleviate any confusion regarding the different license classifications, we wanted to take this opportunity to give examples of the types of food handling activities that fall into each risk level and give an example or two of a typical facility that would be licensed at that risk level.

Risk Level 1: These facilities are those that pose the lowest risk to public health. The concerns in these types of facilities include general sanitation, food labeling, storage practices, sources of food, and expiration dates.

Some examples of "Risk Level 1" activities are: selling only pre-packaged non TCS and refrigerated or frozen TCS foods; offering self service coffee and/or fountain drinks, and pre-packaged non TCS beverages; carrying baby food and baby formula.

Facilities such as video rental stores that offer pre-packaged candy and drinks are licensed as Risk Level 1 operations. These facilities receive a minimum of one standard inspection per license year.

Risk Level 2: These facilities pose a slightly higher risk to public health due to hand contact or employee health concerns, but the foods being handled have a low possibility of supporting the growth of pathogenic bacteria.

Some examples of "Risk Level 2" activities are: handling or preparing only non-TCS food; holding for sale or serving TCS food at the same appropriate temperature at which it was received; heating individually packaged, commercially processed TCS foods for immediate service.

Facilities such as childcare operations who receive catered hot meals and then hold the food at the correct temperature until the children are served are licensed as Risk Level 2 operations. These facilities receive a minimum of one standard inspection per license year.

Risk Level 3: Facilities licensed in this category pose a higher risk to public health due to all the concerns listed under Level 1 and Level 2, as well as concerns regarding proper cooking and holding temperatures, proper cooling procedures, contamination issues or improper heat treatment in association with longer holding times prior to consumption, or processing a raw food product in such a way that reduces the bacterial load to a level that the food can be sold as ready-to-eat.

Some examples of "Risk Level 3" activities are: handling, cutting, or grinding of raw meat products; slicing of ready-to-eat meats and cheeses; assembling or cooking TCS food that is then served, held hot or cold, or cooled; reheating in individual portions only; or heating of a product from a hermetically sealed container and holding it hot.

Most of your typical "Cook -and-Serve" type facilities, such as fast food chains, fall into the Risk Level 3 license category. Within the DGHD jurisdiction, Risk Level 3 is the largest license category. These facilities receive two standard inspections per license year.

Risk Level 4: These facilities pose a higher risk to public health because of all the previously mentioned concerns, as well as concerns regarding proper temperature control when preparing an item with many steps that includes reheating; offering a raw animal product as a ready to eat item (i.e. steak tartar, sushi); serving a high risk clientele (i.e. immunocompromised people in a hospital); or using freezing as a means of parasite destruction.

Some examples of "Risk Level 4" activities include reheating bulk quantities of leftover TCS food more than once every seven days and caterers who transport TCS food. In addition, any facility that requires a variance to carry out a process not addressed by code would be licensed as a Risk Level 4 facility.

Facilities such as hospitals and assisted living facilities are licensed as Risk Level 4 operations. These facilities receive a minimum of two standard and two Critical Control Point (CCP) inspections or Process Reviews per license year. Often, the standard and CCP/Process Review are performed in the same visit.

License classifications, as well as license fees and inspection frequency, are the same for Food Service Operations and Retail Food Establishments.

A facility's Risk Level has the potential to change whenever changes are made to the menu. Please contact Food Protection staff to discuss any changes you wish to make to your menu to ensure that you continue to be licensed in the correct category.

Free H1N1 Immunizations Available to All

The Delaware General Health District has been providing H1N1 flu immunizations since last October.

H1N1 immunizations, like seasonal flu shots, are recommended to help lessen recipients' chances of getting and spreading influenza. It is in the best interest of food establishments for their employees to get the immunizations, both for the health of employees and patrons and to avert absenteeism due to flu. Also, many food establishment workers are in the high-risk groups for H1N1 flu, which include pregnant women and young people through age 24.

H1N1 immunizations are available by appointment as follows:

At the Delaware Health Center, 801 Ohio Health Boulevard, Delaware: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

At the Delaware General Health District Clinic, 3 W. Winter St., Delaware: Weekdays from 7:30 to 9 a.m. To make an appointment, log on to www.delawarehealth.org and follow the link and instructions. Persons without Internet access can phone 740-368-1700.

The H1N1 immunizations are free at health department clinics. They also are available at some retail chains with pharmacies for a fee.

The Health District also encourages all food establishments and workers to help prevent the spread of flu in other ways:

*Wash your hands frequently.

*Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a tissue.

*Stay home if you are sick. Remain home until your fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.