



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Board of Health Sidney-Shelby County

202 W. Poplar Street, Sidney, OH 45365

Robert M. Mai, MPH, RS
Health Commissioner

Phone: (937) 498-7249
Fax: (937) 498-7013
sschd@odh.ohio.gov
shelbycountyhealthdept.org

2008 FOOD SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Where Can I Find the Rules?

OK, here's the scenario: The health department was just at your food business. The sanitarian found several violations. He told you why these were violations and how to correct them. You, as a person-in-charge (PIC) want to make sure that your establishment meets all of the rules. Do you have a copy of the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code? Do you know where to get a copy? If you have Internet access, the quickest way to get a copy is to go to our website, www.shelbycountyhealthdept.org and click on the Environmental Health hyperlink on our home page. Then scroll down to the bottom. There is a column containing pertinent information about environmental health issues. Look under the food safety headline and click on the Uniform Food Safety Code hyperlink. This will open a .pdf copy of the code that you can print or download to you computer and refer to it as needed.

If you don't have Internet access or don't want to print out 124 pages, you can purchase a copy of the code here at our office for \$7.50. It really does pay to become familiar with all aspects of the Code. After all, as a PIC, you should know the rules anyway!

We Need Your E-mail Addresses!

Throughout the year, we have information that we would like to share with our licensed food facilities. Also, in an emergency, this would be a fast way to get needed information to you. We have asked over the years for your e-mail addresses so we can get this information to you in a timely manner. So far, we have received less than 10. The license application does not have a blank on it for this, though we have asked the state to insert this change. Please, if you could, put your current e-mail address somewhere on your application. We have a database we can keep these in so they are available when we need them. These will be used only by our office.

Cooling Foods

When doing inspections, our sanitarians have been asked some questions concerning the cooling of foods. Can food be cooled too fast? If I stick that in the

refrigerator hot, won't it spoil? What is the best way to cool this big pot of soup?

First of all, food cannot be cooled too fast. Also, food can be put into a commercial refrigerator or freezer without the food spoiling. Some of these beliefs go back to when food was stored in iceboxes. Food could spoil then if put away too warm because the ice would melt. Obviously, this isn't a problem now. Commercial refrigerators and freezers are designed to have a quick recovery time when something warm is put into them.

The Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code states:

OAC 3717-1-03.4(D) Cooling - temperature and time control.

(1) Cooked potentially hazardous food shall be cooled:

- (a) Within two hours, from one hundred thirty-five degrees Fahrenheit (fifty-seven degrees Celsius) to seventy degrees Fahrenheit (twenty one degrees Celsius); and
- (b) Within a total of six hours, from one hundred thirty-five degrees Fahrenheit (fifty-seven degrees Celsius) to forty-one degrees Fahrenheit (five degrees Celsius) or less, or to forty-five degrees Fahrenheit (seven degrees Celsius) or less as specified under paragraph (F)(1)(c) of this rule.

Simply stated, food must be cooled from 135°F to 70°F within a two hour time period and then to 41°F not to exceed 6 hours total. Start your timing at 135°F. The 45°F criteria stated only applies to raw eggs when received.

The Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code states:

OAC 3717-1-03.4(E) Cooling methods - temperature and time control.

(1) Cooling shall be accomplished in accordance with the time and temperature criteria specified under paragraph (D) of this rule by using one or more of the

following methods based on the type of food being cooled:

- (a) Placing the food in shallow pans;
- (c) Separating the food into smaller or thinner portions;
- (d) Using rapid cooling equipment;
- (e) Stirring the food in a container placed in an ice water bath;
- (f) Using containers that facilitate heat transfer;
- (g) Adding ice as an ingredient; or
- (h) Other effective methods.

(2) When placed in cooling or cold holding equipment, food containers in which food is being cooled shall be:

- (a) Arranged in the equipment to provide maximum heat transfer through the container walls; and
- (b) Loosely covered, or uncovered if protected from overhead contamination as specified under paragraph (Q) (2) of rule 3717-1-03.2 of the Administrative Code, during the cooling period to facilitate heat transfer from the surface of the food.

If food is put into a shallow container to cool, it should not be any deeper than 2 inches. Ice paddles are a good way to cool down a large, deep container of food. Solid cuts of meat can be sliced or cut into smaller portions to insure rapid cooling. Blast coolers are ideal for cooling, but are very expensive. Use whatever is the best method for the food you have to cool. When taking the temperature, be sure to get the temperature in the middle of the food.

Thermometers

Thermometers can be a food service manager's best friend. The Food Code states in OAC 3717-1-4.1(K-L) that thermometers must be accurate to within 2°F (1.5°C). OAC 3717-1-4.1 (Y) states the sensor of a refrigerator thermometer must be in the warmest part of a cooler and the warmest part of a hot holding unit. It should be easily viewed and easily read, unless, due to the design of the equipment, it is hard to affix a thermometer. The best place to attach a thermometer in a refrigerator is towards the front and at the top since heat rises and will tend to come in through the door.

These thermometers and the temperature of food in a hot holding unit should be checked on a regular basis

throughout the day to insure the equipment is working properly and the food is being held at 41°F and below or 135°F and above, out of the danger zone where pathogenic bacteria can grow rapidly. Keeping a record of these temperatures allows all employees to check on this and helps a food service to prove they are checking temperatures.

Thermometers for checking the temperature of food are required, per OAC 3717-1-04.2(G). These thermometers must be used and be readily available. If the menu at the business has thin mass foods, such as thin meat patties or fish fillets, a thin probe thermometer must be provided and used to insure proper cooking and holding temperatures.

Any thermometer used for measuring food temperatures must give temperatures within the range of cooling, cooking, heating and re-heating foods. This range includes 0-220°F. This thermometer must also be calibratable to ensure accuracy when used, per OAC 3717-1-04.4 (Q). A calibratable thermometer is very useful to check the accuracy of your refrigerator and hot holding unit thermometers. If they are not accurate, they can't give you a realistic holding temperature.

OAC 3717-1-04.5(B) and OAC 3717-1-04.6 state thermometers must be cleaned and sanitized before using and storing. Air drying is required before storing to prevent bacteria from growing on a wet surface.

Of course, all the thermometers in the world won't help unless they are used! OAC 3717-1-o.2.4(C) states it is the duty of a PIC to insure that receiving temperatures, cooking, cooling, heating and re-heating temperatures, and holding temperatures be monitored to keep food out of the danger zone. The PIC is responsible for training employees to take cooking temperatures with an accurate thermometer. Training and constant reminders is probably the best way to insure compliance.

Reminder!! If you have any equipment that cannot hold cold temperatures at 41°F (5°C) or below, it must be replaced by March 1, 2008, per OAC 3717-1-03.4(F)(c). It must be replaced with commercial equipment that has been certified by a recognized food equipment testing agency, such as NSF, CSA or UL, for use in a commercial food service/establishment and for the use intended. Some coolers are intended for use only with commercially pre-packaged food and drinks (a merchandiser). If in doubt, please contact the health department and we can help you to determine if the equipment will fill your needs.