

June 2019



FOOD FOCUS

FOOD PROTECTION SERVICES



Summertime Heat

With the heat of the summer, kitchen temperatures will rise. Ambient air temperature in kitchens can rise to be 85°F and greater during peak days. When refrigerators are opened during service periods, cold air is released. This can become a major issue when refrigerators are opened continuously and left open for long periods of time. If the refrigerator doesn't recover quickly enough, food temperatures will rise.

Ways to ensure proper cold holding temperatures:

- **Keep kitchens cooler.** Refrigerators work best if the ambient air temperature isn't too hot.
- **Add more refrigeration.** Store food in multiple refrigerators to limit the amount of time that walk-in refrigerator is accessed.
- **Install plastic door curtains at walk-in cooler entrance.** This helps keep cold air in.
- **Service refrigerators regularly.** Clean condenser coils and add Freon as needed during warmer months.
- **Monitor food temperatures constantly.** Monitor and record food temperatures routinely and use technological advances:

- Refrigerator temperature sensors are available online starting at \$50. These sensors can be installed in any refrigerator (full-size, workout, walk-in cooler, make table, etc.) and then paired up with tablets and smart phones. The sensors monitor temperatures inside of the refrigerator and will send an alert when temperatures rise above a pre-determined limit.
- Setting up an account with a third-party monitoring company to passively monitor ambient air refrigeration temperatures allows owners, managers, and chefs the opportunity to intervene at the first sign of refrigeration problems.



Fly Control

The common housefly can become a major issue for food establishments. They can quickly spread germs, deter customers, and result in health code violations. Ways to keep flies out of your facility are:

- Keep your dumpsters and grease barrels at least 20 ft. away from your back door. Keep the exterior of each container clean and the lids closed.
- Install air curtains at the back door.
- Make sure employees and delivery men aren't propping doors open.
- Install fly tape or bug lights in areas or corners that are away from food preparation and clean equipment areas.
- Contact a licensed pest control company that will provide the proper bait and traps for use in the food establishment
- Use a fly swatter. Yes, manual fly swatters are approved for use in food establishments. Electric flyswatters are not approved.



Update on National Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently released United States 2016 foodborne illness outbreak figures. Although most foodborne illness cases are not associated with an outbreak; outbreaks provide important data on certain illnesses, foods involved, causes of illness, incubation, and onset times.

In 2016, there were:

14,259 illnesses

875 hospitalizations

17 deaths

839 outbreaks occurred

- Norovirus was responsible for 145 outbreaks (17%).
- Salmonella was responsible for 132 outbreaks (16%).
- Restaurants were linked to 459 outbreaks (61%).

Food Safety Culture

When employees and management are committed to food safety; they'll do the right thing even when no one is around. Leaders must demonstrate their commitment to food safety not only in their words and actions; but also in their policies. Knowledge and training are vital for a successful business, but that does not always influence behavior.

When food in the refrigerator is 50°F and the manager doesn't throw it out; what does that say?

When the line cook is playing on their phone in the kitchen; how do customers perceive it?

Ensuring that all employees know what to do, how to do it, and are following through will result in a strong food safety culture. Having a strong food safety culture will reduce accidents and other issues that could affect your business.

