



FOOD FOCUS — Consumer Protection Division Publication

JANUARY 1, 2007

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR INSPECTOR

Food facility inspectors work hard to protect the public and to educate food service workers. Here are some helpful facts about who they are and what they do.



Credentials:

- Baccalaureate degree that requires at least 30 semester hours in natural, physical, or biological sciences, public health or environmental health.
- Registered with the Sanitarian Advisory Council, Oklahoma State Department of Health.
- 9 out of 24 Tulsa Health Department (THD) Inspectors also hold a Master's Degree.
- Ongoing training on local, State and federal levels

How We Inspect:

THD Inspectors are trained to use a system of critical and non-critical (more minor) violations to record facilities compliance with the Food Code. The Food Code, which outlines requirements can be found online at www.tulsa-health.org.

Who We Inspect:

All types of food establishments including restaurants, health facilities, manufacturing & processing plants, warehouses, grocery stores, mobile food vendors and temporary food vendors at fairs and special events are inspected.

How Often We Inspect:

- Food establishments are put into 4 priorities based on the types of food they serve, the type & number of customers they serve and the potential public health risk.
- Establishments are routinely inspected from 1 to 4 times a year based on these priorities.
- Additional inspections are conducted based on requested assistance from the facility, complaints received and/or enforcement measures to gain compliance with the Code.



Buzz Words

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP)

A system to make sure food is handled safely at every step in the preparation and service of food. Inspectors conduct HACCP investigations at various establishments throughout the year.

Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS)

Also known as "Potentially Hazardous Food", refers to food in which harmful bacteria can grow if not properly handled, including:

- Animal food (raw or cooked)
- Plant food (heat-treated fruits & vegetables, raw seed sprouts, fresh cut melons and tomatoes, or garlic-in-oil mixtures)
- Other foods based on water activity and acidity levels.

Major Food Allergen

Foods that cause allergic reactions in some people include milk, egg, fish (such as bass, flounder and cod), shellfish (crab, lobster or shrimp), tree nuts (almonds, pecans or walnuts), wheat, peanuts and soybeans. It can also be a food ingredient that contains a protein derived from one of these foods.

Reminders !

- ! Food Handler Challenge Test is available each month as an alternative to re-attending the class training. See the enclosed schedule for details.
- ! Original food handler permits are required for anyone working in food preparation or service areas.
- ! Original and non-expired manager's certificate must be posted on site. A certified manager cannot act as certified manager at 2 facilities at the same time.
- ! Any forged or unofficial copies of certificates or permits are not allowed and will be confiscated.

Looking Ahead . . .

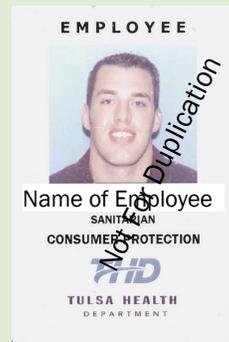
New Food Code — As reported in the last newsletter, the Oklahoma State Health Department has adopted a new Food Code. Soon the Tulsa Health Department will be going to cities in Tulsa County to adopt the new Code.

THD Program Support — A licensing fee increase will be requested in Broken Arrow where there hasn't been an increase in over 15 years. Licensing fees will also be requested in Owasso and Sand Springs since no fees are currently charged.

Website Survey — A new survey will be placed on the website at www.tulsa-health.org where anyone from the restaurant industry can report a concern or make a suggestion. The reports will be confidential and the person making the report will not be identified unless they so choose. The Consumer Protection Division will utilize any comments to improve our program, follow up on problems or make any needed changes.

Inspector Identification Employee Badges Required

At times we receive reports of impersonators who present themselves as inspectors from the Tulsa Health Department. Please be aware that authorized Inspectors will have official identification. As shown in the example, the employee's name and Division or Title is listed on the badge along with the Tulsa Health Department color logo.



If a person requests to inspect your facility, but cannot produce an official identification badge, you have the right to refuse the person admittance. If there is any doubt about the identity of the person, please call us immediately at 595-4300.

Can the symptoms of foodborne illness be mistaken for the flu?

Yes. Foodborne illness often has flu-like symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. Many people may not recognize that the illness is caused by bacteria or other pathogens in food. Experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that many of the intestinal illnesses commonly referred to as stomach flu are actually caused by foodborne pathogens. However, people do not associate the illness with food because the onset of symptoms often happens 2 or more days after the food was eaten.

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