

FOOD FOCUS

JANUARY 1, 2005

Important: All representatives (inspectors) from the Tulsa Health Department are required to carry and present their official identification card when inspecting your establishment. If an unfamiliar person comes in, ask to see their identification. If you have any questions, you may always call 595-4300 and ask for verification.

COPIES NOT ALLOWED

Unofficial copies of food handler permits are not allowed. The official photo permit must be presented to Health Department representatives upon request. Manager's certification (both the paper certificate and the photo identification card) must also be the official documents. **Any copied or forged permits or certificates will be confiscated.** An official duplicate of a lost food handler permit or manager's certification can be obtained at the Expo Square Health Center located at 4616 East 15th Street (15th & Yale), Tulsa.

**RODENT CONTROL!**

When weathers turns cool in the fall, it is time to protect your establishment from unwanted rodents who are sure to try and enter through unprotected openings. The USDA has said that food contamination from mice causes billions of dollars of damage each year. Most of this damage is from contamination of food with mice droppings, hair and urine.

Rodents have an instinctual urge to escape the onset of winter and are quite adept at finding entry into buildings. Think like a rodent—they can run along or climb electrical wires, pipes, fences, poles, shrubs, and trees; they can climb almost any rough vertical surface such as wood, brick or concrete, and many plastic products; they crawl horizontally along or through pipes, augers, or conduit; and they can gnaw through a wide variety of materials including lead, aluminum sheeting, window screens, wood, rubber, plastic, and low-quality concrete.

The following steps should help you greatly reduce rodent migration into your facility and deal with any potential harborage:

- ☑ **Construction & Maintenance** — Buildings should be built to prevent rodent entry. However, poor maintenance or management practices will make the best-constructed building susceptible to rodent entry. Seal all holes with durable materials; junctures where pipes or cables enter structures require special attention. A common wooden pencil can be used to measure gaps that need filling (3/16" to 3/8" is large enough for mouse entry) Also do not leave entry doors and unscreened windows open.
- ☑ **Sanitation** — Good sanitation practices are essential. Keep food well-sealed and the facility clean. Scraps of food can often be found in floor drains, under food preparation equipment, and around refuse and entry areas. This is a sure attraction for rodents.
- ☑ **Trapping & Baiting** — Do not place poison bait or bait packs in the open. Place the bait in commercial bait boxes. **Remember—baits are toxic poisons!** Check the bait daily and replace it as needed. Rodent snap traps or glue boards can be useful in situations where poison baits could be hazardous or are undesirable.



FLU SEASON

Everyone has heard that the nation's flu vaccine is in very short supply this year. Most healthy people should not get the vaccine. The supply will be reserved for those people who need it the most. (Information about vaccination recommendations can be found on our website at www.tulsa-health.org.)

This makes it even more important for everyone to practice healthy habits. Flu is spread, mainly, through the cough or sneeze droplets of an ill person. The droplets with germs can move through the air and land on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Germs can also contaminate surfaces (desk, tables, doorknobs, phones, etc.) for 2 hours or longer. A healthy person touches the contaminated surface and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

We can all help in protecting ourselves and in preventing the spread of germs. Since a large number of people go to food establishments each day, owners and managers are in the position to be of particular help by educating your employees and prominently posting signs provided by the Health Department regarding prevention. Below are important recommendations for the coming flu season:

- ! Always cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- ! Wash your hands afterwards and often throughout the day. It takes about 20 seconds with warm water and soap to effectively kill germs (about the time it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song 2 times).
- ! Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ! Avoid going to work or public places if you are sick and have a fever. Employers should consider sending home sick employees.

Food for thought: Even though you may be able to recover easily from a flu illness, your healthy habits may save someone you know and love from a serious illness or even death! Let's all do our part!

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