

THIS ISSUE

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Food safety law is changing

The existing Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 which apply to the majority of food businesses, along with all the other Regulations (there are currently 17 in total!), are soon to be replaced by new legislation which will apply across the European Union. The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2005, which will come into force on the 1st of January 2006, are intended to streamline food law, and improve clarity and consistency through the whole food production chain 'from farm to fork'.

As a proprietor of a food business, there will be little change in terms of the requirements to register your business with the local authority, maintain the premises in a hygienic condition and ensure that staff are trained to a suitable level.

The main change will be in the way that you will be required

to manage food safety.

Producing safe food doesn't happen by accident. You need to manage the process in order to protect your customers and your reputation, and to comply with the law. Existing legislation states that you must carry out a hazard analysis for your business. This required you to identify steps in the operation of your business where food safety hazards may occur, and to put appropriate controls in place at those steps.

Currently Environmental Health Officers assess how well you comply with the requirement for hazard analysis by asking you questions about the food operation, and by carrying out checks such as measuring the temperatures of refrigerators.

The main change in the new (continued on page 2)

Please contact us if you need this in braille, large print, audio tape or another language

إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية هاتفية.

Arabic

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਓ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Punjabi

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکلی دارید لطفاً به میز پذیرش در آدرس قید شده در زیر مراجعه نمایید تا ترتیب ترجمه

Farsi

تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود:

Civic Centre, 44 York Street,
Twickenham, TW1 3BZ
Tel: 020 8891 7445

Food Poisoning - what can happen

A take-away food establishment in Newham was investigated earlier this year following an outbreak of suspected salmonella food poisoning, which left 146 people needing hospital care.

Twenty-seven of those affected were admitted to hospital with severe dehydration. Environmental Health Officers closed the restaurant in February using an emergency prohibition order.

Fifty cases have so far been confirmed as Salmonella Enteritidis. Food samples

taken to identify the alleged source have revealed that mayonnaise, chicken curry, mint sauce and sag aloo were all contaminated.

Environmental swabs found that the kitchen sink was also contaminated. Another form of food poisoning, Clostridium perfringens, was also identified in seven curry dishes.

Annie Littleton, service unit manager for food safety at Newham Borough Council, said: 'This was a huge outbreak of food poisoning. Newham General Hospital even had to stop taking any

more admissions after Sunday 13 February because it was so full of people presenting with symptoms.'

Salmonella is one of the common causes of food poisoning in the UK and while the majority of cases are sporadic, outbreaks do occur. While the report as to why this outbreak occurred is yet to be released, it is clear that it had a considerable impact upon those customers who were unfortunate enough to become ill from eating the contaminated food.

See the back page for details of food hygiene training courses for your staff

Food Without Fumes Award goes 100%

Following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and SmokeFree London, as from April 2006

Richmond's Food Without Fumes free promotional scheme for local food

establishments will only include places that hold the gold badge award with 100% smoke

free areas. This is also in line with the new proposed restrictions on smoking in public places which are due to come into place in 2008.

As a result of these changes, current holders of a silver award (at least 50% smoke free) will be given until the end of March 2006 to become 100% smoke free if they wish to remain in the

directory. At this point if they are not able to change they will unfortunately be removed from the directory from April 2006.

To allow more businesses to benefit from the free promotion that is available as part of the award, 100% smoke-free establishments will be recorded as part of the Environmental Health Officers normal visit. Unless otherwise requested they will then

automatically be included in the Food Without Fumes online directory and receive the Food Without Fumes Gold Badge certificate and window sticker.

If you have any questions about the revised scheme please contact the Health Development Team (see back).



(continued from page 1)

legislation is that you will be required to keep written records of your hazard analysis and the monitoring that you carry out to check that it is working. This documentation will need to be shown to an Environmental Health Officer on request.

Precisely what level of documentation will be required and the format in which it should be presented is as yet not completely clear. However small businesses will be given more information and advice on how to comply later in the year. What is certain is that all business will be required to keep some written records of how food safety is managed on their premises. For more information contact Commercial Environmental Health (see back).

Shelf life and use by dates

There is sometimes confusion about use by and best before dates.

Use by dates are found on highly perishable foods. It is illegal to sell or have in possession for sale any foods past their use by date. This applies to retailers and caterers who have products in the fridge for use. If you wish to freeze foods, do so on purchase or production and not at the end of the shelf life. There will be very little shelf life left on the product once defrosted.

Best before dates are found on foods with a longer shelf life. They indicate how long food will be at its best quality. It is legal to sell foods beyond their best before date provided they are still fit for human consumption and of an acceptable quality. Once opened, manufacturers instructions should be followed. Regard must be given to the recommended shelf life.

Changes to inspection frequencies

The way in which environmental health officers nationally risk rate your premises has recently changed.

Most changes are minor, but the frequency and manner in which we carry out inspections or deal with the lowest risk-rated premises has been altered to reflect the low risk that such businesses represent. This will enable resources to be concentrated on more risky enterprises.

In future premises currently recognised as being very low

Cooking and bacteria

We all cook food to make it tasty and tender but the cooking process also kills off harmful bacteria contained in raw foods. Cooking should be thorough and the following points are important:

- Avoid cooking very large quantities of food, joint sizes should be kept around 6lbs (2.5kilos).
- Cook all food thoroughly especially red meats, poultry, offal and dishes containing eggs.
- A disinfected electronic probe thermometer is useful for ensuring core cooking temperatures reach 75°C and above. (The exceptions to this are dishes that are served to customer requirements such as rare steak or rare lamb).
- Liquids should be stirred frequently during cooking to distribute the heat and prevent cold areas within the pan.
- Boiling maintained for 10 minutes at the end of the cooking process should ensure that bacteria are killed. Always ensure that frozen meat and poultry products are defrosted before cooking (unless cooking from frozen).
- Where possible serve food straight away after cooking or keep it hot (above 63°C).

Fit to work?

When a food handler is suffering from, or is a carrier of an infectious disease they can transmit the micro-organisms onto the food and contaminate it. Managers must therefore exclude potentially infectious food handlers from the premises. Food handlers must also report to their manager any infectious or potentially infectious symptoms

risk will not necessarily be subject to an automatic programmed inspection. There are a number of different strategies we can adopt to continue to monitor these businesses for compliance with food safety requirements. These include postal questionnaires, telephone surveys, web-based self-assessment submissions and other less formal visits. We would be interested in receiving your feedback. For more information and to give your feedback please contact Commercial Environmental Health (see back).

and ensure they observe good hygiene practices.

The general rule is that anyone suffering from vomiting and/or diarrhoea must stay away from work for at least 48 hours after their symptoms have ceased (without the use of any medication). Some of the more serious types of food poisoning have more stringent requirements, for example food handlers infected with E. coli O157 must give two clear stool samples before returning to work.

In small food business it can be tempting to soldier on even when not well. While understandable, it is not worth running the high risk of contaminating the food. It's far better to have an arrangement with someone competent who can cover for you whilst you are unwell. If you need any advice about food handlers fitness to work contact Commercial Environmental Health.

. . . .FOOD HYGIENE COURSES. . . .

All courses are accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. Courses will take place in York House, Twickenham. In-house courses can be arranged on request for groups of 10 or more. Costs will vary depending on what equipment is provided.

Course costs

The **Basic Course** costs £59.50 per person, the **Basic Food Hygiene Update Course** costs £27 per person, and the **Intermediate Food Hygiene course** costs £182.50. Tea/coffee is provided during the courses but lunch is not.

Exam papers in various languages, oral exams together with courses taught in different languages can be organised on request.

Basic Food Hygiene Update Course - 2005

Thurs 18 November - 9.30am - 12.30pm

Foundation certificate in Food Hygiene Courses - 2005

Weds 20 & 27 July	-	6.00pm - 9.00pm
Tues 20 & 27 Sept	-	1.30pm - 4.30pm
Weds 2 & 9 Nov	-	1.30pm - 4.30pm
Thurs 1 December	-	9.30am - 4.30pm

All foundation courses include six hours teaching. Where two dates are given, this is split into two three hour sessions, both of which need to be attended

Intermediate Food Hygiene course - 2005

We run one Intermediate course per year, usually in April. Please contact us to register your interest in next years course and we will send you more details when they are available.

Please contact **The Health Development Team** on the number below for more information or email us at health@richmond.gov.uk. You can also apply for the courses online at: www.richmond.gov.uk/food_hygiene_training.htm

. . . .FEEDBACK. . . .

We are always trying to improve the service that we provide. If you have any comments about the standard of service you have received or have suggestions on how it could be improved, we would be very pleased to hear from you. For **Food Hygiene Training** contact The Health Development Team, Tel: 020 8891 7445, Email: health@richmond.gov.uk. For **Food Hygiene Inspections** contact Commercial Environmental Health, Tel: 020 8891 7994, Email: commercialeh@richmond.gov.uk

If you would like to make a official complaint please use the online form at www.richmond.gov.uk or address it to the relevant department using the contact details below.

CONTACTS

For enquiries about Food Hygiene / Health & Safety courses and resources or for more information on the Food without Fumes scheme please contact:

Health Development Team
London Borough of Richmond
Room 117,
Civic Centre,
44 York Street,
Twickenham,
TW1 3BZ
Tel: 020 8891 7445
Fax: 020 8891 7448
Email: health@richmond.gov.uk

For all other food hygiene / health and safety enquires please contact:

Commercial Environmental Health
London Borough of Richmond
7b Parkshot,
Richmond,
Surrey,
TW9 2RT.
Tel: 020 8891 7994
Fax: 020 8891 7726
Email: commercialEH@richmond.gov.uk

Further information about these and other sections can also be found on the Council's website at:

www.richmond.gov.uk/food_hygiene_training

www.richmond.gov.uk/food_hygiene_and_quality