



COWLITZ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Volume 8

THE LOADED TABLE

January 2016

Introducing Our New Inspector

As many of you have heard Audrey is no longer at the Health Department. We thank her for her many years of service and wish her a great retirement.

Please welcome our newest Environmental Health Specialist Cora Siipola. Cora was born and raised here in Cowlitz County. After obtaining a degree in Environmental Science at the University of Idaho she was a part of AmeriCorps working with Cowlitz On The Move for a year before she joined the Peace Corps and served two years in Senegal, Africa. Her background in Environmental Science led her to work as an environmental

consultant for the past three years prior to joining our department. In her free time she enjoys playing soccer, yoga and the outdoors. We are excited to have her on board and you'll be seeing her in your establishments!



Program Contact Info

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Chris Bischoff - EH Manager..x 6445

Food Program Staff

Cora Siipola.....x6440
Jesse Smith.....x6442
Ruby Stilson.....x6443
Vicki Washington....x6444

New Fee Starting in 2016

Per code each facility is to be inspected every 6 months. Now if a facility fails their inspections we increase the number of routine inspections from 2x per year to 3 and so on depending on the enforcement procedure. Enforcement procedure information is available upon request.

This year we will be requiring those facilities who have 4 routine (or more) inspections per year to start paying for the additional inspections. The first 3 routine inspection are paid with the permit fee.

Those who this affects have already seen this additional fee on their bills. We want to notify everyone of this change to ensure that all are aware of the consequence to failing inspections. Our number one concern is food safety and the public's health.

If you are at 3 times per year (or more) there is a way to decrease it back to the required 2 routine inspections per year. Simply get 3 consecutive routine inspections done without the need of a follow up. We will decrease your requirement down by 1.

If you are unsure of how many routine inspections you are required to have, contact your inspector and we will be happy to let you know.

Equipment Cleaning

Routine cleaning of all equipment is very important when it comes to ensuring food safety. Make sure you are following the instructions set by the manufacturer of your equipment.

- Cleaning instructions are usually found in the owners manual.
- If you don't have the manual, check out the manufacture's website. We have been able to find information on a lot of equipment even old and discontinued models.

A great example of following the instructions correctly is a recent outbreak of Listeria with an ice cream machine that occurred in King County. Details are available on their website.

A brief explanation of what happened:

- 1 year ago 2 people became ill with Listeria.
- Cases were linked to a soft serve ice cream brand that tested positive for Listeria.
- Machine was cleaned and facility changed ice cream manufacturers
- 1 year later a 3rd person became ill with

the same strain of Listeria.

- Health Department discovered the facility was only cleaning the machine 2x per week.
- Manufacturer of machine required daily cleaning of the machine.

Why did it take a year for the next person to become ill? Theory is that the machine harbored the growth of the Listeria. The limited cleaning and sanitization method did not fully remove the Listeria.

See next page for info on Listeria including incubation time.

It is highly recommended:

- to have a cleaning schedule of what equipment is to be cleaned and how often and always follow manufacturers cleaning procedures in manuals.
- ensure staff doing the cleaning is properly trained in the process.
- use training session as a check to ensure misunderstanding and mistakes are caught and fixed quickly.

If someone calls your facility and says they became ill, gather as much information as you can from them and call us immediately.

IMMINENT HEALTH HAZARDS

AFTERHOURS—CALL HEALTH DEPARTMENT AT 414-5599 FOR DIRECTIONS

Due to the recent flooding and power outages we would like to take this time to review Imminent Health Hazards.

Imminent Health Hazard means a significant threat or danger to health that is considered to exist when there is sufficient evidence to show that a product, practice, circumstance, or event creates a situation that requires immediate correction or cessation of operation to prevent injury as a result of the following:

- fire,
- flood, or sewage backup (including grey and black water);
- no hot water or
- electricity;
- possible foodborne illness outbreak or

- chemical contamination, or
- other circumstance that may endanger public health.

If these situations occur food businesses must stop serving food and call the Health Department. We will assess the situation and give guidance on what will need to be done.

If there is loss of power, the Person In Charge is required to check temperatures of food to ensure the food temperature is in full compliance. During the Longview power outage we found several facilities didn't bother to inspect their equipment and food to verify that food was kept at safe temperatures. Some facilities did not even know how long the power was out and could not properly assess risk.

We want to remind each facility how important food safety is. Please check temperatures and equipment immediately after power is returned or discard product if unsure of how long

food was potentially at unsafe temperatures. For those who did inspect their equipment and discarded food that was found unsafe thank you.

If operations are discontinued as specified the permit holder shall obtain approval from the Health Department before resuming operations. For example, when the Kalama floods occurred each facility had to be evaluated for flood damage. The facilities that closed, had to do a lot of cleaning, and some food had to be discarded. Once cleanup was done each facility was inspected to insure food safety and reopened.

Now is the time to check your procedures for current information and ensure staff understand them. If you don't have any procedures it is a great time to develop them and train your employees. Review your procedures often. Emergencies are never announced and the better prepared you are the less stressful this can be.

Listeria

Although rare in Washington State compared to other foodborne bacterial diseases, Listeria infections can result in severe illness, particularly for immune-compromised persons. Infection with the bacterial agent, *Listeria monocytogenes*, causes a range of symptoms. Healthy persons may have diarrhea or only minimal illness such as fever.

Symptoms begin: 3-70 days after exposure

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Fatigue and aches
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Confusion
- Loss of balance
- Convulsions
- In pregnant women: miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery or life threatening infection of newborn

There is no standardized test for Listeria in the stool, so the diagnosed and reported cases are predominantly invasive infections. As a result, Listeriosis has one of the highest fatality rates of notifiable infectious conditions because most diagnosed cases are severe. 10-25 cases are reported every year with 1 in 7 resulting in death. Almost all case patients had risk factors such as pregnancy, older age, or pre-existing immune-compromising illness.

Listeria occurs in soil, water and silage. Wild or domestic animals and birds may be infected or farmyards and food pro-

cessing factories contaminated, resulting in contamination of dairy products such as raw milk cheese and meat. Due to its ability to multiply at refrigerator temperature, Listeria contamination can be a problem with processed ready to eat foods such as hotdogs, luncheon meats, and smoked fish as well as deli salads and vegetables.

The US Department of Agriculture lists food recalls occurring in this country. Such recalls typically reflect detection of Listeria during routine monitoring, not Listeriosis outbreaks. In recent years, Listeria contamination has been responsible for a large proportion of recalls in the United States. CDC estimates there are about 1600 report cases and 2600 deaths per year. Products with Listeria identified included pork, hot dogs, turkey deli meats, ham salad and dried beef.

Information Available Online

There is also information available online at <http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/index.aspx?nid=1061>

- Applications for Seasonal/Temporary events
- Applications for new establishments
- Plan review processes
- Food Handler testing
- Fee schedules
- Fact sheets for various Foodborne illnesses
- Printable signs i.e. hand washing
- Links to additional websites
- WAC 246-215 and 246-217