



COWLITZ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Volume 7

THE LOADED TABLE

January 2015

Food Worker Card Testing: New Locations

Online Food Worker card testing is a great success in Cowlitz County.

The only approved online site for Food worker cards is at <http://www.foodworkercard.wa.gov/>. They should have the county logo and Health Officer Signature. If you're unsure ask your health inspector.

All new employees must have a current card before they start working.

It's the Permit Holder and PIC's responsibility to make sure that cards are valid, current and available onsite.

Please be sure to check your food-worker cards and ensure they are the Washington State Food Worker Card.

As of January 1, 2015 Food worker testing will no longer be done at LCC.

NEW LOCATIONS FOR WALK-IN HEALTH CARD TESTING AND PAYMENT AT SITE INCLUDE:

- Lower Columbia CAP
1526 Commerce Ave, Longview
- Goodwill Job Training Center
1030 15th Ave, Longview

If paying online with credit or debit cards, you can test anywhere computers are accessible to the public.



Program Contact Info

Environmental Health Section

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Main Line.....414-5599 X6441

Food Program Staff

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Tomatoes and Lettuce Requirements

Remember that cut tomatoes and cut leafy greens were added to the list of Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF) in the May 2013 food code.

These foods, once they are cut, must be cold held at 41°F or less. To ensure proper cold holding, here are a couple of tips:

- Pre-chill tomatoes and lettuce before cutting. Cut small quantities at a time and place into cooler immediately.
- Place sliced pieces into a 2 inch food depth and cool under refrigeration to 41°F or below.

Remember they must be cooled to 41°F or less within four hours in 2 inch food depths or an approved cooling method. Refrigerated preparation tables are not intended for cooling or chilling foods.

Commercial bagged lettuce must also be held refrigerated at 41°F or below.

Food Code Tips

- **Personal Medicine:** We have been seeing vitamins, prescription drugs and over-the-counter medicine during inspections. Only those medicines necessary for the health of employees are allowed and must be labeled and located to prevent contamination of food, equipment, utensils, lines, and single service items.
- **Raw Shell Eggs:** are a raw protein. They should not be stored over ready to eat foods or foods that are not cooked prior to eating.. After handling shell eggs, hands should be washed and gloves changed before starting another task.
- **Species Separation:** Raw meats should be should be stored below other foods in the refrigerator. Store meat with a higher cooking temperature (like chicken) below meat with a lower cooking temperature (like fish) to avoid cross contamination.
- **Tip Sensitive Thermometers** are needed if you cook foods 1' or less thick. Packaging will say if thermometers are appropriate for checking temperatures of thin foods.
- **Thermometers:** Know where they are and use them. Many times during inspections workers can't find them, batteries are dead or the thermometer is broken.
- **Chemical Storage:** Chemicals should never be near food, food contact surfaces or clean dishes. LABEL spray bottles. If a chemical isn't needed for operation then that chemical shouldn't be in the facility and should be removed.
- **Service Animals:** We receive many complaints about animals in food stores. Please review ADA updates as well as Washington laws to ensure you are in compliance regarding service animals.

IMMINENT HEALTH HAZARDS

AFTERHOURS—CALL HEALTH DEPARTMENT AT 414-5599 FOR DIRECTIONS

Due to recent weather events and a loss of water to a few food establishments 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:

- A breakdown or lack of equipment or power causing improper temperature control for potentially hazardous food;

- A lack of water or hot water preventing adequate hand washing, equipment cleaning, or sanitizing;
- An emergency situation caused by accident or natural disaster, such as fire, flood, or building collapse;
- A sewage backup or sewage contamination within a food establishment; or
- An occurrence of an outbreak of foodborne illness linked to the food establishment.

Food businesses must stop serving food and call the Health Department when there is a health hazard that can make the food unsafe.

Health Hazards include: fire, flood, or sewage backup; no hot water or electricity; possible foodborne illness outbreak or chemical contamination, or other circumstance that may endanger public health.

When calling the health department to report a potential foodborne illness outbreak be prepared with contact information of those reportedly ill and the food consumed. If there is suspect food left stop serving immediately and save it for the Health Department.

If operations are discontinued as specified the permit holder shall obtain approval from the Health Department before resuming operations.

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 write one and train your employees.

Thermometers 101

Food thermometers must be provided, accurate and readily accessible at all times.

Thin tip sensitive thermometers:

If the food is 1" thick or less than a digital tip sensitive thermometer is required. The way to determine if the thermometer is a thin tip sensitive thermometer is the stem will change size and become smaller at the tip. This type of thermometer is more accurate and faster than the stem dial thermometer.



Stem Dial thermometers: You can use 0°F to 220°F metal stem thermometers for thick foods or liquids. You must insert more of the stem length into the food for an accurate reading.



When you buy a food thermometer, check the package to ensure it is intended for measuring the food you need to check. Instructions for calibrating are also on the package.

Time as a Public Health Control (Time as a Control Plan)

If time without temperature control is used for potentially hazardous foods, you must follow requirements specified in the Food Code. WAC 246-215-03530 requires a written plan prepared in advance, which is maintained and available for the inspector upon request.

For information about time as a control, for what foods it can be used and the requirements which must be met please review Section 03530 in the Food Code. We have a template form available which we request to be completed and submitted. Ask your inspector.

2015 REINSPECTION FEE CHANGES

High Risk Factors indicated as red violations during an inspection are improper practices or procedures identified as the most prevalent contributing factors of foodborne illness or injury.

The Health Department inspects more quickly in response to high numbers of red violations to ensure correction. An office conference and reinspection will be scheduled within 3 to 5 days resulting from inspections documenting 55 or more red violations.

In 2015, the Health Department will impose a fee for the first follow-up inspection for high number of red violations