



# POLK COUNTY

## LICENSING AND FOOD NOTES

### Fall 2017

### **FOODHANDLERS CERTIFICATION CLASS REGISTRATION FORM ONLINE**



The Polk County Health Department is offering the **ServSafe Foodhandlers Certification Course January 22, 2018**, at the Government Center in Balsam Lake.

Each food establishment, other than those with a prepackaged license, is required to have at least one certified foodhandler on staff (preferably the owner or manager to avoid loss of this person due to employment changes). These classes are limited to 20 participants and fill up quickly, so if you need this course, please send in your registration as soon as possible. The registration forms are available at:

<http://www.polkcountyhealthdept.org/services/foodhandlers-certification/>

The ServSafe course is also offered by the WI Tavern League and WITC.



### **IMPLEMENTING A FOOD SAFETY CULTURE**

Implementing a food safety culture in your operation sounds like a noble achievement, and is often mentioned as very important to a safe and successful food establishment. But what does the term “Food Safety Culture” really mean?

Developing a food safety culture at work essentially means for employees and management to virtually eat, sleep and breathe food safety in your operation.

Everything you do is governed by the desire to lift up food safety and sanitation, everyday, every shift, together in a positive way.

Whether you are referring to personal hygiene, food rotation, surface cleaning, preventing cross contamination, or temperature controls, the objective is to develop a mindset in employees and management to practice safe behaviors. Consistent positive behaviors around food safety and sanitation long-term comprise a strong food safety program, and is essentially an expression of the food safety culture in a foodservice operation.

Food safety protocols should be firmly embedded in employee behaviors and followed consistently throughout the workplace, from preparation areas to facility sanitation. Raise the food safety culture in your operation through these actions:

- Modeling proper behaviors by management to engage staff, and for employees to learn and value these practices at work themselves
- Written procedures in place to ensure correct procedures, including handwashing, cooling, cooking, labeling, and storage
- Training for all existing and new employees
- Keep training sessions short, visual and interactive
- Posters and bi-lingual wall charts to help keep food safety a priority
- Ongoing evaluations and corrective actions, in a positive way
- Review inspection reports together to help improve results and staff behaviours



## PROPER USE AND CARE OF THERMOMETERS

Time and temperature control is imperative to your restaurant's food safety efforts. Keeping TCS (time/temperature control required for safety) food out of the temperature danger zone reduces pathogen growth, which is a key point when building a culture of food safety in your business.

To get an accurate reading, always calibrate, or adjust, thermometers at these times:

- After they have been bumped or dropped
- After they have been exposed to extreme temperature changes
- Before deliveries arrive
- Before each shift

There are two ways to calibrate a thermometer:

- **Boiling point method:** adjust the thermometer to the temperature at which water boils (212 ° F/100° C)
- **Ice-point method:** adjust the thermometer to the temperature at which water freezes (32° F/0° C) which can be conducted in an ice slurry (equal parts water and crushed ice)

Some thermometers can't be calibrated, which means you must dispose of and replace them. Others may need to be sent back to the manufacturer for calibration. Consult the manufacturer's guidelines for the best method.

Thermometers are considered food-contact surfaces. Remember to wash, rinse and sanitize with a solution specifically for food-contact surfaces, and air-dry these devices as well as their storage cases before and after use. Avoid using glass thermometers, as they can contaminate food if they break.

## SURFACE CLEANING IMPORTANCE



One study of health department inspections in 2016 showed that 21 percent of food establishments had soiled non-food contact surfaces observed during the audit, and 18.2 percent of establishments were out of compliance for having cleaned and sanitized food

contact surfaces in all areas. Another study showed dangerous pathogens, including Listeria, Salmonella and Staphylococcus in foodservice environments at alarming rates: 49 percent of kitchen floors, 46 percent of mops and buckets, 66 percent of floors and drains contained one or more of these bacteria. A recent FDA research study demonstrated that contaminated faucets and door handles in restrooms significantly contribute to transmission of the Norovirus in foodservice establishments.

### Enhance your food safety program with these surface cleaning tips for food contact surfaces:

- Use EPA registered chemicals for cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces according to labeled directions.
- Have cleaning products readily available, including chemicals, detergents, mops, brushes, etc.
- Clean food contact surfaces and equipment between tasks or in between raw and ready-to-eat foods (cutting boards, knives, slicers, etc.)
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces prior to food preparation
- If food contact utensil or equipment is in continuous use, clean and re-sanitize it every four hours
- Train staff on mixing and testing chemical concentrations of sanitizers in warewashing areas and three compartment sinks according to labeled directions
- Have guidelines in place for filling sanitizer buckets/wiping cloths, including testing for proper chemical concentrations in sanitizer buckets and replacing solutions when needed

### Have a written schedule for periodic cleaning of non-food contact surfaces:

- Restroom floors, counters, stalls and especially faucets and door handles
- Menus, dining tables, chairs, booths
- Walk-ins and storage areas
- Ice machines, floors and drains
- Use color-coded cleaning tools for different zones of the operation to prevent cross-contaminations between areas.

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