



FoodBytes

Indiana State Department of Health

Indiana to improve recall plan

As a result of the late summer botulism recall, the Food Protection Program is working to develop improved methods of notification to the local health departments, food industry and other key stakeholders who have a part in ensuring recalled products are not sold to consumers.

There is a void at the federal level in providing effective guidance to the states on what actions to take with recalls, so Indiana will devise its own structured plan. The first step is already in the works.

The Food Program developed a



survey and sent it to key state agriculture and health departments around the United States asking how they handle recalls and how they structure guidance to local health departments and the food industry. The results are being compiled by Dan Gala, Consumer Specialist and Recall Coordinator.

It is hoped that from this work, improved guidance can be provided to stakeholders on actions they need to take or not to take within specific timelines. If you have any recommendations to offer, contact Dan Gala at 317-233-7360.

Scott Gilliam, ISDH

FoodBytes to go online next issue

This will be the last printed issue of FoodBytes mailed out by the Food Protection Program. Starting next issue, FoodBytes will be available via the ISDH Website, enabling readers to print their own copies as they wish.

An e-mail will be sent to recipients when issues are ready containing the link to the latest edition.

Going to an electronic format will allow additional production flexibility while reducing costs.

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Outdoor cooking: Should inspectors allow it?

Restaurant operators, hoping to add that special flavor to their foods, are setting up grills outside their back doors. Open or outdoor cooking operations may be considered if the risks have been evaluated and addressed to assure the final food product produced is safe.

Operations separated from the indoor food establishment with open food handling conducted regularly beyond 14 days would be considered as a separate retail food establishment, and the following areas of 410 IAC 7-24 would need to be in compliance:

- ◆ **Protect against the elements, like wind, rain, snow, heat, cold, and dust (Sec. 309, 399, 400, 402, 403, 404, 408, 409 and 414).**
- ◆ **Control pests, like insects and rodents (Sec. 413, 415 and 416).**
- ◆ **Hand washing facility must be provided, conveniently located, properly equipped**

and maintained (Sec. 342 through 346).

- ◆ **Warewashing facilities must be available for washing and sanitizing utensils (Sec. 269 through 304).**

If sinks are not readily and easily accessible in the main building, they must be provided onsite in the auxiliary area where food utensils are being used and possibly contaminated.



- ◆ **Guard against cross contamination from outdoor surfaces to food contact surfaces in the auxiliary and main facilities (Section 200, 203, and 204).**

- ◆ **Comply with plumbing codes concerning water supply, capacity, and waste water disposal (Sec. 320 through 341 and 374 through 380).**
- ◆ **Restrooms must be available for employees (Sec. 350 through 354).**
- ◆ **A service sink must be available, if not already provided close by, to facilitate waste water disposal and for general cleaning of the physical facility (Sec. 355).**
- ◆ **Adequate lighting must be provided and shielded. (Sec. 410 and 411)**

Operators need to consider the fire safety aspects of open flame cooking. For example, there can not be an open flame under a tent, according to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Only equipment designed for cooking may be used. Proper fire extinguishers must also be provided.

Food Protection Program planned move is off

The Food Protection Program along with several other divisions at the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) were planning on a new home by early 2008.



of the 5th floor in the ISDH building at 2 N. Meridian St., Food Protection's new home was announced to be on the east side at 2855 N. Franklin Rd., just North-east of the I-465 / I-70 interchange.

The Epi-Resource Center and

Public Health Preparedness Emergency Response programs were also to move to this location.

As a business decision, the agency felt the move was not in its best interest. The Food Protection Program will remain at its current location. The mailing address and phone numbers will stay the same.

After ten years occupying part

Food security at state fair continues to improve

Food Defense Specialists are finding fewer problems with unguarded food during the Indiana State Fair.

George Jones, Food Defense Specialist for Northern Indiana, says there are fewer problems than in years past and most of the problems are easily corrected.

Jones says common issues include food being stored, like corn, potatoes, buns, and beverages, where the public could possibly have access to it.



One security problem observed was food, like potatoes, stored where the public can reach it.

“The products were often stored out of sight of the operator when the stand was operating or left unsecured when the stand was closed,” Jones said.

Jones said that one interesting observation was a funnel cake that had been displayed, apparently overnight, outside a stand on a shelf.

“This can create a liability problem for the stand’s operator,” he said.

Restaurant’s creativity causes safety concern

How does a Mexican restaurant chain cut its tortillas into perfect strips? By being inventive.

The problem with the restaurant chain’s inventiveness was that the method was in violation of Indiana’s food code.

Their secret to getting tortillas to shred into perfect strips every time? They used a paper shredder.

A spokesman for the chain reported they have been doing it this way for over ten years. Their method of cleaning was to “blow out” food debris with air pressure.

Using the shredder in this way caused it to wear out in about four months time, then the stores would just buy new shredders.

A restaurant spokesman said it was getting more difficult to find the older model of shredders they wanted. The newer ones are “cross cutters” not “strip cutters.”

Their method of cleaning was to “blow out” food debris with air pressure.

The strips were always deep fried after cutting, which likely rendered them safe enough.

Since paper shredders don’t meet the requirements for materi-

als, design, and construction as spelled out in the food code, the restaurants will go back to cutting the tortilla strips by hand, until suitable equipment could be found.

Who would have guessed that the local office supply store might sell food preparation equipment?!



Photo by Paula Proctor

Food transport safety project still finding violations

On September 12, three teams from the Food Protection Program worked with members of the Indiana State Police Commercial Vehicle Inspection Section to conduct vehicle and food safety inspections of trucks transporting foods. Teams were located near Terre Haute and Richmond on I-70 and on US 41 near Evansville. This multi-state effort, with Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, focused on the smaller box type trucks making short haul deliveries. Although food safety had improved from the last such project, there were still violations observed like incorrect temperatures, storage practices, and lack of food safety knowledge by the drivers, and failure to properly seal and secure loads.

In Richmond, the Wayne County Health Department partnered with our program to assist with the inspections and to help oversee any landfill disposals that might be needed. Assistance from local health departments is vital both during these inspections and also when conducting inspections of deliveries to their local facilities. The Food Protection

Program strongly encourages local inspectors to conduct separate inspections of delivery vehicles and document it on inspection forms. These inspections should be forwarded to the Food Protection Program to help the ongoing effort to reduce food safety and security problems during transport.

“We have heard from more than one source that the news of these vehicle inspections is spreading throughout the transportation industry,” said Travis Goodman of the Food Defense

Section. “The legitimate transporters are glad to see their segment getting some oversight in order to weed out some of the bad actors.”

The Food Protection Program staff conducts vehicle inspections on a quarterly basis and local health departments may be contacted to assist. “Progress is being made, but there is still much to do,” says Scott Gilliam, Food Program Manager. “If you have questions, contact a field representative.”

Scott Gilliam, ISDH



Pictured from left to right are team members participating in the latest food transportation safety project: Dan Miller, Mark Linderman, Lynnette Brown, Jason Howard, Gale Woods, Mark Mattox and Fred Buzendahl.

Foodservice chemicals must be properly labeled

Any chemicals used in a foodservice must be properly labeled, according to Indiana and federal law.

The Indiana State Chemist’s Office at Purdue University says sanitizers are legally considered “pesticides.”

Sec. 441 of 410 IAC 7-24

includes the language that any pesticide contain “manufacturer’s label instructions that state that use is allowed in a retail food establishment.” In other words, if the label doesn’t specifically say it’s OK to use in a food establishment, it isn’t.

Inspectors should read the

labels of chemicals an establishment uses to determine if the products are being used correctly. Ask employees to explain how they use various chemicals.



Botulism recall costing company millions of dollars

Processing problems with canned products at a Georgia plant may end up costing Castleberry Foods millions of dollars.

The Augusta (GA) Chronicle has reported that the recall cost has reached \$35 million, according to Castleberry Foods parent company, Toronto-based Connor Bros.

In July, four suspected botulism cases in Indiana and Texas were reported. Investigations showed all those infected had eaten Castleberry hot dog chili sauce.



This prompted a nation-wide recall that eventually included all products produced by the same Georgia plant.

The Castleberry's canning

facility in Georgia produces both FDA- and FSIS-regulated products. The outbreak investigation by FDA and FSIS identified production deficiencies that might have permitted spores of *C. botulinum* to survive the canning process.

C. botulinum spores are in the environment and can be present in foods that have not been properly subjected to high temperature and pressure during the canning process.

Some information from Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Training aims to improve recall effectiveness

Failure to achieve satisfactory compliance with the recent botulism recall has prompted the ISDH Food Protection Program to host a one-day training seminar for Indiana's food manufacturing and distribution industry. State and local health department inspectors conducted recall effectiveness checks of food establishments around Indiana.

State Health Commissioner, Judy Monroe, MD, in the invitation letter says, "During the recent recall our statistics indicated over a 5% failure rate of ensuring contaminated product was removed from sale. This is unacceptably high. We all must work diligently toward a 0% failure rate. Dr. Monroe added, "All of us have a stake in protecting the public's health. Your brand name is at risk of damage and loss if this would happen to your company."

"Statistics indicated over a 5% failure rate of ensuring contaminated product was removed from sale."



The upcoming training will include a panel of speakers from local, state and federal regulatory agencies, and from distribution, salvage and retail businesses to discuss how they handled the recent botulism recall and lessons learned. The afternoon session will have a speaker from the American Institute of Baking (AIB), who will provide the "nuts and bolts" of developing recall and traceability

plans and identifying weak links in existing plans. Another speaker will discuss how to use the media effectively to get the message to the public. A final speaker will discuss the Indiana Health Alert Network (IHAN). The Food Protection Program is planning to use IHAN to broadcast recall and advisory messages, minimizing the time it takes to get recall and notification actions initiated.

The goal of the training is to prompt improvements in recall methods incorporated by the food industry thereby minimizing the need for regulatory agencies to conduct effectiveness checks. The seminar is set for November 2, 2007 in Indianapolis.

Scott Gilliam, ISDH



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Bits, Bytes, and Blurbs

Send your questions to the e-mail or postal address above.

- ◆ Section 443 of 410 IAC 7-24 refers to 21 CFR 178.1010 to determine requirements for sanitizers. Since federal law has changed, you won't find this CFR any longer. Instead look to 40 CFR 180.940 for this information.
- ◆ Three violative conditions can exist with sanitizing solutions. One, doing nothing, two, doing something, but not enough, and three, doing too much. If it's "one," then Sec. 303 may be marked. "Two," Sec. 294 is correct. And if "three," choose Sec. 443. Sec. 441 might also be used.
- ◆ If you have a topic you'd like considered for next year's

Food Symposium, contact Scott Gilliam or a field representative. Do it soon.

- ◆ *The Indiana State Fair became the first fair in the nation to require its food vendors to use only cooking oils without trans fats. Bruce Sigmon told vendors at the pre-fair meeting that their tests had shown no difference in flavor, versus other oils. The Indiana State Fair gained national attention from an article in USA Today about it.*

- ◆ *Have you checked the accuracy of your probe thermometers lately? Why not?*

Calendar

ISDH Orientation
December 4-6, 2007
ISDH Rice Auditorium

ISDH Food Symposium
March 11-13, 2008
Fishers Conference Center