

FoodBytes



Indiana State
Department of Health

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Let’s take this quiz. From this list, (and without looking ahead) pick the pathogen most commonly associated with foodborne illness.

- ◆ *Bacillus Cereus*
- ◆ *Campylobactor*
- ◆ *Clostridium perfringens*
- ◆ *E. coli O157:H7*
- ◆ *Listeria*
- ◆ *Norwalk-like virus*
- ◆ *Salmonella*
- ◆ *Shigella*
- ◆ *Staphylococcus*

Which one did you choose? Staph? E. coli? Salmonella? Sorry, but these are all wrong. The correct answer is Norwalk-like viruses (NLV).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC) approximately two-thirds of all foodborne illness cases involve NLV, and numbers from the Epidemiology Resource Center at ISDH also bear this out. Twelve cases of NLV were investigated in Indiana during 2000, far more than any other individual pathogen.

If one considers the cases that showed similar

symptoms, but the cause was never determined, the number would likely be even higher. The CDC says an estimated 181,000 cases



of NLV occur annually.

If you didn’t know that this was the most prevalent pathogen, do you think your retail operators will know how to prevent outbreaks from NLV? It is more difficult for health department officials to respond correctly to foodborne illnesses when their perceptions of causes are wrong.

Symptoms of Norwalk virus infection include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Headache and low-grade fever

may also occur. Persons with this infection usually recover within 2-3 days without serious or long-term health effects.

The CDC says that food handlers’ hands are the most likely vehicle for transmitting viruses.

NLVs are typically passed by the fecal-oral route. This means that stressing proper personal hygiene including adequate hand washing is vital if the spread of pathogens is to be controlled.

Oysters can also be a problem if harvested from waters contaminated with sewage.

Such viruses can also be found in ready-to-eat foods like salads, and can survive for days on surfaces of equipment or utensils.

The answer is to wash hands correctly, and often, before touching food and use suitable utensils.

Are you “alarmed” about dish machines?

What piece of kitchen equipment seems to present an unnecessary challenge to some inspectors? The answer is the dish machine.

Dish machines come in various shapes and sizes, but all of them perform a similar function under the code. They wash, rinse, and sanitize. The major difference is the



indicate the water temperature for washing, rinsing, and most importantly, the final rinse temperature on a hot water machine. On larger units, gauges might be hidden behind a

panel, but all machines should have indicators of water temperature.

In addition, hot water sanitizing machines need to have a final rinse pressure gauge visible to the inspector. Chemical sanitizing machines will not have this gauge. (Incidentally, chemical sanitizing machines will always use a chlorine based sanitizer, never quats.)

In 410 IAC 7-20, Sec. 225, all newly installed chemical sanitizing machines must have a sanitizer level indicator. This means a device that can be seen or heard. Insist that this requirement be met. Manufacturers can install alarms but often do not do so until required by the local health department.

The new code says all newly installed chemical machines must have a sanitizer level indicator, meaning a device that can be seen or heard.

size or how much equipment or utensils can be handled per load.

Dish machines come in two basic types determined by their sanitizing method: hot water or chemical. The design can also determine how the cleaning is accomplished. Smaller units may be a “batch” design, while larger units utilize a conveyor mechanism to move the equipment and utensils through the machine. But inspectors are mainly concerned with the sanitizing method.

Gauges on the machine will in-

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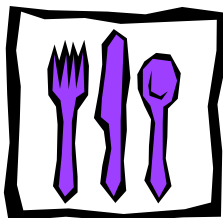


The first ISDH

Food Protection Educational Workshop

is coming soon!

*March 12, 13, 14
2002*



*Westin Hotel,
Indianapolis*

Workshop topics include:

temporary & mobile vendors, new code concepts, cultural differences, building relationships with others, plumbing, dish machines, and much more!

Right tools essential for inspectors

A mechanic doesn't repair cars without the right tools. Nor does a plumber fix pipes without the equipment he needs.

So how can a food inspector inspect a food establishment without essential inspection equipment? Answer: He can't.

Here's a minimum of what is needed: inspection forms; head cover (baseball cap, hair net, or equivalent); alcohol swabs; thermocouple or thermister temperature measuring device; maximum registering thermometer or temperature sensitive tapes; chemical test kits; flashlight; light meter; device for measuring distances.

An inspector will not be "standardized" if he or she is not properly equipped!

Attendees say orientation well worth it



Representatives of Indiana's local health departments attended the revived Environmental Health Specialist Orientation held in December at ISDH.

The environmental health specialists who attended the December orientation sessions sponsored by the Indiana State Department of Health agreed that it was well worth their time.

The two-day affair was intended to introduce new local health department employees to ISDH and to the services the state agency can offer them. The sessions were also designed to familiarize new local employees with their responsibilities that can include food and pool inspections, vector control and sewage disposal.

The following attended:

Steve Cale, John Kennard, Shane Modglin, Brown Co.; Amy Kelley, Grant Co.; Nicole Wolff, Decatur Co.; Kara Bieke, Hendricks Co.; Michelle Arvin, Howard Co.; Kevin Scher, Huntington Co.

Also attending were Melissa Hatton, Jennings Co.; Lisa Chandler, Amanda Fitzsimmons, Montgomery Co.; Reno Gosser, Rush Co.; Steve Sever, Shelby Co.; Kevin Hayes, Switzerland Co.; Dan Banes, White Co.; and John Raines from the White County Commissioners Office.

It's hands off ready-to-eat foods

A new code concept still not fully understood is the idea of using a "suitable" utensil when contacting ready-to-eat foods. Section 136 spells this out.

When training food handlers, stress the reasons behind the requirement (to avoid spreading viruses, etc.) so handlers know there is scientific basis for the rule and it's not just to in-



convenience them. Gloves are one acceptable utensil. So are deli papers, spoons, tongs, scoops, and spatulas.

The no-bare-hand contact idea is defeated if food workers touch the food at any point.

Ready-to-eat means food that will go through no further processing before being served to the customer.

*Americans have more food than any other nation. They also have more diets than anyone else to prevent them from eating it.
The Splendid Table - MPR*

When do “non-profits” need to comply?

Local health department inspectors often believe that if an organization is “not-for-profit” it is exempt from compliance with the food code. Is this true? The answer to this depends upon several factors.

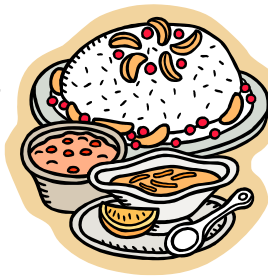
IC 16-42-5-4 governs compliance by not-for-profit groups. Here’s how this law came to be.

For years, people have baked cookies, cakes, and pies to be sold to help raise money for special causes, or to support local organizations (fire departments, school band boosters, little leagues, etc.) Many years ago, a local health department was trying to do its job of uniformly enforcing “Food Service Sanitation Requirements” when inspectors came upon a group baking items to sell. The local health department told the group that they could not sell these items without a food permit or license.

They were not happy

about this and contacted a powerful legislator who subsequently wrote a bill that passed through the legislature and became law. The new law now provided for an exemption so Indiana’s not-for-profit groups would not need to comply with Indiana’s food code requirements, but some stipulations had been added to the bill to restrict the exemption of not-for-profit groups.

The law’s provision that is often forgotten is that “Events conducted by the organization under this section (may) take place for not more than thirty (30) days in a calendar year.” These days can quickly add up for groups that operate a few days each month or two. Also, the members of the organization must prepare the food to be sold, and the member’s name must be attached to the container of



the food he or she prepared.

The organization needs to show proof of exemption from the Indiana gross income tax under

IC 6-2.1-3-20 through 6-2.1-3-22 to meet the definition of a not-for-profit organization. Legitimate groups have this proof in writing. This exemption does not prevent a local health department inspector from addressing an imminent health risk or responding to a complaint.

Organizations may waive the exemption and be inspected, but such groups should be excused from any fees. ISDH Food Protection has waiver forms available for local health departments to use.

Don’t be overzealous. Look at those groups selling food that don’t seem to be a legitimate organization.

Patricia Fowler

Use care when filling out sample forms

The forms that accompany samples submitted through Food Protection to the ISDH Laboratory for analysis are considered legal documents. That is why certain protocols must be followed when filling out the forms.

Reba Stuckey, ISDH Microbiological Labs, says one of the common errors is “mark - outs” on the submitted forms, or the use of

White Out.

Stuckey says, “We need to start tidying up some things as we look toward trying for laboratory certification in the future. Any error on a form must be crossed out with one mark and the initials of the person correcting the error.”

She cautions not to mark out with multiple lines, because the initial mark has to be readable,

and adds, “Do not use any *White Out* or white tape to correct errors.”

Any lab report including the requisition could potentially be a part of a court action and the reports cannot have any questionable marking on them. They also become part of the permanent record of the laboratory and may be viewed by FDA. Also, all dates must have the year as well.

Here’s what IC 16-42-5-4 says:
Sec. 4. (a) An organization that is exempt from the Indiana gross income tax under IC 6-2.1-3-20 through IC 6-2.1-3-22 and that offers food for sale to the final consumer at an event held for the benefit of the organization is exempt from complying with the requirements of this chapter that may be imposed upon the sale of food at that event if the following conditions are met:

- (1) Members of the organization prepare the food that will be sold.
- (2) Events conducted by the organization under this section take place for not more than thirty (30) days in a calendar year.
- (3) The name of each member who has prepared a food item is attached to the container in which the food item has been placed.

But it's not us!

Recently, many local health departments have received a mass mailing from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department in Washington State.

The mailing included a letter and samples of the department's newsletter, "Food Bites." Despite the similarity of the name with this newsletter, there is no connection to ISDH and we haven't changed.

Scott Gilliam, manager of the Food Protection Program, has cautioned that some of the information in that mailing is a bit different than that in our code, and that in Indiana, 410 IAC 7-20 applies.

Direct code questions to your field representative.

Law determines food label information

As an inspector, are you looking for labels on food products being sold at retail establishments? Reading labels should be part of the inspection routine to determine food sources and code compliance.

What do you look for on a labeled product?

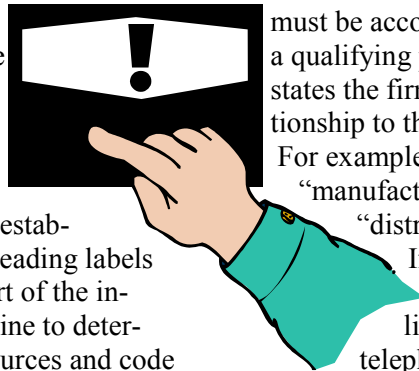
In Indiana, there are four basic labeling requirements for food sold in packaged form. Each label must contain:

- ◆ **The common or usual name of the food, if it has one.**

If there is none, an appropriate descriptive name that is not misleading should be used.

- ◆ **The name and place of the business of the manufacturer, packer or distributor.**

If the name given is not the actual manufacturer, it



must be accompanied by a qualifying phrase that states the firm's relationship to the product.

For example, "manufactured for" or "distributed by."

If the business is listed in the telephone book, the street address is not required.

- ◆ **The common or usual name of each ingredient listed in order of predominance by weight.**

Water that is added in making a food is considered an ingredient. When an approved chemical preservative is added to a food, the ingredient list must include both the common or usual name of the preservative and the function of the preservative by including terms, such as "preservative," "to retard spoilage," "a mold inhibitor," "to help protect fla-

vor," or "to promote color retention."

- ◆ **An accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of weight, measure or numerical count.**

Net contents must be expressed in both metric and U.S. Customary System. Numerical count may be used if twelve or fewer units are arranged in an orderly fashion and can be easily counted without opening the package.

This information is simply an overview of labeling. There are some exceptions and many more specifics.

For additional information, see Indiana Code IC 16-42-2-3 (<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title16/ar42/ch2.html>) and FDA's "A Food Labeling Guide" (<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/flg-toc.html>). Also, questions may be directed to ISDH Food Protection Staff.

Vonda Allen

New area code affects some HDs

Effective January 15th, 20 of Indiana's local health departments have new telephone numbers.

The number change is the result of the split of the 219 area code into three parts.

219 will change to 260 for these health departments: Adams,



Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Jay, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley.

These locals will change to 574: Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Pulaski, St. Joseph, Starke, and White.

There will be a phase in period until June 14th, according to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, when both area codes will allow calls to be completed.

The change was necessary because rapid growth in telephone, cell phone, and pager usage in Northern Indiana was quickly depleting the existing 219 numbers.

"Ask Scott"

Q. I've heard the current plumbing code may impact new food establishments. Can you explain?

A. There are two changes (or clarifications) that may make a difference to new food establishments. One is that all plumbing fixtures need to have potable running water supplied. This means that utility sinks such as mop sinks need to have water plumbed, and water can not be supplied via a hose or bucket from another sink. (675 IAC 16-1.3)

The second is that food prep sinks need to have an air gap or air break provided

in their drains. Currently a direct connection is allowed for some waste discharges. Air gaps or air breaks are required on ice bin drains and refrigeration drain lines.

Health Departments should look for compliance when conducting plan reviews for new establishments. Any corrections should be required before construction approval is given. Note that businesses already operating need not change

unless remodeling.

Q. Do food inspectors need to wear hair restraints during inspections?

A. Yes, the inspector is the "standard" for compliance and needs to wear a hair restraint while conducting the inspection. He or she should also properly wash hands.



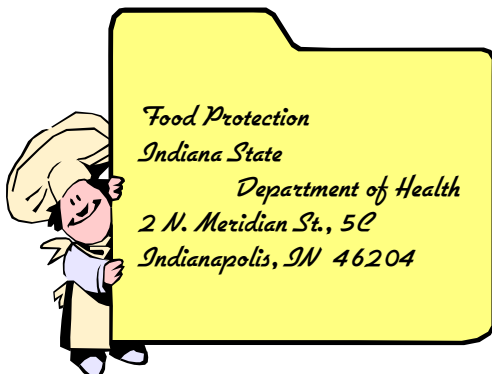
key element to conducting food establishment inspections is communication! Talk to the person in charge and food handlers in plain English before, during, and after the inspection.



Tip of the month

When checking for proper operation of a cooler, probe the temperature of something liquid that has been in place over night or longer. You can also have the operator place a cup of water on a shelf to be left for this purpose. Knowing whether cooler units are working right will help you diagnose food temperature problems.

Send your questions to Scott Gilliam at <food@isdh.state.in.us>, or use the address on page 2.



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