



News and Notes In the World of Food Safety

Spotlight On

Catering

What is catering? Catering is defined as a licensed food establishment preparing hot or cold food in a licensed food establishment and transporting that food to an off-site event. To be considered catering, no food can be prepared, cooked, or reheated on-site.

If you are cooking, grilling, or reheating at an off-site event, you will need a temporary food license. This license will allow you to cook, grill, or prepare food at one location for up to 14 consecutive days.

Another option for a licensed food establishment is to obtain a mobile food license. This license will allow your business to cook or prepare food at off-site events.

To find out more information please visit our website <http://www.kalcounty.com/eh/food.htm> or contact us directly at (269) 373-5210.

2014's Most Cited Violations...and how to avoid them in 2015

When 2014 came to an end, we decided to look at the most cited violations for Kalamazoo County and offer advice on how to avoid those violations in 2015. Our goal is to protect the public from food borne illness and help restaurant operators improve food safety. What follows are the top 4 violations in no particular order.

1. Cleaning of physical facilities

Facility cleaning needs to be done on a routine basis in order to prevent build-up of food debris that will allow bacterial growth and harborage of pests. Keeping facilities clean requires a facility cleaning plan that identifies what needs to be cleaned by whom and when the cleaning should be done. Remember to clean not only the walkways between equipment, but under and behind equipment, along the floor wall juncture, and any hard to reach areas.

2. Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces

Food contact surfaces in continuous use throughout the day must be cleaned and sanitized at least every four hours or when contaminated. All food contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized to ensure most of the harmful bacteria have been eliminated. Wiping cloths in sanitizer buckets should only be used to remove food debris and not to wash and sanitize.

3. Cold and Hot Holding of Potentially Hazardous Foods

Potentially hazardous foods must be held below 41 °F or above 135 °F. In order to ensure foods are being held at a proper temperature, use a calibrated food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of food. We recommend taking temperatures at least every 2 hours to ensure coolers and steam tables are functioning properly.

4. Cleaning non-food contact surfaces of equipment

Kitchen equipment should be cleaned on a routine basis to prevent build-up of grease, dirt, and food debris. A facility cleaning plan identifies cleaning frequency and how and when the cleaning should take place. Proper cleaning includes the interior and exterior of equipment, shelving in coolers, ventilation hoods and between equipment.

Kalamazoo County Evaluator's Contact Information and Specialty

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Hand Washing Basics

Hand washing is the most effective means of preventing the spread of bacteria and viruses to your customers and employees. Proper hand washing can prevent contamination of food, utensils, and equipment.

Steps to Hand washing:

1. Wet hands with warm water
2. Using soap (not a hand sanitizer) work up a soapy lather that covers hands
3. Rub hands together for at least 10 - 15 seconds. Make sure to wash palms, back of hands, and between fingers
4. Rinse hands in warm water
5. Dry hands with single-use paper towels or air dryers. Turn off faucet with paper towels to prevent recontamination of hands

When to Wash:

- Before starting to work with food, utensils, or equipment
- After removing gloves and before putting on gloves
- During food preparation, as often as needed, and when changing tasks
- When switching between raw foods and ready-to-eat foods
- After handling soiled utensils and equipment
- After coughing, sneezing, or using a tissue
- After eating, drinking, using tobacco products, or electronic cigarettes
- After touching your skin, hair, or face
- After handling service animals, fish in aquariums, or molluscan shellfish in display tanks
- After using the restroom

Where to Wash:

Only wash hands in sinks designated for hand washing.

Sign up for [Food Safety Listserv](#) to receive important food safety newsletters and other communications instantly via email

<http://www.kalcounty.com/eh/foodsafety-listserv.htm>

Use your smart phone or mobile device and a QR code reader to connect directly to our website!



Spotlight On

Reduced Oxygen Packaging (ROP)

ROP can be used to describe any packaging procedure that results in a reduced oxygen level in a sealed package. One type of device that will reduce the amount of air within a package is a vacuum sealing machine. We are seeing an increased use of these machines to package foods for storage, to cook foods, and to cool foods.



Clostridium botulinum and ***Listeria monocytogenes***

are examples of bacteria that prefer low oxygen environments and can grow on foods that have been improperly vacuum sealed. Special steps must be taken in order for you to safely use this type of equipment.

If you are using a vacuum sealer in your establishment, please contact our office at (269) 373-5210 to discuss proper sealing procedures and food safety guidelines.