

# THE CENTRAL KITCHEN



**A publication of the Central Michigan District Health Department**

## New Rules Regarding Allergens

Studies show that 15 million Americans have some kind of food allergy – a number that is trending higher every year. This is a concern since an allergic reaction can be serious, even fatal. Food service operators in particular need to be knowledgeable about allergens because half of all fatal episodes from food allergens occur outside the home. The good news is that just 8 foods cause 90% of food allergy reactions: Dairy, Peanuts, Shellfish, Tree Nuts, Eggs, Fish, Soy and Wheat. The following requirements for food facilities begin this year in order to address food allergen issues:



- **Beginning now:** All facilities must display an allergen awareness poster so employees know the common allergens, symptoms of an allergic reaction, and how to handle customers with allergen concerns. Posters are free from the health department and are available in 7 languages.
- **From now until January, 2017:** Certified Managers must complete additional (1 hour minimum) allergen training. Approved courses are listed on the MDARD web site. The NRA on-line course is available for \$10 – or free for Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) members.
- **Beginning January, 2017:** Violations will be written during routine inspections for non-compliance with the above 2 requirements.



## Food Worker Training

The Central Michigan District Health Department offers food safety training for food workers in our six-county district. This two hour class covers major topics relating to food safety such as personal hygiene, approved food sources, cooking temperatures, cooling and reheating procedures, cleaning and sanitizing, etc. The charge is \$10 for two hours of instruction. Pre-registration is required and the registration form is available on our website.

## The P.I.C.

The Michigan Food Law requires retail food establishments to have a **Person In Charge**, or **PIC** during all hours of operation. The **PIC** must be able to demonstrate knowledge of:

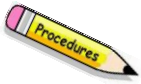
- ✓ foodborne disease prevention
- ✓ applications of HACCP principles, and
- ✓ the requirements of the Food Code

There are three ways a PIC may demonstrate this knowledge:

- 1) By compliance with the Food Code during a routine inspection. That is, no Priority or Priority Foundation violations during a routine inspection.
- 2) By becoming a *certified* food protection manager. To become certified, the PIC must have taken an accredited manager certification course that includes passing a test.
- 3) By correctly responding to an inspector's questions. This is not a "quiz." However, during the inspection, food safety procedures used by the establishment will be discussed between the PIC and the inspector. The PIC should show a working knowledge of any Food Code requirements that apply to the practices used in the facility.



### Standard Operating Procedures

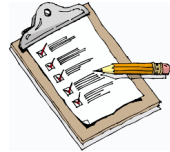


All new or newly remodeled food establishments must develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Health Department review before opening their facilities. SOPs may also be required when addressing recurring or repeat violations. Some operators voluntarily use SOPs as training tools for their employees. But what exactly is a SOP?

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is simply a written document that describes the activities necessary to complete a task in accordance with the Food Code and Michigan Food Law. Its purpose is to protect products from contamination, control microbial growth that can result from temperature abuse, and to ensure that equipment is properly maintained. A properly completed SOP will address the following four questions:

- (1) What will be done and who will do it?
- (2) Who will make sure it's done and how?
- (3) How should problems be fixed?
- (4) What records will be kept?

For example, a SOP for cooling soup which was held hot at the buffet could be as follows:



- 1) A food worker will place the soup into an ice bath until it reaches 70°F within 2 hours, then store the soup in the walk-in cooler where it will be further reduced to 41°F within an additional 4 hours. Temperatures and times are recorded in the Time/Temperature Log.
- 2) The Person In Charge (PIC) will review the T/T Log before leaving his/her shift.
- 3) If the two-stage cooling parameters are not met, the soup will be immediately discarded.
- 4) Time/Temperature Logs for this process will be kept on file for at least 30 days.

Some common SOPs:

Handwashing  
Cross-contamination prevention  
Date-marking  
Cooking  
Cooling  
Reheating  
Hot holding and cold holding

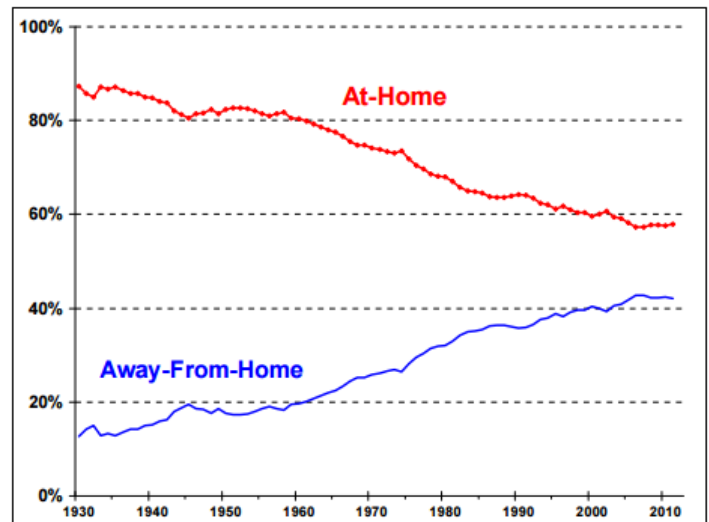
Customers expect the food they eat at restaurants to be consistent in quality and safe. To accomplish this, the entire organization must have a culture that includes food safety from the time food is received through service. Management and staff must have a food safety culture with shared beliefs and behaviors that are routinely practiced and demonstrated over time. Everyone in the organization must be aware of their role in food safety and be accountable.

- Written policies and procedures create a framework for management and staff to follow.
- Procedures must have clear expectations for everyone from the back of the house to the front.
- Keep the customer in focus; many are very young, elderly, or have medical conditions making them vulnerable to unsafe food.
- Use checklists and logs to monitor compliance with procedures and record food safety control points.
- Incorporate routine training to reinforce expectations and continue to improve performance.

Serving food that is consistent in quality and is safe to eat becomes a proactive process by incorporating food safety into the culture of the organization.

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Average U.S. Food Expenditure Shares: At-Home vs. Away-from-Home



Source: Consumers and Food Price Inflation, Randy Schnepf Specialist in Agricultural Policy, September 13, 2013, Congressional Research Service; at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40545.pdf>