

food

No. 2

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH • WINTER 2000

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As promised in our first issue, we want to keep you updated on changes in the Health Code, new inspection procedures and current issues in food protection. We hope that this newsletter, which we will send to you regularly, will help answer many of your questions. For more information, see the directory on page 4. To suggest topics, call the Health Academy at (212) 280-9211.

NEW SIGN REQUIREMENT

The latest change in the Health Code requires restaurant owners to have a special sign posted conspicuously at all entrances to their establishment. This sign is to inform the public that the most recent health inspection report of the restaurant can be obtained by contacting the Department of Health. This requirement is designed to make restaurant inspection information more accessible to the public. (Restaurant owners are not required to give inspection reports to customers, just to have the sign.)

Copies of this sign are available at the Citywide Licensing Center located on the 5th floor at 42 Broadway in Lower

Manhattan. The blank spaces on the sign must be filled in with the name of your restaurant, the business name on your permit, the permit number and the address of your establishment. All information must be printed in a legible manner.

You don't have to worry about being fined for not having

this sign but it is a violation that will be counted in your total violations and may result in your getting re-inspected.

You may request that copies of the sign be mailed to you by calling (212) 442-9666. Ask for the "Inspection-Report-Available Sign." □

PLUMBING

Did you know that Department of Buildings regulations require that the installation and replacement of plumbing fixtures and equipment in food service establishments must be done by a licensed master plumber? This includes work done on backflow prevention devices, floor drains, water lines, gas lines, toilets and sinks.

Restaurant Name _____
Business Name _____
Permit Number _____
Address _____

How did we do on our most recent Health Department inspection?

To obtain the inspection report, please call (212) 442-9666



New York City Department of Health
520 West 181st Street, 9th Floor
The City of New York, Commission of Health
Website: www.cityofny.gov/DOH

2000

JANUARY							APRIL							JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				

PASTEURIZED MILK AND CREAM

Restaurant owners are very familiar with the fact that only pasteurized milk and cream are allowed to be sold in New York City, and that these products have an expiration date printed on them. In New York City, the expiration date on pasteurized milk and cream is 9 days from the date of pasteurization, while the expiration date on ultra-pasteurized cream is 30 days from the date of ultra pasteurization.

Checking the expiration date on these products will help you to purchase a product that is guaranteed safe and that you can use up before the safety is no longer guaranteed.

Also, remember that milk is a potentially hazardous food and must be kept refrigerated at a temperature of 41°F or below. □

COMMON VIOLATIONS AND HOW TO CORRECT THEM

Some of you asked for information on the most common violations found during inspections and how to correct them. We will address three of those in this issue and some others in the next.

Not having someone with a Food Protection Certificate on the premises

A large number of food service establishments have been receiving violations for not having someone on the premises with a Food Protection Certificate. The New York City Health Code requires that someone with a Food Protection Certificate supervise food preparation activities during all hours of operation. In order to comply with this regulation, most restaurant owners employ more than one person with this certificate. In this way, one Food Protection Certificate-holder will always be on the premises.

If you need information on how to register for this course, you may call the Health Academy at (212) 280-9211.



Insects and vermin

Another frequently cited violation is the presence of insects and vermin in food service establishments. Great care and serious effort are needed to control insect and vermin. It takes the combined efforts of you and your pest control operator to manage this problem. A reliable pest control operator, while a valuable asset, is just one part of the solution. You have responsibilities, too. Cleaning up spilled food, storing food items in securely closed containers, paying special attention to the disposal of garbage and using trash cans with tight-fitting covers can all help control insect and vermin by cutting off their food source.

Storing supplies and equipment off the floor and away from walls remove a popular hiding place for rats and mice. This will control rodents by removing their "homes."



Not holding hot foods at 140°F or higher.

Some food service operators, concerned that the food will dry out and become unattractive, keep foods hot enough to serve but not hot enough to prevent germs from growing. It is very important to remember, though, that hot foods must be kept hot to prevent germs from multiplying and causing illness. At 140°F and above, the germs usually found in food do not stand a chance—they are killed by the heat. Food-service personnel must keep hot foods at 140°F or hotter so that any germs that were not killed during cooking and any germs that that might have been introduced after cooking cannot multiply and cause customers to become ill.

There are several ways to ensure that hot foods are kept hot:

- ♦ Prepare food as close as possible to the time of service so that there is no need to hold for later service.
- ♦ Keep food on the stove or in the oven with the heat low to avoid the food burning or drying out.
- ♦ Ensure that the water in the holding unit is very hot before setting out trays of food.
- ♦ Check the temperature of all food items regularly with your thermometer. Do not rely on the thermostat on the holding unit.
- ♦ Use smaller amounts of food on your steam table. It will finish faster and can be replaced with fresh, hot food from the stove or oven.
- ♦ Avoid over-filling trays. This will cause the food in the upper portion, which is exposed to air, to lose heat.
- ♦ Stir soups, stews and other such foods at reasonable intervals so that the temperature of the food is the same in the top of the container as the bottom.
- ♦ Keep food covered when not in use to help retain heat.

□



The following guidelines are provided to keep you informed about the Health Department's activities as they affect your operations and to explain the role of our inspectors.

♦ In October 1999, the Department of Health created a new unit of inspectors whose job is to inspect food-service establishments during weekends and in the evenings. Therefore, you should not be surprised if a Department of Health inspector shows up during these times to inspect your premises.

♦ Inspectors are provided with two forms of identification: a photo identification card and a small metal shield. You have a right to be shown both of these items and to refuse access to your premises if they are not produced. (However, inspectors are not required to hand over their identification to you or members of your staff.)

♦ Inspectors, when requested, must give you the telephone number of their supervisor and the address of their field office. You may then call and confirm that the individual is an employee of the Department of Health and is at your establishment to conduct official business.

♦ Inspectors are authorized by the Commissioner of

Health to perform their duties. Under the law, they must be allowed onto your premises to conduct an inspection or other investigation at any time your establishment is in operation, whether or not it is open to the public for the service of food.

♦ Verbal abuse of an inspector or obstructing an inspector from carrying out his or her duties after proper identification has been shown is punishable by the suspension or cancellation of a permit, which can also include on-the-spot closure.

♦ Inspectors are *not* authorized, *under any circumstances*, to collect money on behalf of the Department of Health. Any attempt to obtain money from you is against the law and should be reported immediately to your local police precinct or the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Health at (212) 825-2141.

♦ Whether you are an individual owner, partner or officer of a corporation, the Department will hold you responsible for violations or for acts committed by your employees or agents.

Please call (212) 676-1600 if you have any questions about inspections. We are happy to answer them.



GREASE INTERCEPTORS

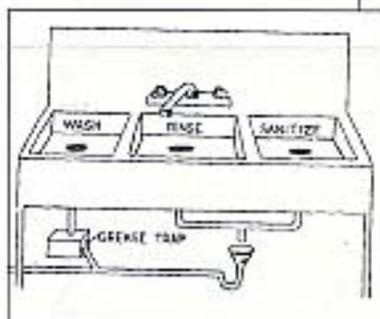
The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requests that we give you the following information on grease interceptors.

Grease interceptors, or "grease traps" as they are commonly known, serve the purpose of preventing grease, fats and oils from clogging the sewer system, which could cause back up of sewage into the basements of buildings. The damage caused by sewer back-ups is unhealthy and expensive to repair.

The Department of Environmental Protection is responsible for maintaining the City's sewer system and has regulations that prohibit the disposal of grease, fats and oils through it. Restaurants and other businesses are required to have a grease interceptor or "grease trap" to prevent grease, fats and oils from entering and clogging sewer lines.

A licensed plumber can determine the size of the grease interceptor needed for

your establishment and install it so that it works correctly. However, it is your responsibility to clean it out each week and dispose of the grease properly through a fat renderer or other grease recycling company.



If you have questions or comments regarding this newsletter, please call the Bureau of Inspections or the Health Academy. The telephone numbers are listed below.

If you wish to contact:

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL
2 Lafayette Street, 14th floor,
NY, NY 10007
(212) 676-2020

BUREAU OF INSPECTIONS
253 Broadway, 12th floor,
Box CN59A, NY, NY 10007
(212) 676-1600

CITYWIDE LICENSING CENTER
42 Broadway, 5th floor,
NY, NY 10004
(212) 487-4436

HEALTH ACADEMY
160 West 100th Street,
NY, NY 10025
(212) 280-9211

INSPECTOR GENERAL
80 Maiden Lane,
NY, NY 10005
(212) 825-2141

DEP has inspectors whose job is to ensure that these interceptors are of adequate size and are working and maintained properly. Violations can result in serious fines; to avoid these, please ensure that your establishment has the correctly sized equipment and that it is maintained properly.



For information about the Sewer Use Regulations, call DEP's Compliance Engineering Section:
☎ (718) 595- 4731.

To report sewer back-ups or to get assistance with sewer, water, air or noise problems, call DEP's 24-hour hotline:
☎ (718) 337- 4347.

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