

What's Going On at That Roadside Stand? By Ashley Ullom

If you haven't already seen roadside stands popping up, then you most certainly will. In May 2009 the Indiana legislators passed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1309. This new Act excludes Home Based Vendors (HBVs) from the definition of Retail Food Service Establishment and exempts them from the regulations of retail food establishments such as registration, licensing, and health inspections. HEA 1309 allows for the production of certain foods that are **not** "potentially hazardous foods" (PHFs) in the private home of the manufacturer and sale of those foods to the public at a roadside stand or farmers market. In addition, HBVs may not sell any food products that have been sealed in reduced oxygen packaging (ROP) or canned products that are shelf-stable in a hermetically sealed container such as salsas, canned vegetables, canned meats, and canned seafood. HBVs may not sell pickled vegetables, cut tomatoes and cut melons, garlic in oil mixtures, herb in oil mixtures, raw seed sprouts, and fruit butters (i.e. pear, pumpkin).

A home based vendor is defined as: An individual vendor at a farmer's market or a roadside stand if the individual vendor's food product:

1. is made by an individual in the individual's primary residence;
2. is not a potentially hazardous food product;
3. is prepared by an individual who practices proper sanitary procedures including: proper hand washing, sanitization of the container or other packaging in which the food product is contained, and safe storage of the food product.

All foods produced by HBVs must be labeled with the following statement in at least 10 point type: "**This product is home produced and processed and the production area has not been inspected by the State Department of Health.**" Labels must also include: the name and address of the producer of the food product; the name of the food product; the ingredients in the food product in descending order by weight; net weight and volume of final product or numerical count; and the date on which the product was processed.

Foods prepared by HBVs may only be sold at farmer's markets and roadside stands. HBV foods may not be sold or used as an ingredient at any other venue including retail food establishments (ex: foodservices, restaurants, grocery stores, or gas stations), festivals, fairs, carnivals, or any other event and may not be delivered. Also, one can not be an HBV and a licensed food service. They are either one or the other. As licensed food services you can not use products from HBVs in your facility as they are considered an unapproved food source since they are not inspected.



4230 Elkhart Rd.
Goshen, IN 46526
Phone: 574-875-3391
Fax: 574-875-3376

Promoting a healthful life and environment through education, service and community involvement.

www.elkhartcountyhealth.org

Elkhart County
Health Department



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5,000 people die from a foodborne illness each year in the United States



Fall 2009

Food Safety News

Who is Food Safety Protecting? By Jenn Montiel

While everyone is susceptible to foodborne illnesses, certain groups of people are at higher risk for contracting one of the more than 200 known diseases that are transmitted through food. Infants, young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk for foodborne illnesses. The Centers for Disease Control reports that 76 million people become sick; 325,000 people are hospitalized; and 5,000 people die each year in the United States from a foodborne illness. Causes of foodborne illnesses include viruses, bacteria, parasites, toxins, metals, and prions (infectious particles of protein).



Prevalent foodborne illnesses are constantly changing in the United States. A century ago, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and cholera were common foodborne diseases. Improvements in food safety from farm to fork have lessened outbreaks of these diseases. These improvements include safe canning, pasteurization of milk, and water supply disinfection. Other foodborne diseases have become common that were unknown several years ago. If you were operating a retail food establishment 20 years ago you may not have heard of E. coli, but now this term is common knowledge. New pathogens are now recognized as foodborne diseases because microorganisms can easily spread around the world, microorganisms can evolve, the environment and ecology can change, food production practices and consumption habits change, and improved laboratory tests can better identify microorganisms. Essentially, the food you served and the method in which that food was served years ago may not be the same as the food you are serving today.

Why is it important to understand foodborne diseases and at-risk populations? As a retail food establishment, it is your responsibility to offer safe food to your customers so that what consumers eat today will not kill or injure them tomorrow. The following are five steps to keep in mind to prevent foodborne illness:

- ◆ **Cook** potentially hazardous foods thoroughly. Use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature to determine that the food has been cooked sufficiently to kill bacteria.
- ◆ **Separate** raw and ready-to-eat foods, as well as different types of foods. Prevent cross-contamination by washing your hands and food contact surfaces between foods.
- ◆ **Avoid** the temperature danger zone. Potentially hazardous foods should always be properly held at/below 41°F or at/above 135°F.
- ◆ **Clean** all produce before preparation. Rinse produce in running tap water to remove visible debris. Remove the outer leaves of items such as cabbage and lettuce. Approved produce washing chemicals may also be used.
- ◆ **Wash** your hands often and as required to prevent foodborne illness. Do not be a source of illness yourself. Properly wash your hands for 20 seconds with friction and soap using 100°F water.
- ◆ **Report** suspected foodborne illnesses to the Health Department. You can be our first line of defense for preventing a foodborne outbreak.

For more information on protecting at-risk populations from foodborne illness visit www.safetables.org or www.cdc.gov. You may also contact the Elkhart County Health Department at 574-875-3391 and speak to an Environmentalist.



The Face of Foodborne Illness

S.T.O.P. – Safe Tables Our Priority is a national, non-profit, public health organization dedicated to preventing illness and death from foodborne pathogens. Foodborne illness can result in much more than 3-5 miserable days of flu-like symptoms. Many of the pathogens that cause foodborne illness have devastating and lifelong lasting effects. These effects range from extremely painful days to months in the hospital with complications such as kidney failure, strokes, heart failure, brain damage and secondary infections.

The Elkhart County Health Department is trying to enlist a guest speaker from the S.T.O.P. organization to come to Elkhart County in the spring of 2010 to put a face on foodborne illness. The presentation will be open to the public. Plan to come and hear the personal side of foodborne illness and learn how you can be an advocate for food safety. We'll let you know the details early next spring. In the meantime, visit www.safetables.org to read for yourself some of the heart-breaking stories that we all can work together to prevent from happening in Elkhart County.

Many of the pathogens that cause foodborne illness can have devastating and lifelong lasting effects.

H1N1 Flu and Your Food Service By Shelley Chaffee

H1N1 flu is an influenza virus that is spreading worldwide. It is sometimes called "swine flu" because initial laboratory testing showed it was similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. Further study has shown that the virus actually has genes from flu viruses that circulate in pigs, birds, and humans.

The H1N1 flu is not considered a foodborne illness, meaning it is not transmitted by food. It is spread person-to-person by the coughs and sneezes of someone who is sick. The virus can also live on surfaces for up to 8 hours and infect a person who touches a contaminated surface and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces that could be contaminated with the virus is important. Pay special attention to surfaces that are touched often and by many people such as doorknobs, counters, telephones, keyboards, and sink faucet handles. An infected person may spread the illness to others from one day before getting sick and up to 7 days or more after.



Symptoms of H1N1 flu:

- ◆ Fever (but not everyone with flu will have a fever)
- ◆ Headaches and body aches
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Runny or stuffy nose
- ◆ Chills
- ◆ Sore Throat

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that a person who is ill stays home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine. An employee may NOT return to work in a food service until he or she is free of vomiting and/or diarrhea symptoms for at least 24 hours. Any employee who is experiencing persistent sneezing, coughing, or a runny nose may not work with food, clean equipment, or unwrapped single-service items.

Protect yourself and your food service:

- ◆ Stay home if you are sick and send ill employees home
- ◆ Wash hands often with soap and water
- ◆ Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are effective but in a food service they may only be used after hand washing and not in place of hand washing according to the Indiana Retail Food Service Sanitation Requirements 410 IAC 7-24
- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- ◆ Cough/sneeze into your elbow to prevent contaminating your hands
- ◆ Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes
- ◆ Clean and sanitize equipment and surfaces with the same sanitizer you use every day in your facility

For more information visit:

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

National Restaurant Association

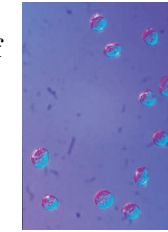
www.restaurant.org/fluinfo

Biofilms By Ashley Ullom

Quickly wiping down food surfaces with cleansers and sanitizers at the end of the night may not be enough to protect your facility from the formation of biofilms. Sanitation efforts in food facilities may fail if biofilms have formed in the establishment. Failure or inadequacy of cleaning/sanitation programs leads to biofilm formation in the first place.

Biofilms may be defined as communities of bacterial cells that:

1. adhere to each other and to surfaces
2. are surrounded, held together and protected by glue-like materials (polysaccharides) that they produce
3. have different gene expression profiles and phenotypes compared with normal cells.



Biofilms occur widely in nature and become major problems in wounds and surgical equipment as well as in foods and processing facilities. Biofilms are a complex network of cells performing collectively as a living system. Channels exist between cell clusters that deliver water and nutrients to each cell and facilitate waste removal. These characteristics combined with strong cohesive properties and sophisticated collaboration make biofilms highly resistant to cleaning agents.

While microbial cells have the ability to attach to surfaces where they can multiply and grow, their attachment to surfaces is facilitated by the presence of moisture and nutrients or soil on the surface that may be the result of inadequate or infrequent cleaning.

By The Numbers

We have compiled a list of the top five critical violations and a list of the top ten violations cited from August 1, 2009 thru October 31, 2009 on routine inspections of regularly licensed facilities in Elkhart County. You may use this list as a way to trouble shoot in your own facility. Your inspector can help you find ways to correct these violations.

TOP FIVE CRITICAL VIOLATIONS:

1. Improper holding temperatures of potentially hazardous foods.
2. Improper hand washing.
3. Food contact equipment with accumulation of debris.
4. Improper date marking of Ready-to-Eat foods.
5. Cross-Contamination with raw foods stored over Ready-to-Eat foods.



Attachment of some bacteria to surfaces may occur within 20 minutes. Biofilm development may occur within 24 hours and can grow to millimeters in a few days. Biofilm bonds become stronger with time, but bacteria cells may also dislodge and serve as sources of contamination on other surfaces or food. Biofilm-forming bacteria include *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Pseudomonas*.

Biofilms may be present on floors, walls, pipes, drains, gaskets on cooler doors, and surfaces of equipment including stainless steel, aluminum, nylon, Teflon, rubber, plastic, and glass.

Proper cleaning and sanitization work best for biofilm prevention while its removal is only necessary if prevention fails. Biofilm removal and inactivation is achieved by the following:

- ◆ proper concentrations of cleaning and sanitizing agents
- ◆ adequate exposure time as directed on the product label
- ◆ proper mechanical action (scrubbing)

Prevention of biofilm formation is preferred and is accomplished by avoiding conditions that lead to cell attachment by cleaning and sanitizing surfaces regularly. If an area in your facility has an accumulation of debris and/or soil and you feel a biofilm has established, extensive scrubbing with proper chemicals is important in biofilm removal.



TOP TEN OVERALL VIOLATIONS: *denotes critical

1. Inadequate cleaning of physical facilities, ex: floors, walls and ceilings.
2. Inadequate cleaning of non-food contact surfaces.
3. Physical facilities in poor repair, ex: holes in walls, broken floor tiles, etc.
4. Broken or leaking plumbing.
5. Broken/poor repair of equipment components.
6. Inadequate lighting in facility.
7. Improper sealing of outer entrances allowing pest entry
8. *Improper holding temperatures of potentially hazardous foods.
9. Broken/poor repair of equipment.
10. Inadequate spacing/sealing of equipment for ease of cleaning.

OPERATOR WRITTEN RESPONSE TO INSPECTION

PLEASE RETURN WITHIN TEN (10) DAYS OF THE INSPECTION OF YOUR ESTABLISHMENT

Elkhart County Health Department
Environmental Health Services
4230 Elkhart Rd.
Goshen, In 46526
Ph. 574-875-3391
Fax 574-875-3376
www.elkhartcountyhealth.org

Date _____

The following is my response to the inspection performed and the report prepared by the

Elkhart County Health Department's representative, _____ on _____

Attach additional sheets as needed.

Optional:

Name Title

Establishment

Address Response form 10/09

Health Inspectors-A Valuable Resource By Karla Kreczmer

Have you ever thought about all the resources you utilize for your food service? You use refrigeration and hot holding to keep food at the proper temperatures. You use thermometers to check temperatures. The dishwasher cleans your dishes. The cash register tracks your sales. You use the phone book and advertising to get people to come into your facility. Your suppliers keep you up to date on what is new and coming. Your patrons tell you what they want and like. You have insurance to cover you in the case of liability. You also have one other resource that you may not have considered to help you in many areas of your food service...the health inspector!

Your health inspector can be a very valuable resource and you should take full advantage of that. Your inspector has been in numerous facilities and has seen many situations. If you are having trouble with a certain problem, whether it is holding temperatures, storage issues, employee training, choosing a piece of equipment, etc, chances are your inspector can help you. S/he can provide advice based on their prior experience of seeing what has and what hasn't worked for others in the same type of situation. In addition, they can help you make the best choices based on your facility and how your operation works. They can be utilized as a third party auditing tool to help keep you in compliance, while providing valuable guidance.



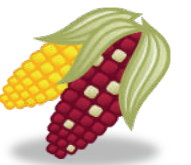
Situations where an inspector has been a useful resource include helping to redesign a kitchen for better flow and increased efficiency, suggesting the use of stainless steel containers for salad bar condiments in order to maintain proper temperature resulting in less waste, coordinating pest control applications in multi-unit buildings to get better elimination of pests, suggesting equipment changes resulting in a better product, and identifying recalled products implicated in foodborne illness outbreaks throughout the country and notifying the operator before the product is used in the facility. The inspectors have also helped facilities save money by providing guidance on the construction of food service facilities or the purchase of new equipment so that it is done correctly the first time, eliminating the need to be redone at an increased cost.



The health department has also been called upon in cases of suspected foodborne illness. Several times the health inspectors have been able to provide proof of compliance with regulations for the implicated facility. This is something that could be used in the defense of a court case should it ever come to that. You may even find that inspections showing compliance may be good for your insurance rates.

The health department can be in your first line of defense to help you while you provide safe food to the public. The health inspector is an under-utilized resource that is there to guide you in many ways. Not only are they there to protect the health of the public, they are there to help you protect your customers and therefore your business.

Your Input is Appreciated



Some of you may recall, many years ago, a piece of paper you used to receive along with your inspection called the 'Operator Written Response to Inspection'. The form can be utilized by you, the operator, to make a written response to the inspection you received at your facility. The choice to respond is completely up to you, it is not required. The form will allow you to make a written response to your inspection including how it was performed, any concerns you may have, any items you are addressing from the inspection, or just to relay the experience you had, negative or positive. The responses should be based on the current inspection that you received.

In order to improve our services we will once again be utilizing these forms. Your inspector will provide you with the form at the completion of your inspection. The form will be on a pink sheet of paper. You can return the form to our office via the fax, the mail or you can drop it off at our office. We would like to get these responses from you to gain more current data on how we are doing. The data would then be used to improve our services to you and the public. We are working hard to do the best job that we can when helping you provide a safe product to your customers.

On the back side of this page there is a copy of the form that we will be handing out. Please feel free to utilize this form now if you have received an inspection in the last three months or so that you would like to comment on. In order to use your comments to the best of our ability please be specific and provide the name of the inspector and the date the inspection was performed. Thank you in advance for your assistance.