

Nourishing News



IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

MAY 2009



Food Safety

This publication has been sent to all:

- School Food Service Directors
- School Food Service Kitchen Managers
- Child & Adult Care Food Program Sponsors

UPCOMING TRAININGS

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SAVE THE DATE

August 6th & 7th SNA Mini-Conference in Kellogg please check back for specific classes.

To sign up for Child Nutrition trainings or for more information, visit our training web site: www.databasesdoneright.com/nutrition/

- CIRCULATE TO: Superintendent Principal
 School Nurse Health Teacher Kitchen Staff

How to calibrate a thermometer correctly

Thermometers need to be calibrated before initial use, when they are dropped or go from one temperature extreme to another.

Thermometers are critical equipment for measuring temperature to ensure the safety and quality of many food products.

Calibrate them frequently. Also, remember to sanitize thermometers before and in between uses.

There are two methods that you can use to calibrate a thermometer:

Ice Point Method

- Fill a container with crushed ice and water. Ensure that the container has enough crushed ice to provide an environment of 32° F, so you may need to add more ice into the container during the process.
- It will take about 4 to 5 minutes for the mixture of water to stabilize. Insert the thermometer needing to be calibrated into the appropriate immersion depth (note: from tip of thermometer to the dimple on stem is the sensing portion).
- Hold the thermometer away from the bottom and sides of the container to avoid error. Wait until the thermometer stabilizes before adjusting the thermometer.



A Message from the Director

Serving safe food is a critical responsibility for maintaining quality foodservice programs and healthy environments at schools and child care facilities. Keeping foods safe is

also a vital part of healthy eating and a recommendation of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. When properly implemented, food safety programs will help ensure the safety of the school and child care center meals served to children across Idaho.

Food safety problems need to be stopped before they even happen by identifying and controlling possible critical points that may contaminate food as it flows through a food establishment. There are different areas to build upon when developing a food safety program. The first area is to know and understand the areas of potential concern. This ensures that the proper procedures are followed to identify any possible concern that can make food unsafe for the customers. If any area is overlooked, the program is potentially ineffective. The second area of support is employee training. Employees need to be trained so they have the knowledge, skills and motivation to prepare and serve safe food. All employees must realize the important role they play in food safety, no matter what job they have. Research has found new strains of harmful organisms, sometimes in foods once thought to be free of potentially

harmful organisms. As research continues, our Child Nutrition Program employees must keep up-to-date with the latest information and procedures that will control or eliminate harmful microorganisms that could make anyone sick when consuming food.

Section 111 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) amended section 9(h) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires school food authorities (SFAs) to implement a food safety program for the preparation and service of school meals to children in the school year beginning July 1, 2005. This program must be based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles and conform to guidance issued by the Department of Agriculture. Idaho State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs have offered Food Safety and HACCP courses regionally throughout the state for several years. This has allowed all Idaho SFAs to have a fully implemented food safety program that complies with HACCP principles at their serving sites. While HACCP is not a regulatory requirement for child care centers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), it plays an important role in providing safe food.

Child Nutrition Programs hopes you find this newsletter of assistance when reviewing the food safety program you have at each serving site. For additional information visit www.fns.usda.gov/fns/food_safety.htm

Sincerely,
Colleen Fillmore, PhD, RD, LD
CNP Director

A Reminder on Hand Washing

Rachel Johns, RD, LD, Coordinator

Washing hands multiple times may seem like an inconvenience during a busy day, but it is a critical step in serving safe food. The following list from the *Idaho Food Safety Manual* has examples of when foodservice workers should wash their hands:

- ▶ Immediately prior to engaging in food establishment operations;
- ▶ After using the toilet;
- ▶ Before handling food, clean food-contact surfaces of equipment or utensils;
- ▶ Before putting on gloves to work with food;
- ▶ After eating, drinking, using tobacco, coughing, sneezing, touching the mouth, touching the nose, or touching the hair;
- ▶ After handling raw meat, poultry and seafood when cross-contamination can occur;
- ▶ After handling garbage, dirty dishes or soiled equipment;
- ▶ After handling personal belongings (street clothing, purses, cosmetics, etc.), and at any other time during the work hours as necessary to keep hands clean.

It is important when washing ones hands that soap is used and that one scrubs for 20-30 seconds. Warm water should be used to rinse. Common towels and aprons should not be used to dry hands; this can re-contaminate just-washed hands. Paper towels should be used to dry hands and turn off faucet. Trimmed fingernails are also critical in helping to keep one's hands clean.

Hand washing is vital in the process of preparing safe food, but it is not the only step to take toward proper personal hygiene. Foodservice staff need to be clean, have clean hair, clean hands, clean fingernails, and clean clothes. Eating, drinking and smoking should not be done in food preparation or dishwashing areas. Wearing gloves and not working while sick are other essential habits of good hygiene.

Source: *Idaho Food Safety Manual*



Risk Factors and Training for Food Safety

Patrick Guzzle, Food Protection Program Manager, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

News of recalled food items and foodborne illness outbreaks continues to pose concerns for food safety personnel. In 2008, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducted a study of the occurrence of specific risk factor behaviors taking place in retail food establishments, including school cafeterias. The risk factor behaviors include: inadequate handwashing, improper cooking, improper time and temperature controls, and others. This is the third time FDA has conducted a risk factor study. Though initial reports of the data are not yet available, one wonders what food workers can do to reduce the occurrence of risk factor behaviors.

The previous two risk factor studies have indicated a strong correlation between having a “person-in-charge” who can demonstrate food safety knowledge and a reduction in the occurrence of risk factor behaviors. Though every staff member is ultimately responsible for food safety, having a person-in-charge can facilitate additional training.

There are several different ways to demonstrate knowledge of food safety. It is highly recommended that supervisory level staff members complete one of the three nationally accredited courses. Another option is for a

supervisor to know the material in the *Idaho Food Safety and Sanitation Manual* and successfully complete the accompanying exam.

Both the manual and exam are available, free of charge, at the web site: www.foodsafety.idaho.gov. The best and most effective training is for a supervisory level person to work directly with hourly employees to ensure that safe food practices are followed. While the Manual and Exam are aimed at supervisory level personnel, a new resource, *Keep it Healthy: Food Safety Employee Guide*, is also available on the web site.

Keep it Healthy is a smaller handbook that provides some basic food safety training information and can be used by anyone. However, *Keep it Healthy* does not prepare a person to successfully complete the Idaho Food Safety Exam. To access *Keep it Healthy* from the web-site, click on the link *Employee's Guide to Food Safety*.

The web site also has other useful information, including links for the *Idaho Food Code*, Idaho's seven public health districts, the FDA, the USDA, and foodborne illness information available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Use of these materials, combined with other food safety training programs currently available, will help staff understand and implement steps to ensure food safety. In addition, food service employees and supervisors should feel free to contact the local district health department or the Idaho Food Protection Program (334-5938) for more information.

The Danger Zone Revisited

Jean Zaske, MS, RD, LD, Coordinator

One of the most basic food safety rules is to keep food out of the temperature “Danger Zone” - the temperature range in which bacteria grow most rapidly (between 41° F and 135° F). This can be challenging when a foodservice establishment must safely and quickly cool down a hot food.

Several cooling methods are recommended to chill foods rapidly (choose the method appropriate for the food item being chilled):

- ▶ Place the food in shallow, uncovered containers no more than 4 inches deep on the top shelf in the back of the walk-in or reach-in cooler.
- ▶ Use a quick-chill unit such as a blast chiller.
- ▶ Stir the food in a container placed in an ice water bath.
- ▶ Add ice as an ingredient.
- ▶ Separate food into smaller or thinner portions.
- ▶ Pre-chill ingredients and containers used for making bulk items such as salads.

Other steps to take in the cooling process:

- ▶ Monitor temperatures of products every hour throughout the cooling process using a properly calibrated thermometer and record temperatures and corrective actions taken on a Cooling Temperature Log.
- ▶ Be sure to modify menus, production schedules and staff work hours to allow for implementation of proper cooling procedures.
- ▶ Train all employees on proper cooling procedures.

Summer is Coming, Keep those Commodities Safe

Dennis McNees, Commodity Specialist

In the summer, heat is great for the fields but not for processed food. The higher the temperature, the shorter the shelf life of your commodities. You like to keep cool in the summer and so do the commodities. You may want to move the commodities to the coolest part of your warehouse or storage area. You need to move them away from doors that are going to be opened, partially for the heat and partially for security.

Bugs just love the summer. They like to take their vacations, doing a lot of traveling and going on long trips. Any type of grain product really attracts bugs. Flour is a particularly good place for bugs to vacation. We suggest that if you have the room in your freezer, move your flour and other grain products into it during the summer months.

Summer is a big drain on the cooling systems. That is why you need to make sure your systems are checked before the heat starts. You also need to make sure they are checked frequently during the summer. There always seems to be a freezer that goes out every summer. The more frequently the freezers and refrigerators are checked, the less likely a big loss will occur. Please make sure all the switches and valves that operate the cooling system are labeled “Do Not Touch.” It would not be the first time maintenance turned off something to work on it and turned off the cooling system at the same time.

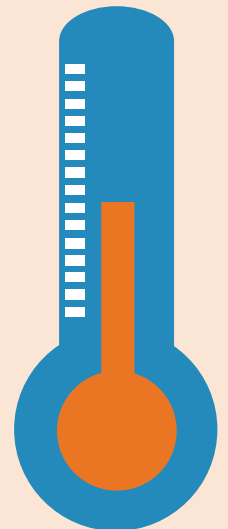
Remember to keep the thermometer in the ice water bath as you calibrate it.

- For accuracy, the thermometer needs to be within +/- 2° of 32° F.

Boiling Point Method

- Fill a container with water and heat it up until it reaches a complete “rolling” boil. Insert the thermometer to the appropriate immersion depth. Boiling point is obtained at 212° F.
- Be sure to leave at least a two-inch gap between the thermometer sensing element and the bottom and sides of the container to avoid error.
- For accuracy the thermometer needs to be within +/- 2° of 212° F.

The ice point method is recommended as the more accurate calibration method as the boiling point method changes due to altitude changes.



Useful Summer Signage - (Inside Poster)

Ed Herrera, BS, Coordinator

With summer quickly approaching, your thoughts may be wandering toward vacations and carefree days. Now is the perfect time to make summer plans for your facility. The inside poster contains four important signs. Copy, laminate and plan where to place them for the most visibility.

Periodic maintenance that requires power and water to be shut off may take place in the summer. Included are two posters (an English and Spanish version) that require the foodservice director to be notified if the power or water needs to be shut off for any reason.

Assign someone to check the temperatures of the freezers and coolers during vacation times. Ideally these temperatures should be checked and logged on a daily basis. Often storms, construction projects or refrigeration equipment failure affect the coolers and freezers. Daily monitoring will allow refrigeration problems to be identified early and may prevent your entire inventory from spoilage.

As you do some final cleaning and sorting of your inventory, keep in mind the summer temperatures of your dry storage areas. High temperatures affect the shelf life of dry storage items; you may consider moving these items into

your cooler or freezer. Practice "First In, First Out" and remember to date code everything in inventory. Now is also the perfect time to dispose of inventory that is past its usable shelf life. These ideas will help you get ready for summer vacation and aid a smooth transition into next fall.



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