



FOOD Facts

Madison Department of Public Health Environmental Health Services Section
Madison, Wisconsin Vol. 1 No. 1 Fall, 1991

We're Here to Help!

The City of Madison is divided into six environmental health districts, so that each district public health sanitarian is responsible for all inspections in her or his area. In addition to restaurants and retail food stores, our sanitarians inspect swimming pools, hotels, motels and tourist rooming houses, bed and breakfast establishments, vending machines, recreational/educational campgrounds, and mobile home parks; and they investigate all types of environmental complaints from citizens in their districts. As you can see, our inspectors must become knowledgeable in many diverse areas, and we do depend on you to help educate us concerning your particular operation. Our staff is almost as diverse as the areas with which they are involved, and we would like to introduce ourselves (many of you know us well already!).

Kelly Heibel has the South Madison area and most of the State Street area. He is the most senior sanitarian and is one of two lead sanitarians. Kelly has had the primary role in upgrading our mobile food cart program and is also responsible for our fledgling Food Operator Training program. **Duane Jackson** is our other lead sanitarian. Dewey has the northwestern area of Madison (north-south dividing line is Mineral Point Road). He is our swimming pool specialist and routinely works with the Farmers' Market sales around Madison.

Robert Elliott has extensive experience inspecting food establishments and has been responsible for the downtown area as well as the far northeast

side. Bob has an interest in occupational health problems and has had a major role in our department's lead testing program. **Laura Spiess** has the near east side area, which has also been designated as our Interdisciplinary Team Pilot District. This team consists of a sanitarian and three public health nurses who are developing a way of working together on cases that need attention from both disciplines for best problem resolution. (see Staff, p. 5)



Left to Right, Top Row: Rick VanDerGeest, Bob Elliott, Laura Spiess, Duane Jackson, Jill Schmidt, Kelly Heibel. **Bottom Row:** Delores VanVeen, Tommye Schneider, Pat Pollard

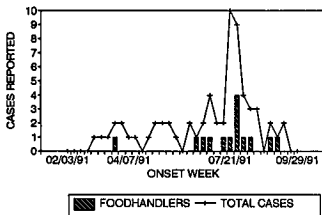
Welcome to our NEW newsletter!

The environmental health staff of the Madison Department of Public Health would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as a reader of our newsletter. We are planning on two issues a year, but if we have an excess of news, we will consider quarterly publication. *Food Facts* will allow us to provide you with the latest information on food safety and code requirements. It will give us an opportunity to tell all of you the same thing at the same time—thus improving the consistency of information provided to food establishments. We hope it will become a useful tool to promote dialogue among all of us who have a common goal: providing a safe food product to the general public. We invite your comments, questions and suggestions regarding the newsletter articles or other issues needing future discussion.

Update: Hepatitis A Hits Madison!

Hepatitis A virus (HAV) made its mark on Madison this summer. It has infected and affected food handlers in some of our restaurants as well as non-food handlers. Department Communicable Disease Specialist Rob Savage reports a four-fold increase over our normal yearly level of HAV cases (over 60, compared to an average of 15 cases per year). This increase has meant extra work for health department staff as well as for those food establishments involved. However, a positive result of these efforts is that our communication with food establishment operators has increased, as well as overall awareness of the problem.

HEPATITIS A CASES--MADISON 1991 FOOD HANDLERS



Following are some precautionary control measures that should always be followed when handling food:

1. Effective employee handwashing, often.
2. No direct handling of ready-to-eat food items (use disposable gloves, tongs, spoons or other utensils).
3. Employees should not work if they exhibit any of the following symptoms: *jaundice (yellowing) of the skin or whites of the eyes, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain, dark urine, low grade fever or muscle and joint aches.*

Once an employee has been confirmed as positive for HAV, the food establishment must take the following measures to stop the potential spread of the virus:

1. Call the Health Department to request assistance in dealing with the problem. We will help you.

2. All food handlers and dishwashers in the establishment must undergo blood testing to determine if they are infected with HAV. Additionally, they must receive an injection of Immune Globulin to help prevent (temporarily) their chances of becoming infected.
3. All food handlers must use disposable gloves when directly handling food.
4. Each confirmed HAV case is not allowed to return to work until their period of transmission is past (normally 2-3 weeks from the onset of illness). This is determined in conjunction with the Health Department and the employee's physician.

If you have any questions, please call your district sanitarian. She or he will gladly provide any information you may need. Hepatitis A virus is a serious disease that must not be taken lightly. Report any cases or information regarding cases to the Health Department promptly.

Vital Statistics . . .

We have only recently computerized our recordkeeping system, so we are not yet able to look back and see trends in Madison's food industry. However, the following statistics from the 1990-1991 licensing year (July 1, 1990 - June 30, 1991) may be of interest to you.

Number of establishments:

Licensed as restaurants only ___ 684
 Licensed as retail food store only ___ 248
 Licensed both as restaurant and
 retail food store _____ 36

Total number of:

Active restaurant and retail food store
 Food and Drink Licenses ___ 968
 New establishments opening
 (pre-inspections) _____ 131
 Establishments going out of business
 (or undergoing owner change) ___ 120
 Consumer complaints on food
 establishments received by
 Health Department _____ 181

Videos Available

We have a number of videos available for loan to assist you with your food-handler training needs.

Food Safety is No Mystery (USDA - 34 min, 10 sec). Aimed at people with little or no experience in the food industry. Training manual included.

Wide World of Food Service Brushes (Sparta Brush Co. - 18 min). Reduce or eliminate the potential of creating food-borne illness, which is caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites. (Emphasis on cleaning with brushes.)

The Danger Zone (Int. Dairy-Deli Assoc. - 30 min). This is a deli food safety and sanitation program to be used by retail employees who prepare and sell food in the deli department. Training manual included.

Sanitizing for Safety (Clorox - 17 min). Very good, concise video which addresses common food-borne illnesses, proper personal hygiene, cross-contamination, proper cooking and holding temperatures, proper food storage and proper sanitization. (Strong emphasis on using bleach as sanitizer.) Training guide included.

IPM: Control of German Cockroaches in Commercial Kitchens (National Pest Control Association - 15 min). Good tape to provide the food operator with basic knowledge on roach control and what can be done so the least amount of pesticide is needed. Training manual included.

Please contact your district public health sanitarian for information on how to borrow these videos for training.



Food Establishment Operator Surveys Compiled

In January of this year, we mailed surveys to 300 food and drink establishment owners and managers in Madison. Since there are six environmental health districts, 50 surveys were mailed to establishments in each district. The survey was anonymous, although respondents were given the opportunity to provide their name, if they wished. Sixty-nine of the 110 total responding (63%) did provide us with the name of their establishment. Following is a summary of the survey results:

Average number of

Years as food establishment owner or manager	13
Years employed in food industry	16
Employees in food establishment	35
New employees hired annually	26

Percent of respondents who

Recognize their health inspector	76
Feel they have a good working relationship with their health inspector	89
Have ever contacted their inspector for answers to questions or requested training	61
Consider health inspections to be reasonable and beneficial	88
Consider health inspections to be fair	85
Understand what compliance dates are	95
Understand City Attorney referral process	70
Understand conditions that can result in immediate suspension of the Food and Drink license	66
Are interested in no-cost training	59
Are interested in food-borne illness training	75

In general, owners and managers responding had significant experience in the food industry (range - 1-47 years). Their employees, however, need constant training due to the large turnover every year (*average employee remained in an establishment 1.3 years*). There is agreement that health inspections are beneficial, and a majority of operators feel their staff could use training in safe food temperatures, personal hygiene, bacterial cross-contamination, utensil washing, sanitizing, food-borne illness and general cleaning. Concerns were raised regarding lack of time for training, language barriers and inconsistencies in code requirements from place to place.

We thank all of you who took the time to complete this survey. We are evaluating all of your comments to help us better meet your needs in the future.

Thank You!

Eggs and Salmonella

For many years, shell eggs were considered to be a potentially hazardous food (PHF). This designation changed when, in the early 1970s, the FDA exempted them from PHF requirements. At that time, the FDA said that, "Due to current egg-handling practices, shell egg research and regulatory controls, both state and federal, we are of the opinion that fresh, clean, uncracked and odor-free shell eggs are not potentially hazardous." This designation changed once more, in September 1990, when the FDA again designated shell eggs to be a potentially hazardous food.

So, why are shell eggs now potentially hazardous, while for years they were not? Since 1985, a steady increase in *Salmonella* outbreaks, especially those found to be caused by *Salmonella enteritidis*, has been noted by the Centers for Disease Control. These outbreaks were first identified on the East Coast and associated with foods containing uncooked or undercooked eggs that been temperature abused. However, further investigation revealed a previously unsuspected problem: The *Salmonella* bacteria can be directly transmitted from the chicken to the egg interior during the laying process. Once the bacteria are in the egg, they multiply if the egg is held above 40°F. The individual who eats such an egg that is not thoroughly cooked will become ill with *salmonellosis*.

A food handler who contracts *salmonellosis* and continues to work while suffering from diarrhea can cause an outbreak of *salmonellosis*, which can be devastating to a food establishment. Therefore, due to this new-found manner in which *Salmonella* may find its way into an egg, food establishments must take the same precautions with eggs as with any other potentially hazardous food.

1. Shell eggs shall be maintained at an internal product temperature of 40°F, or below, until sold or used.
2. Raw eggs shall not be used as an ingredient in the preparation of uncooked, ready-to-eat menu items. (Substitute commercially pasteurized eggs and egg products for foods such as Caesar salad, uncooked hollandaise or bearnaise sauce, and non-commercial mayonnaise, eggnog, ice cream, and egg-fortified beverages.)
3. Shell eggs shall not be pooled if the pooled eggs are to be held before or after cooking. (Shell eggs may be pooled for immediate cooking, followed by immediate service; pasteurized eggs may also be substituted for shell eggs where holding is required for menu items such as scrambled eggs, omelets, French toast, Monte Christo sandwiches, chocolate mousse and meringue.)

4. Individually prepared eggs and pooled eggs shall be cooked to heat all parts to 140°F or above.
5. Cooked eggs requiring holding before service should be held at an internal temperature of 140°F or above.



Did you know . . .

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is used in the Western world to enhance other food flavors rather than to provide its own distinct flavor? The exact mechanism of its flavor-enhancing effect is still unknown, although the use of MSG in food goes back to ancient oriental cooks. They used a seaweed stock to add richness to the flavor of foods during cooking, and chemists in the early 20th century discovered that the salt of glutamic acid (glutamate) in the seaweed was responsible for flavor enhancement.

Some sensitive individuals may respond to glutamate with feelings of tightness, warmth, tingling and a feeling of pressure in the upper part of the body. Frequently, the eating of Chinese food is implicated. Actually, many different ethnic foods have been reported as producing similar reactions, apparently arising from esophageal stimulation. Tests indicate that it is much less common, in fact, than reported.

Food Operator Training to Become *Mandatory!*

Melons Potentially Hazardous

All restaurant operators need to be aware of a new law that was passed with the last State budget on July 1, 1991. This bill requires that, after January 1, 1995, the operator, or at least one manager representative of a restaurant, have a certificate issued by Health and Social Services that indicates that she or he has passed a H&SS-approved written examination demonstrating a basic knowledge of food protection practices, or has achieved approved comparable compliance, as determined by H&SS. It is also required that each operator or manager representative must obtain recertification within five years through an H&SS-approved recertification course. The training and examination requirements have not yet been developed by H&SS but will be in the near future. You will receive information on this required program as soon as it becomes available.

Staff, from p. 1

Richard VanDerGeest is responsible for the southeast area of Madison (north/south dividing line is East Washington Avenue). Rick also worked with Kelly in presenting our first Food Operator Training Session. Rick has worked extensively with the "Taste of Madison" to improve sanitation and safety in that event. **Delores VanVeen** (Lori) has the southwest area of Madison. Her specialty area is pest control (IPM), and she has also worked with a number of restaurant events through the year. **Tommye Schneider** is Environmental Health Services Supervisor. She previously was an inspector in the south and southeast areas. **Jill Schmidt** is Director of Environmental Health and Laboratories, and **Patricia Natzke**, Director of the Department of Public Health. **Patricia Pollard** is our clerical support person.

We are all available to you for consultations, answers to questions or what ever you may need. The district sanitarians are in the office every Monday through Friday between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.. If you are unable to call at that time, please leave a message and indicate a phone number and time when you can be reached. We want to help you when we can!

On July 17, 1991, the FDA issued a revised interpretation for handling cantaloupe and other melons in retail facilities. The new interpretation considers melons to be a potentially hazardous food that requires temperature control measures to ensure the safety of the product. This interpretation developed due to five reported outbreaks of *Salmonellosis* linked to melons during the past 40 years. The largest outbreak occurred between December, 1989 and March, 1990 throughout 30 states. An estimated 25,000 persons were reported ill (with two deaths) from cantaloupe contaminated with *Salmonella*. The latest outbreak occurred in June of this year when several hundred people in 10 states became ill with another strain of *Salmonella*.

In these outbreaks, each episode involved pre-cut melons (which had *Salmonella* on the surface) that were held at unknown, not refrigerated, temperatures prior to sale and consumption. These outbreaks reveal that a melon, once cut, affords sufficient levels of nutrients to rapidly grow *Salmonella*. Since it is not currently possible to assure that all melons will be *Salmonella*-free, the following precautions must be taken at all times when preparing melon for sale in restaurants and retail food stores:

Cut melon products received from off premises shall be obtained only from retail at 40°F or below, and received at retail at 40°F or below.

Melons to be cut in the food establishment shall be cleaned thoroughly, using potable water; prepared using clean and sanitized utensils and surfaces; and held at 40°F or below until sold or served. If possible, refrigerate melons prior to cutting.



Safety Message: Minors Not to Clean Meat-Slicers

According to the Department of Labor (DOL), the agency has reversed its 10 year old enforcement policy that allowed minors to clean meat-slicing equipment. DOL has consistently penalized employers who allowed minors under 18 to operate, set up, adjust or repair power-driven meat-slicers in food service operations. The agency is now adding cleaning to its list of infractions that merit penalties.

For more information, contact your local DOL Wage and Hour Office for its 12-page booklet explaining all aspects of federal laws on teen labor.

Food Operator Training Programs Presented

Kelly Heibel and Rick VanDerGeest presented our first food operator training class on January 16, 1991. Approximately 20 establishments were invited, and 21 managers and food handlers representing 11 establishments attended this first training session.

The session was held at the V.F.W., 133 E. Lakeside St., from 2:00 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. We want to give a big "thanks" to the V.F.W. for graciously allowing us the use of their facility!

The training agenda included a 17-minute video entitled "Sanitizing for Safety," and discussions on food-handling techniques, utensil washing and sanitizing procedures, employee handwashing, ill food handlers, and inspection and enforcement policies.

Our second training session was offered on November 6 and was targeted at catering operations.

We are planning to hold these training sessions two or three times each year and hope to expand and improve each time. We would appreciate your comments and ideas on training. Please keep in mind, however, that mandatory food operator training will begin in 1995 (see separate article in this newsletter).

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