

FoodBytes



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Temporary events: plan now for 2001

Temporary events can be one of the most dreaded activities of local health department food protection programs. The thought of being inundated by dozens of questionable food vendors is enough to make an inspector consider seeking other employment!

But there are ways to lessen the burden and make the job of inspecting and issuing permits more manageable. Planning is the key to success.

Most of the temporary vendors visit during specific events, rather than popping up at random. So step one is to contact the event, festival, or fair organizers, tell them who you are, and explain the food safety laws that you are obligated to enforce. Explain that not only must the vendor be properly equipped (hand sinks, etc.) but he must *register* with you ahead of time. Ask for a list of the anticipated vendors. Nearly all events require advanced registration and collect any fees for lot



Planning now with your festival organizers should reduce unwanted surprises when the events begin.

space with the application. You should be able to get that information.

Armed with the list, try to contact each one and inform them of the food safety and permit requirements (if this is your first contact with the vendor). Let them know that failure to comply will delay their operation, and operating without a permit is not an option!

Strongly urge the event organizers to set a deadline mutually acceptable to the health department, and stick to it! You should never be forced into a position of accepting money away from your office, or trying to

write permits in the field.

Remember that you are doing the vendor a favor by allowing him to operate, not the other way around. Once vendors learn that you are enforcing the regulations, they will stop trying to slip past at the last minute. No vendor should just open up then tell you, “You have to let me operate since I’m already set up.”

Good vendors willingly comply but expect fairness.

Who is a temporary vendor?

410 IAC 7-20 does not include a specific section on “temporaries” since the food safety rules should apply to all who qualify as a “Retail Food Establishment”. The only real difference (in the code) is the *time* the vendor operates (Sec. 87).

We would encourage reasonable accommodation for temporaries, such as not adhering strictly to the provisions of Section 427.

Standardization of food inspectors will resume after training period

The *standardization* of inspectors employed by local health departments will be reinstated in the future, but only after a suitable training period for inspectors.

“There is no sense trying to standardize anyone until they have achieved a good working knowledge of the new code,” said Lee Bray, Training Specialist with the Food Protection Program.

“Also,” he added, “The new standardization program will be different than the previous program.”

Bray says the Indiana program of standardizing retail food establishment inspection officers will be based upon the FDA model for such programs. The first step will be that the applicant must qualify to be accepted into the program. He or she must be regularly engaged in performing food inspections, and have completed 100 inspections in the three years prior to application.

New standardization will also include HACCP inspections and evaluation of the applicant’s communication skill when dealing with the food establishment operator and presenting the final report.

Prospective candidates should start preparing now by studying the new code, learning to write the narrative report correctly, and equipping themselves with the proper inspection tools. The inspector’s “tool kit” should include (but may not be limited to) the following: note pad, pens, thermocouple thermometer, chemical test kits, maximum registering thermometer, temperature test tapes, flashlight, gloves, alcohol pads, inspection forms, and a hair restraint.

“Food Conference” to offer practical training for counties

Plans are underway for the ISDH food program to host the first “food conference” specifically designed for food inspectors of local health departments. Program Manager, Scott Gilliam, made the announcement during the recent IEHA Fall Educational Conference in Evansville.

Time and place are still undecided but the conference

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would run two to three days.

A new round of HACCP training sessions are being planned. Watch for more information coming via direct mail or future issues of FoodBytes.

Food safety puzzle

Unscramble each of the words, placing one letter per box. Then take each of the letters that appear in boxes containing circles and unscramble them for the final food safety message!

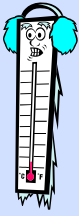
PAHCC	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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RYD GESRATO	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Courtesy of Discovery School Puzzle Maker

When is 41° F. re-quired for coolers?

The simple answer is always, now that the new code is in effect. While Sec. 173 allows for a 10-year exemption, that exemption is only allowable under very specific circumstances. It must be shown to the inspector's satisfaction that the in-use cooler can not achieve 41° F. But once any change is made to the unit, such as repairs or replacement, the exemption does not apply and 41° F. is required. Also the exemption only applies to the owner at the time the code went into effect. Any change of ownership of the establishment, and the cooler, even though in place, must meet the cold holding requirement.



Internet food dishes up new challenges

As the popularity of the Internet grows, new food-related businesses and existing food establishments are finding ways to increase sales via the web and direct mail. This has prompted questions about licensing and inspection of such businesses' food sales. Who is responsible for inspections, and how should these businesses be regulated?

The Indiana State Department of Health established the following guidelines after consulting with Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

If the business is a wholesaler of regulated food products, FDA or more commonly, ISDH will register and inspect. However, this does not apply if the business is a food manufacturer that is mostly retail but sells on a limited wholesale basis. Specifically, the company must sell 25 percent or more wholesale annually to come

under the Wholesale Inspection Program of ISDH.

If the business is a restaurant or manufacturer that is exclusively retail, it is not part of the FDA's registry called the Official Establishment Inventory (OEI). If the company doesn't manufacture food, but distributes prepackaged food items, it is treated as a warehouse and is included in the FDA's OEI. However it must be noted that FDA does minimal routine food inspections in Indiana, leaving this to state and local health authorities.

The only exception would be if there was an imminent health threat and the company ships across state lines. Then FDA could exercise its authority and step in.

This leaves all the other businesses that sell retail, or mostly retail, to be licensed and inspected by the local health department, unless they exist on state property.

These companies are to be treated as any other retail facility in Indiana and are expected to meet the requirements of 410 IAC 7-20.

The Indiana State Department of Health registers and monitors wholesale operations in the state. This includes businesses that sell retail, but do at least 25 percent of their business in wholesale. With only five inspectors to carry out the inspection responsibility for the approximately 800 wholesale firms in the state, ISDH does not have resources to cover all Internet and direct mail food businesses. Unless the business meets the specifications for a wholesale operation, the local health department has jurisdiction. Although the products may be sold across county or state lines, the business is still regarded as a retail facility, subject to local regulation.

by Tara Renner

Retail field staff provides support, training

ISDH has assigned seven field staff members to provide training and provide a link between local health departments and ISDH.

You are encouraged to use these people as your contact with ISDH and to get answers to your questions. They are also ready to provide training assistance as you implement the new code in your counties.

- Area 1 - Ed Norris
enorris@isdh.state.in.us
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- Area 3 - Dan Miller
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- Area 6 - Ed Zglenicki
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- Area 7 - Travis Goodman
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Areas assigned to ISDH Retail Food Protection Field Staff

"Ask Scott"

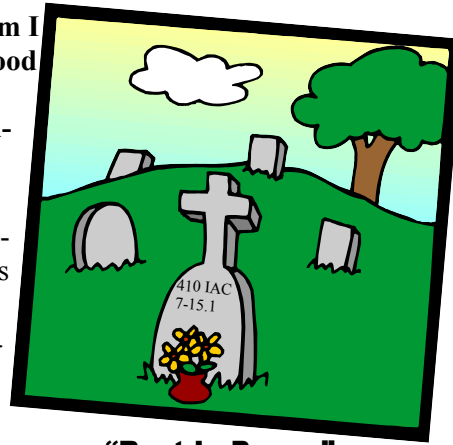
Q. When can we expect to receive printed copies of the new code?

A. Very soon, if not already. We expected to have code books shipped out before now, but we encountered some problems with the print quality and assembly of some of the books. This required having part of the job re-done as we couldn't allow a sub-standard product to be distributed. Meanwhile, you can use the "master" copies sent to each local health department to make emergency copies.

Q. I am trying to improve the "bare hand con-

tact with food" problem I see with some of our food establishments. Can I require the use of utensils when handling ready to eat foods?

A. It is strongly suggested that all inspectors observe food handlers during their inspections. As per Section 136, "food employees shall not contact exposed ready-to-eat food with hands that have not been washed... and shall use suitable utensils". You should assume that a suitable utensil *could* be used. It is up to the operator to prove to you that using a utensil is not practical. So if utensils are not



"Rest In Peace"

If you're still using the "old" code, or out-dated inspection forms, STOP!

They "died" on April 29th!

being used, mark this as Critical. For foods *not* ready-to-eat, bare hand contact should be *minimized*. More on this later.

Tip of the month

Sections 430 and 431 provide great tools for getting new food establishments off to a good start with a proper "plan review". Follow these sections to gain compliance prior to any construction or remodeling.

You are doing the new business no favor by letting this slide. Remember, failing to plan is planning to fail. And always start with the menu!

Send your questions to Scott Gilliam at "foods@isdh.state.in.us", or use the address on page 2.

