

# Food Safety Update



This publication will keep operators of food service establishments up to date on food safety, regulations and foodborne illness. Content is generated as a collaboration between Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Health Protection | *Ensuring Healthy People and Healthy Environments*

2018

## FOODSAFE Reminder

### Level 1 Certificates - Expiry Dates

All FOODSAFE Level 1 certificates issued prior to July 29, 2013 will expire on July 29, 2018. As of July 29, 2013, all FOODSAFE Level 1 certificates issued in BC are valid for 5 years.

Renewals of Level 1 certification can be achieved either by retaking the full version of the FOODSAFE Level 1 course (in-class, correspondence, or online) or by completing the FOODSAFE Level 1 Refresher course. The Level 1 Refresher course is offered online and can be completed within 1 to 3 hours.

In order to be eligible for the Level 1 Refresher course, a person must have received a FOODSAFE Level 1 certificate issued by a BC Health Authority. For more information about the Level 1 Refresher course or the FOODSAFE Level 1 course, please visit the website below or contact your local Environmental Health Services office: <http://www.foodsafe.ca/>

If you have lost your FOODSAFE certificate, you can obtain a replacement at an Environmental Health Services office from any of the BC Health Authorities. ■



## Food from Unapproved Sources

### Trunk Trade

#### Do you know where your food comes from?

Social media is helping to grow the underground economy for all kinds of goods including food. Right now there is a new food market growing called the “trunk trade” where people buy food from unlicensed food sellers.

Customers place their orders online and then arrange to pick up food in a public place such as a mall parking lot. These food items are produced in unknown



locations, without records of how the food item was handled, usually without labels on the products and they may not be transported at the proper temperature. Your customers are at risk of illness and injury if you are buying and then serving foods in your business purchased from a “trunk trade”.

BC law requires that all foods served in a restaurant be obtained from an “approved source”. This means you need to buy food products from businesses that are inspected by a government agency. Purchasing food from an “unapproved” source may cost you money. If it is found during an inspection it cannot be served to your customers.

You also risk enforcement action such as the destruction or seizure of the food, a Public Health Act Order and/or a violation ticket. ■

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# Bug Spotlight: *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp)

*Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp) is a bacterium naturally found in ocean water year round. However, numbers of Vp can increase during summer months when the ocean water is warmer. The bacteria can survive and grow in seafood - especially shellfish such as oysters, clams, and mussels.

People can become sick with Vp within one to four days after eating raw or undercooked shellfish - usually oysters. The symptoms can last up to seven days.

What are the most common symptoms?

- Watery diarrhea
- Cramps
- Nausea
- Fever

Tips for preventing Vp infection:

- Cook shellfish. Oysters should be cooked to at least 90°C for at least 90 seconds.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked shellfish especially if you have health problems.

What is important to know as a food handler?

- Shellfish must be refrigerated immediately after harvest until consumption to limit the growth of Vp.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling raw shellfish.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all utensils used to handle raw shellfish.

- Do not contaminate cooked food with raw shellfish or liquid from raw shellfish.
- Restaurants that serve raw oysters must display a warning message informing customers of the increased risk of foodborne illness.



All shellfish served in restaurants must be from an approved supplier. This ensures that shellfish is harvested properly and processed at a registered facility. The shellfish will be supplied with proper shellfish tags (identification tags). All restaurants must keep records of their supplier invoices, shellfish tags, sales and service records. These important records must be made available to your Environmental Health Officer when requested.

In BC, public health authorities investigate *Vibrio* illnesses in the community. In 2015 sixty people in BC became ill after eating uncooked oysters. The majority of people who became ill ate the oysters in a restaurant setting. ■

## Fires in Food Service Establishments

Small fires confined to a small area of a food premises or to a piece of equipment can usually be extinguished by the fire suppression system or a hand-held fire extinguisher. Although these types of fires do not usually cause extensive damage, food and equipment may become contaminated by smoke, fumes, water and chemicals.

The following action(s) must be taken in the event of small fires to ensure that food is safe to eat and that the restaurant can operate in a safe and sanitary manner:

- Assess the extent of damage and make necessary repairs.
- Clean and sanitize all contaminated surfaces thoroughly.
- Throw out contaminated food.

### Assess the damage

After a small fire inspect your business to make sure:

- Equipment is operating according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Floors, walls and ceilings are not contaminated by water, debris, smoke and/or chemicals.
- Single service items, such as take out containers, are not contaminated.
- Food contact surfaces are clean and sanitary.
- Food is not contaminated.

### Clean and Sanitize Surfaces

Thoroughly wash and rinse all contaminated surfaces. Food contact surfaces (such as cutting boards, dishes and utensils) must be washed, rinsed, sanitized and air-dried.

Continued on page 3 . . . .

# Storage of In-Use Utensils

Utensils such as chef knives, spatulas and stirring spoons are important tools that are regularly used during food preparation and service. Therefore knowing how to properly store them so they do not contribute to foodborne illness and contamination is very important.

“In-use utensils” are those utensils that may be used multiple times to prepare or serve different foods before they are washed and sanitized. Customer’s utensils are used once and then they must be washed and sanitized; these are not “in-use utensils”.

Environmental Health Officers observe a variety of methods used for storing in-use utensils. Some examples include a spoon stored in a container of water at room temperature, a spatula stored in a sanitizing solution or knives stored with the blade in cracks between equipment. None of these methods are acceptable.

All in-use utensils must be washed, rinsed and sanitized at least every four hours. However, whenever there is a risk of cross-contamination the utensils must be properly washed and sanitized more frequently. For example, after handling raw meat, poultry or fish utensils must be washed, rinsed and sanitized before handling ready-to-eat foods.

Store in-use utensils in one of the following ways:

- On a clean portion of a food preparation table or cooking equipment.
- In a container of food with the dispensing utensil handle extended out of the food.
- In a dipper well with a continuous flow of water.
- In a container of water if the water is 4°C/40°F or less or 60°C/140°F or greater; the container and utensils must be washed and sanitized at least every 4 hours and whenever contamination is introduced.

Do not store in-use utensils in a sanitizer solution. This is not an approved method as there is a potential risk for contaminating food with the sanitizer.

If you have any questions regarding the storage of in-use utensils please contact your local Environmental Health Officer. ■



## Fires in Food Service Establishments . . . . Continued from page 2

### Throw out contaminated food

Examine food carefully to make sure it is not contaminated. Contaminated food must be thrown out when the food is visibly damaged. For example, if food is covered with ash. However, in some cases, such as when food has been exposed only to fumes and/or heat, contaminated food may appear undamaged. Throw out food if you are unsure if it has been contaminated.



### Close your business

In some cases you will need to temporarily close your business. For example, if the fire has caused damage to critical pieces of equipment such as coolers or if electrical services are unavailable.

You must contact your local Environmental Health Officer if you have experienced a fire. If you have closed your business you must obtain approval before reopening. ■

- 11. Trunk
  - 12. In-use
  - 11. Height
  - 10. Diarrhea
  - 9. Online
  - 5. Vibrio
  - 4. Wash
  - 3. Cook
  - 2. Sneeze guard
- Down**

- 17. Heat
  - 16. Fumes
  - 15. Germs
  - 13. Contaminated
  - 8. Expire
  - 7. Risk
  - 2. Approved
  - 1. FOODSAFE
- Across**

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Answers to crossword on

# Food Protection Equipment

## Sneeze Guard design

Food protection is an important part of keeping food safe for your customers. While there is a variety of equipment used to protect food, sneeze guards help to keep food safe from customer contamination. However, Environmental Health Officers have seen sneeze guards removed or the height of them lowered to improve the look of the restaurant and/or to let customers watch food preparation. Therefore, it is important that restaurant operators understand the purpose and design of sneeze guards to make sure food is kept safe.

A sneeze guard is a plastic or glass screen placed between people and

food and is required to protect food from germs especially those spread by sneezing. Any surface used for food preparation or storage in an area where customers can reach must be protected by a sneeze guard.

There are two main types of sneeze guards: self-serve and display-only. Regardless of the type of sneeze guard you use it must be a certain height to keep the food safe. The sneeze guard must be located so that it protects the food from contaminants coming from the mouth of a person of average height. This is usually 54 to 68 inches from the floor

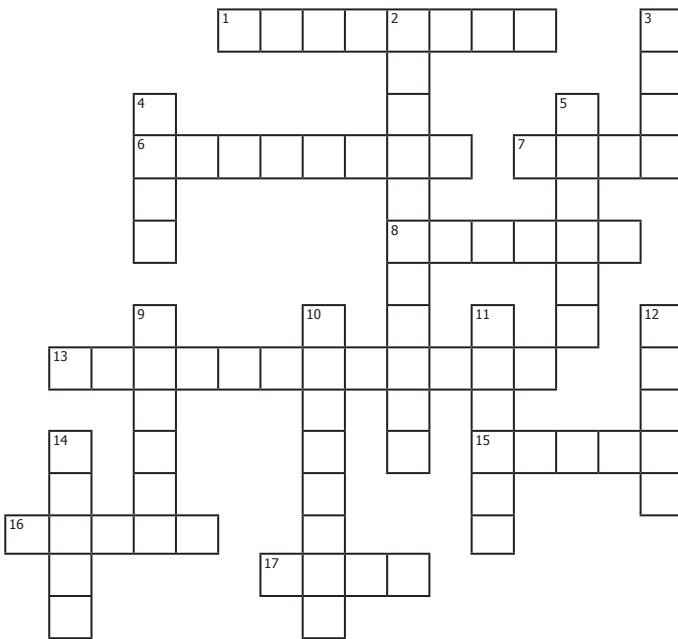


for a self-serve sneeze guard and 68 inches from the floor for a display-only sneeze guard. The height of a sneeze guard can vary as long as food is protected from contamination.

If you have questions about sneeze guard design please contact your local Environmental Health Officer. ■

## Crossword

### Test your food safety knowledge



#### Across

- A food handler training course
- Use foods that have been inspected by a government agency; they are \_\_\_\_\_
- Food from unapproved sources put your customers at \_\_\_\_\_
- All FOODSAFE Level 1 certificates \_\_\_\_\_ after 5 years
- Food may be \_\_\_\_\_ after a fire
- These are spread by sneezing
- Food may be contaminated by smoke. \_\_\_\_\_, water and chemicals during a fire
- Food exposed to \_\_\_\_\_ only during a fire may be damaged

#### Down

- A type of equipment used to protect food
- \_\_\_\_\_ oysters to at least 90°C for at least 90 seconds
- \_\_\_\_\_, rinse and sanitize utensils
- A type of germ found in oysters
- A way to complete FOODSAFE Level 1
- A symptom of food poisoning
- An important feature of a sneeze guard
- \_\_\_\_\_ utensils may be stored in water at 4°C/40°F or less
- \_\_\_\_\_ trade; a type of underground food market

## Feedback

Tell us what you think of our Food Safety Update and topics you would like to see in future issues. Contact [liz.postnikoff@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:liz.postnikoff@fraserhealth.ca) or [Claudia.Kurzac@vch.ca](mailto:Claudia.Kurzac@vch.ca).

This update has been prepared and published as a collaboration between Health Protection departments in Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.

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