

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*

2019

FOODSAFE Reminder

Is My FOODSAFE LEVEL 1 Certificate Still Valid?

All FOODSAFE Level 1 certificates issued before July 29, 2013 expired on July 29, 2018. FOODSAFE certificates are valid for 5 years from the date of issuance. To renew your FOODSAFE Level 1 certification you must:

- Retake and pass the full version of the FOODSAFE Level 1 course, OR
- Pass the on-line FOODSAFE Level 1 Refresher course. This refresher course is a quick and inexpensive way to renew your certification.



Starting on January 16, 2019, you must hold a valid FOODSAFE Level 1 certificate in order to take the FOODSAFE Level 1 Refresher course. This means if your FOODSAFE Level 1 certificate is expired effective January 16, 2019 you must retake and pass the full FOODSAFE Level 1 course to renew your certificate. People who have taken a food handlers training course other than BC FOODSAFE Level 1 are not eligible to take the FOODSAFE Level 1 Refresher course.

You can take the full version of the FOODSAFE Level 1 course through:

- Distance/correspondence.
- Online.
- Face-to-face classroom.



You must hold a valid FOODSAFE Level 1 certificate even if you hold a valid FOODSAFE Level 2 certificate.

To learn more about the different ways to take FOODSAFE Level 1 visit <http://www.foodsafe.ca> or contact your local Environmental Health Officer. ■

Inside this issue

FOODSAFE Reminder	1
Reusable Containers	2
Animals in Food Premises	2

Bug Spotlight - <i>E. coli</i>	3
Dragon's Breath	3
Mechanical Dishwashers	4
Crossword.	4

Please share this Update with your staff

Reusable Containers

How Can We Reduce Waste?



It's time to shift our thinking about waste.



#ReduceSingleUse

Many people are looking at ways to reduce waste and have placed pressure on the food industry to reduce, reuse, and recycle food packaging materials. The City of Vancouver has found that disposable containers make up a big part of the waste going to our landfills. For example, disposable cups and containers make up almost 50% of the garbage collected in street trash cans. The City of Vancouver Council approved a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy in June 2018.

One way to reduce waste from disposable containers is for people to use reusable containers for take-out food or bulk food purchases. When people bring a reusable container to a food premises and exchange it for a clean one this is

called a container exchange (reuse) program.

The challenge for the food industry is to start a container reuse program that meets current regulations.

Section 17 of the Food Premises Regulation requires operators to make sure that utensils used in the food premises are kept in a sanitary condition. Operators must also make sure that all food contact surfaces which include utensils, are washed and sanitized. This means operators have to wash and sanitize containers customers bring in before filling them with food. If you have room, you can store cleaned and sanitized containers that are ready to use.

Contact your local Environmental Health Officer for more information on container exchange programs. ■



Animals in Food Premises

Difference between Therapy, Guide and Service Dogs

Have customers brought dogs into your food premises and said they are “therapy” dogs? It’s difficult to deal with these situations but it is important to know that “therapy” dogs are not guide or service dogs.



Dogs are only allowed in a food premises if they are guide or service dogs. These dogs are specially trained to act appropriately in public situations, with public safety being a priority.

The BC Food Premises Regulation Section 25 says:

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), an operator of food premises must not permit live animals to be on the premises.
- (2) An operator of food premises may permit the following animals on the premises:
 - (a) A guide dog or a service dog, as defined in the Guide Dog and Service Dog Act, but not in any area of the premises in which food is prepared, processed or stored.

There’s an easy way to determine if a dog is a guide dog or service dog. The dog owner will have a Guide Dog and Service

Dog Certificate from the BC Ministry of Public Safety. The certificate will have details about the dog and its owner.

According to the BC Ministry of Public Safety:

A guide dog is a dog that has been trained to assist individuals that are visually impaired.

A service dog is a dog that has been trained to assist an individual with specific tasks pertaining to disability. For example, individuals with epilepsy, diabetes, or mobility limitations may use a service dog.

Check out the “BC Guide Dogs and Service Dogs Information Brochure” on the BC Ministry of Public Safety website <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog> for more information or contact the Ministry if you have any questions. ■

Answers to crossword on page 5

Across

- 4. Correspondence
- 5. Contaminated
- 6. Thermometer
- 7. Expire
- 12. Refresher
- 13. Romaine
- 14. Premises
- 15. Liquid nitrogen
- 16. Guide dog

Down

- 1. Rinse
- 2. Hot water
- 3. Low temperature
- 8. Breath
- 9. Service
- 10. Container
- 11. Sanitized

Bug Spotlight: Escherichia coli

What is *E. coli*?

Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) are bacteria (germs) that live naturally in the intestines of healthy people and animals such as cattle. Most kinds of *E. coli* do not cause illness however people can get sick if they eat foods contaminated with some types such as *E. coli* O157:H7. Foods that are contaminated are not safe to eat.



E. coli O157:H7 can cause severe stomach cramps, watery or bloody diarrhea, fever and vomiting. In rare cases, *E. coli* can cause kidney failure and/or death. Symptoms can start 2 to 10 days after eating contaminated food.

Infections with *E. coli* have been linked with undercooked ground meat; unpasteurized milk; cheese and fruit juices; contaminated water and contact with a person infected with *E. coli*. It is important to know that these bacteria can also contaminate fruits or vegetables, especially those grown in the ground, when soil or water on the farm fields becomes contaminated.

In 2018 there was an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 in Canada linked to contaminated romaine lettuce. As of December 2018, twenty seven people were sick with *E. coli* O157:H7 who had eaten romaine lettuce. Nine people were hospitalized and two people had serious kidney problems.

What do you need to do?

Follow these tips to help reduce the chances of an *E. coli* infection in your food premises:

- Be aware of food safety and recall notices issued by government agencies.
- Do not serve recalled foods to your customers.
- Know your suppliers and the source of your foods.
- Wash all produce under cool, running water to remove any dirt.
- Cook ground beef products to an internal temperature of 71°C; use a thermometer to check the internal temperature.
- Always wash your hands before and after handling any food, particularly raw meat.
- Always wash and sanitize utensils, cutting boards and counter tops used to prepare foods. This will prevent bacteria from spreading.
- Always store raw meat on the lower shelf of the coolers and ready-to-eat foods on upper shelving units in the coolers.



Never work in a food premises if you have an *E. coli* infection until cleared to do so by your Environmental Health Officer. ■

Dragon's Breath

Safe Use of Liquid Nitrogen in Food and Beverages

Liquid Nitrogen (LN2) is a very cold, colourless liquid (boiling point is -196°C). LN2 is not poisonous but it must be handled very carefully because of its extremely low temperature.

LN2 is widely used in the food industry to instantly freeze various foods, desserts and drinks. More recently, it has become increasingly popular for LN2 to be used in food to create smoke or fog effects from the consumers' mouth and nose when eaten. These types of foods are commonly called "Dragon's Breath".



However if LN2 is mishandled or eaten, it can cause breathing problems and severe damage to the skin and internal organs.

Take these simple actions to reduce exposure to LN2 for your staff and customers:

- Use food-grade LN2 only.
- Store LN2 in clean containers that can withstand extremely low temperatures. Only store LN2 in containers with loose fitting lids.
- Ensure there is no excess LN2 in foods served; allow the smoke/fog to dissipate before serving to customers.
- Provide eating instructions and safety precautions to customers.
- Provide utensils so that small amounts of food are eaten at a time.
- Train workers on the safe handling of LN2. This is a WorkSafeBC requirement.
- Make sure food handlers wear suitable protective clothing and eye protection.

Before using LN2 in your food business, an approved written food safety and sanitation plan is required. Contact your local Environmental Health Officer for more information. ■

Mechanical Dishwashers

Cleaning and Sanitizing Dishes

Mechanical dishwashers are used to clean and sanitize dishes and are a commonly used type of equipment found in a food premises. It is important to use clean and sanitized dishes in order to lower the chance of a foodborne illness. Therefore, you must take the right steps if the dishwasher is not working properly.

Mechanical dishwashers use a wash and rinse cycle to make sure dishes are clean and then use hot water (high temperature dishwasher) or a chemical sanitizer (low temperature dishwasher) in the final rinse to sanitize the dishes. All three cycles must work properly to make sure that dishes are clean and sanitized.

Dishes are sanitized when germs such as bacteria are reduced to a safe level.

Take one of the following actions if the mechanical dishwasher in your food premises is not working:

- Use the 3 compartment sink method for washing and sanitizing dishes. Not all premises can use this method so contact your local Environmental Health Officer.
- Use disposable dishes.
- Temporarily close your food premises until the dishwasher is repaired.

Sometimes the wash and rinse cycle of the mechanical dishwasher are working but the sanitizing cycle is

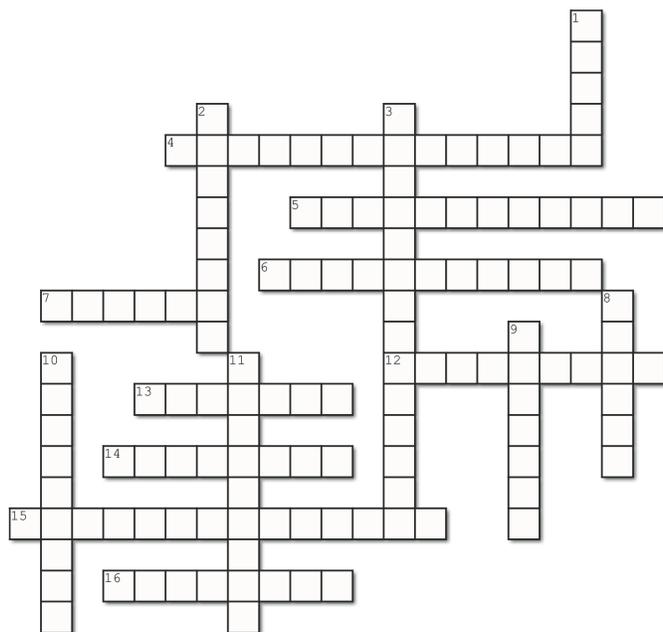


not. For example, the water is not hot enough or there is no chlorine in the sanitizing cycle. In this case you may wash and rinse dishes in the mechanical dishwasher and then use a chemical method (e.g. bleach) to manually sanitize dishes followed by air drying. Please contact your local Environmental Health Officer for more information as not all food premises can use this method.

You must repair your mechanical dishwasher immediately; the above solutions are only temporary. ■

Crossword

Test Your Food Safety Knowledge



Across

4. A way to take a FOODSAFE course
5. Foods that are not safe to eat
6. Use a _____ to check temperatures
7. FOODSAFE certificates _____ after 5 years
12. Take the FOODSAFE _____ course to renew certification
13. Vegetable that made people sick in 2018
14. BC Food _____ Regulation
15. A very cold, colorless substance
16. This animal is allowed in a food premises

Down

1. Wash, _____ and sanitize
2. A way to sanitize dishes
3. A type of mechanical dishwasher
8. Dragon's _____
9. People with mobility issues may use a _____ dog
10. A way to reduce waste; a _____ exchange program
11. Dishes must be clean and _____

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 or 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.

Editors: Steven Eng, Inderjeet Gill and Liz Postnikoff, Fraser Health; Claudia Kurzac; Vancouver Coastal Health.
Layout: Olivia Cheng, Fraser Health.

Contributors: Health Protection staff from Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.