



Deschutes County Environmental Health Food Safety Newsletter

Summer 2018

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Going off-site for a public event? Don't forget to your temporary restaurant license.

You can even apply on-line! <https://store.deschutes.org/tr/>



Shortening the farm to table chain:
An opportunity to improve food safety



In the wake of large scale outbreaks like the recent *Escherichia coli* outbreak on romaine lettuce, produce safety is on the forefront of many food safety conversations. Investigations have linked irrigation water as the likely source of the outbreak. This large scale outbreak may garner more media attention than we normally attribute to produce however, according to the CDC, from 1998-2008 46% of foodborne illnesses were attributed to produce. Small farms aren't regulated for food safety, yet by shortening the chain safety can be enhanced. Not only does a shorter chain with less steps between producer and consumer decrease the chances of contamination or abuse, it also allows a personal relationship between the consumer and producer. Preventing contamination isn't limited to large scale operations. When considering a partnership with a specific farm or distributor don't be afraid to consider food safety and its implications and liabilities.

When partnering with farmers or distributors to address possible contamination from the field to your establishment, some questions to consider are:

- Has your farmer attended a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training or other training regarding food safety on the farm?
- Does the distributor verify on farm food safety prior to purchasing?
- Do they have standard operating procedures (SOPs) regarding food safety?
- Are fruits and vegetables washed post-harvest? If so, where and how?
- Are harvest aids such as knives, aprons and containers protected and washed?
- Where employees are using the restroom?
- Is there a place for employees to wash their hands, especially after using the restroom?
- Are employees trained on working while ill and employee hygiene?
- Is ice used to cool produce? If so, where does it come from?
- Is potable water used to irrigate crops, or does it come from ponds, streams or other surface sources?
- How are fruits and vegetables transported?
- Do farm animals, pets or wild animals or birds have access to the produce?
- Is manure, if used, applied to crops at least 120 days before harvest?

The CDC estimates that well over half of all foodborne illness in the United States are caused by a sick food worker. The foodservice permit holder shall require food employees to report to the person-in-charge information about their health and activities as they relate to diseases that are transmissible through food.

Employees need to know that they must stay home if sick with:

- VOMITING
- DIARRHEA
- SORE THROAT WITH A FEVER
- YELLOWING OF THE SKIN OR EYES



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Deschutes County is now offering
SERVSAFE Manager Classes!
Class is scheduled for August 23rd
SEE ATTACHED REGISTRATION FORM



Who's in charge here?



As the owner and operator of a restaurant in Deschutes County, you have many duties, from tracking orders to meeting your customers' needs. But did you know that as a licensed food service operator, the Oregon Food Rules has a specific list of responsibilities to keep your restaurant safe and clean? Use these rules to serve your customers a safe meal, and give yourself greater peace of mind, knowing that you're one step ahead of the competition. Let's take a closer look.

Many of the responsibilities of the Person in Charge of a licensed food establishment have to do with how your facility is used. A restaurant may not be located in a home, or room where people sleep, and access to the restaurant is limited to employees and other people involved in the food operation (such as deliverymen or service technicians).

Think employees come in knowing how to run a restaurant safely? As the Person in Charge, you are responsible for training your employees, making sure they wash their hands and stay home when they are sick with reportable symptoms or illnesses, and are aware of the public health significance that food allergies may have on customers' health.

How about the food? From the time you decide where to purchase foods, to when it enters the doors of your establishment, to storing it in refrigerators, to cooking it to a safe temperature, you are responsible for ensuring your customers' food is handled properly. This is especially true when hot foods are rapidly cooled.

As a Person in Charge, it is your responsibility to ensure that equipment and utensils are properly cleaned, sanitized and safely stored, and that customers use clean tableware when they return to buffets.

Finally, let's look at the place where customers order the food that you have prepared for them: the menu. The Person in Charge must inform customers if any of the foods are offered raw or undercooked. The Oregon Food Rules are a tool to keep the public safe. Use this information to provide your customers with food safety in every bite! (Read the Code: Oregon Food Rules "Responsibilities of the Person in Charge 2-103.11")

Oregon Health Authority provides many great resources for operators including the PDF version of the Oregon Food Sanitation Rules!

Find these resources here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/FOODSAFETY/Pages/FoodCode.aspx>



Want to have successful health inspections? The trick is to be ready at all times. To stay ahead of the game, managers can conduct regular, in-house inspections. Here are several tips to help your team prepare:

- Use online resources to create a self assessment form that applies to your facility, and use it often.
- Learn from your previous inspections. Review old inspection reports with your staff to learn from your mistakes.
- Reinforce the importance of hand washing. Post signs at all kitchen sinks and in employee restrooms. Train your employees and reinforce good handwashing habits.