



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Fall 2018



## Updating Risk Categories for Food Service Establishments

All food service establishments (FSEs) do not necessarily present the same risk of causing foodborne illness. Because of this, FSEs are categorized based on their relative risk of causing a foodborne illness. The categories are broken down into three risk groups: high, medium and low. The risk level does not mean that any one establishment is less safe than another, but rather that the type of population served and nature of menu items may cause a greater potential for foodborne illness to occur.

**HIGH RISK** establishments serve food that requires a great deal of processing, handling, cooling, re-heating, hot/cold holding, and preparation of food in advance. This category also includes food that is often prepared and served to a population of people who are more susceptible to illnesses.

**MEDIUM RISK** establishments serve potentially hazardous foods, but there often is a rapid turnover between preparation and service. This includes low risk types of food which require extensive handling.

**LOW RISK** establishments either serve no potentially hazardous foods or have very limited handling of the food that they sell.

In 2018, the Livingston County Department of Health completed a re-evaluation process to ensure each of its roughly 300 FSEs are categorized in the appropriate risk category. The process incorporates information obtained from the routine health inspection together with information gathered from menu items and a review of the population served by each establishment. The Livingston County Department of Health will contact FSEs whose risk category has changed.

### Food Service Program Staff, Location & Hours

#### Center for Environmental Health

2 Murray Hill Drive  
3rd Floor, Room 302  
Mt. Morris, NY 14510  
8AM-4PM Monday-Friday

Phone (585) 243-7280 or (585) 335-1717  
Fax (585) 243-6793

Mark Grove, P.E.—EH Director  
Barb Rogers—Senior Public Health Sanitarian  
Kevin Dyke—Public Health Sanitarian  
Stacey Bennett—Clerical Staff

## Online Food Workers Course

The Livingston County Department of Health is now accepting an **online** Food Worker Training Certification! This course may be completed at anytime and will be equivalent to attending one of our in-person courses. Go to:

- [www.statefoodsafety.com](http://www.statefoodsafety.com)
- click on "Food Handlers Card"
- select "New York State"
- select "Livingston County"
- follow instructions

Please note that there is \$10 fee for the online course which is paid directly to the third party course provider. The LCDOH will continue to offer in-person trainings free of charge at our regularly scheduled times.

## In-Person Food Workers Courses

**Please note that we will be offering two evening sessions and one morning session in October:**

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Thursday, October 11, 2018

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

### PRE-REGISTRATION IS A MUST!!

Space is limited and classes fill up quickly. Please register on or before October 1, 2018 by calling the LCDOH at (585) 243-7280 or (585) 335-1717 or by email to: [sbennett@co.livingston.ny.us](mailto:sbennett@co.livingston.ny.us)

All courses are being held at the Livingston County Highway Department at the Hampton Corners Complex located on Gypsy Lane.

**At least one employee from each food establishment must have a current certificate from an approved Food Workers Course.**

Please call the LCDOH for more details regarding approved courses.

## 5 Common Food Safety Violations

If proper food safety principles are not followed, foodborne illness and other dangerous consequences can occur. Often, employees do not recognize that they may be contaminating the food that they serve. Below are five common food safety violations and tips on how to correct them:

### 1) *Temperature abuse of time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods*

TCS foods require time/temperature control in order to limit the amount of pathogens on the food. If food is allowed to be in the danger zone (45°F to 140°F) too long, then pathogens can grow and may cause foodborne illness. Make sure food is cooked to the required temperature and always keep hot foods hot (140°F or above) and cold foods cold (45°F or less).

### 2) *Having ill food workers performing duties*

Allowing ill employees to work in the kitchen can lead to foodborne illnesses. A facility should have an ill food worker policy and know when to restrict an employee if he/she becomes ill.

### 3) *Bare hand contact and improper handwashing*

Handwashing and glove use are two of the most critical components for preventing foodborne illness. Hands should be washed before putting on clean gloves. Gloves must be changed often to prevent cross contamination and handling money with gloves on is not recommended.

### 4) *Not cleaning and sanitizing utensils, equipment or machines regularly and properly*

Cleaning and sanitizing utensils, equipment, and machines routinely is critical in preventing foodborne illness. Cutting boards and knives should be cleaned and sanitized when changing food products to avoid cross contamination. Staff should regularly clean and sanitize machines, such as ice and soda dispensers as directed in the manufacturer's instructions to prevent pathogen growth.

### 5) *Storing or using chemicals on or near food and food-contact surfaces*

If chemicals get into food, it can be very harmful to the consumer. The best way to prevent chemicals from getting into food is to make sure that they are used and stored away from any food products or food-contact surfaces. It is important to clearly label all chemicals so that they are not confused with other chemicals or even food items.

## Food Packaging Dates

Almost all food packages have a “use by” or “best by” date located somewhere on the package. Did you know that, with the exception of infant formula, federal law does not require manufacturers to provide these dates? It's true! Although printing dates are not required by federal law, manufacturers choose to publish these dates to notify consumers when food is at its best quality. When dates are assigned, manufacturers consider the time and temperature at which the food is held, the type of packaging used, and the characteristics of the food itself. It is safest not to use or consume food after the printed date has passed as the food will be at a higher risk of spoiling. As far as violations being issued to restaurants that have packages on site which are out of date; that's another story. Critical violations for adulterated or spoiled food can only be written when the food is adulterated or spoiled. If the “use by” date has passed but the food is not spoiled, a critical violation cannot be written. It would, however, be in the best interest of the restaurant to use best operating practices to ensure food acquired is stored and used in a timely manner to deliver the best product.



*Thank you for your continued diligence in promoting Public Health!*