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New Food Handler Card Process

In January, 2012 the Health Department unveiled a new food handler card process. Instead of paper cards, you are now issued a plastic card with your photo on the front. Some things you should know about food handler cards:

⇒ You should arrive at least 15 minutes early to class. If the class fills up or if you arrive late, you won’t be able to take the class.

⇒ Please bring your driver’s license or identification card with you to class. We scan the bar code on the back of your license for your first and last name and date of birth. If you don’t have a license, that’s no problem. We can enter your information into the computer by hand.

⇒ If you need more than one copy of your food handler card, make sure you ask for one at the sign up before class. We will issue you a copy at no charge. If you realize later that you need another copy, the cost is $5.

⇒ You must leave a copy of your card at your place of employment. When your food establishment is inspected by the Health Department, all food handlers that are employed there must have a card on site.

Emergency Handbook for Food Managers

Do you ever think about what you would do if a Joplin sized tornado ripped through Boone County? Your staff and customers will likely be frightened or panic; your restaurant will likely lose power and potentially sustain damage. As a restaurant manager, you need to be able to quickly lead your customers and staff to a safe location. You also need to be able to quickly assess if it is safe to keep operating and prevent further damage to your facility. The Emergency Handbook for Restaurant Managers gives quick and easy tips to assess damage from many types of disasters, minimize losses and keep food safe. Does your staff know the safest place to take shelter? A basement or walk-in cooler is best but patrons and staff can also shelter in a room with no exterior walls or windows if possible. Create an emergency kit with a few flashlights, plenty of batteries and a weather radio. Keep the cooler doors closed except when taking temperatures of food items. Keeping a temperature log of food items from each cold holding unit every 2 hours can help you know when to throw food away. Discard potentially hazardous food when it has been over 41°F for more than six hours. Discard hot holding foods after 6 hours below 140°F. Do not attempt to cool hot holding food in coolers without power. In the event of a long term power outage you should also cancel incoming food supply shipments and consider transferring food to health department approved off-site cold storage facilities. The handbook also gives guidance on when it’s best to close the doors. Download and print this handbook for emergency use at the following URL:

http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/apc/managers/handbook/emhb.pdf
ALCOHOL SERVER CERTIFICATE—MANDATORY FOR ALL SERVERS

On November 19, 2012, the Columbia City Council approved an ordinance requiring all persons serving alcohol in the City of Columbia to obtain a server certificate. This applies to persons serving alcohol by the package, like grocery stores and convenience stores, and to those who serve alcohol by the drink. The goal of this program is to get servers the information and tools they need to serve alcohol responsibly. Research shows this may result in reduced liability for servers and businesses, a decrease in underage drinking and binge drinking, fewer alcohol related accidents and less crime.

Beginning January 2, 2013, the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services will begin issuing server certificates. To obtain a server certificate, you will first need to complete a responsible beverage server training program approved by the City. This includes the free, on-line State of Missouri Alcohol Responsibility Training (SMART), designed for all sellers and servers of alcohol (http://wellness.missouri.edu/SMART). Your employer may require a certain type of training. If so, be sure to ask if it is approved by the City.

After you’ve completed an approved training, you will need to complete an application at the Department of Public Health and Human Services, provide proof of completion of the required training within 12 months of the application, and pay the server certificate fee. The server certificate fee is $5.00 for each new, renewed or duplicate server certificate. This fee will be waived if the server certificate is obtained in conjunction with a food handler permit. Like the food handler permit, the server certificate will be valid for three years from the date it is issued and must be displayed in all establishments in which you are working. Please note that all persons serving alcohol in Columbia must obtain a server certificate by January 1, 2014. After that, servers will have 30 days from the start of employment to obtain a certificate.

For questions or more information, please contact the Department of Public Health and Human Services at 573.874.7355 or via email at health@gocolumbiamo.com.

FOOD CODE UPDATE

The ordinance that defines the rules under which food establishments operate is called the “food code”. In 2013, the Health Department will begin the process of updating the current version of the food code with the newest version. Every two years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) updates the master food code. Before the code is updated, there will be opportunities for education and discussion from all interested parties, including food establishment operators. Look for postcards in January 2013 with details of meeting dates and times.

BOIL ORDERS/ADVISORIES

If your food establishment is located in an area where a water main breaks, you may be issued a boil order or boil advisory. A boil order or advisory is issued when the water supply may have become contaminated and unsafe to drink for a period of time. In order to remain open to the public as a food establishment during a boil order/advisory, several water usage items must be addressed.

1. Water may be used for potable uses after treatment by boiling vigorously for at least three minutes or by disinfection. Disinfection using chlorine must show a level of free chlorine of 0.5—4 ppm and must be retained for 30 minutes before using.
2. Handwashing can be done, but must be followed by applying an approved hand sanitizer to clean hands.
3. Beverage dispensers cannot be used and must be flushed and sanitized before being returned to service after the order has been lifted.
4. Coffee machines can remain in service if the water reaches boiling temperature for at least 1 minute.
5. Dishwashing may be done, either mechanical or manual.

If your food operations are very complicated or use lots of water, closing the establishment until the order is lifted may be the best option. Please contact the Health Department for more information.