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No Reservations

No Reservations **is a monthly newsletter published by RQA Inc. for the restaurant industry.**

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FSMA And Restaurants

The U.S Food and Drug Administration has filed its rule on intentional adulteration under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Focused mitigation strategies to protect food against intentional adulteration will require domestic and foreign food facilities to address hazards that may be intentionally introduced by acts of terrorism.

"The goal is to protect the food supply from those who may attempt to cause large-scale public health harm," said Michael Taylor, FDA's deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine. "Such events, while unlikely to occur, must be taken seriously because they have the potential to cause serious public health and economic consequences."

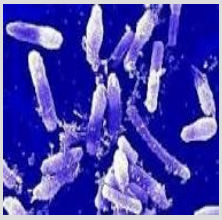
The rule targets certain processes within a facility that are most likely to be vulnerable to attack. Food facilities will be required to have a written defense plan addressing these vulnerabilities.

So, how does this affect the restaurant industry? First, restaurants need to ensure that the suppliers they purchase their food from are reputable and they are compliant with the most up to date version of the FSMA. Restaurant owners and food purchasers should contact their suppliers and request documentation to prove they are doing their due diligence to ensure their food is safe. A document suppliers may provide is a letter of guarantee stating proof of a HAACP Plan, third party auditing program, statements regarding their safe transportation program, and records of passing audits from government agencies, etc. Second, restaurant operators need to be aware of the opportunity for intentional contamination of their food once it is received. Listed below are the kinds of measures that retail food store and food services establishment operators may take to minimize the risk that food under their control will be subject to tampering or other malicious, criminal, or terrorist actions.

Provide adequate lighting for the outside and inside of your facility. Conduct daily inspections of the outside and inside of your facility. Secure exit/entry doors and windows. Use licensed sources for all food products. Maintain a delivery schedule with designated times. Match delivered items with invoices upon delivery. Assess the condition of packages for punctures, tampered seals, in addition to required product temperature. Store all delivered products immediately. Limit access to food preparation and storage areas. Check identification of visiting contractors and accompany contractors where practical (especially Pest Control Operators). Monitor the serving or display of food in self-serving areas. Maintain an employee roster for each shift. Include designated work areas. Limit the amount of personal belongings; provide adequate locker space for staff within the facility. Provide training for staff on food security issues. Collect ID tags, keys, and uniforms of staff that leave employment. Become familiar with the emergency response system in the community. Post emergency numbers, and an evacuation plan in the public and non-public areas. Provide supervision of staff and public for any unusual or suspicious behavior. Screen employees for legal resident status and perform background checks if practical

Pathogen Spotlight: *Bacillus cereus*

<u>Bacillus cereus Gastroenteritis:</u> Onset time: Vomiting Illness – 1-6hrs, Diarrheal Illness – 10-16hrs, Duration of illness: 24-48hrs



Bacillus cereus is a spore forming bacteria found in the soil. It is commonly associated with plants and cereal crops, such as rice. This type of bacteria can produce two different toxins when allowed to grow to high levels.

Food most commonly associated with the pathogen is cooked corn, cooked potatoes, cooked vegetables and meat products for the diarrheal toxin, and cooked rice dishes including fried rice and rice pudding for the emetic (vomiting) toxin.





The symptoms associated with bacillus cereus Gastroenteritis are watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps and pain for the diarrheal toxin, and nausea and vomiting for the emetic toxin.

The critical prevention measures are to reduce the bacteria in the food through cooking the food to the required minimum internal temperatures, holding the food outside of the temperature danger zone, and to properly cool the food. *Remember, after proper cooking, potentially hazardous food (PHF) must cool from 140/135*°F to 70°F within two hours and from 70°F to 41/40°F within four hours (please refer to your local food code for temperature and time requirements for the cooling of PHF).

Sources: CDC Bad Bug Book, CDC.gov,
Food Safety News

National Chain Restaurant, Bellingham, WA. February 2014

The national chain restaurant was closed a second time Tuesday, Feb. 11, because two more employees have been sickened in a suspected norovirus outbreak. It's not known when the Whatcom County Health Department will allow the restaurant to reopen. Norovirus is highly contagious and causes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. A total of 15 employees have reported becoming ill - most of them on Thursday, Feb. 6, and Friday, Feb. 7. The health department first closed the Bellingham restaurant Friday morning, after inspectors heard about gastrointestinal illness among workers. County officials allowed the restaurant to reopen around noon Sunday after a 48-hour closure to help stop the spread of the virus. Other measures included extensive cleaning and sterilization of the restaurant, and requiring ill workers to stay home for at least 48 hours. But the health department closed the restaurant again Tuesday because it "was no longer confident that transmission of this illness has been interrupted," said Tom Kunesh, supervisor for the health department's Food and Living Environment Program. "Assuming the average incubation period for a norovirus-type agent, that would put their exposure potentially to the time when they were working at the restaurant on Sunday," he said of the two new cases. The restaurant has been cooperating with the health department and will continue to do so to ensure everyone's safety, the restaurant's spokesman said. "Our franchisee is committed to staying closed until they and the health department agree that the restaurant is safe," Smith said. "Our franchisee is a part of this neighborhood. We're just as concerned as our guests with how this is affecting our community," he added. It's unknown exactly how many restaurant-goers may have been sickened before both closures, although the health department has received 27 calls. All but two calls were from patrons, and all but one reported eating at the restaurant on Wednesday or Thursday just before the first 48-hour closure, which is the window when an infected person could transmit the illness. Before the two new cases, the last onset of employee illness was Friday morning. Kunesh has said he didn't know what caused the illnesses when he ordered the first closure Friday morning but was preparing for a worst-case scenario by reacting as if it were norovirus. Based on the symptoms, the incubation period, and reports of secondary transmission as household members who came into contact with those who were sickened became ill themselves later, he has since said that "this outbreak has characteristics of a norovirus outbreak." Kunesh said the health department might never know what caused the cluster at the restaurant, adding that gastrointestinal illness has been circulating in the community. "We have had more than the usual numbers of complaints about nausea, vomiting and diarrhea in past week or two weeks," he said. "We're not certain that those illnesses are associated with this restaurant," he added of the two employees. As for what the restaurant might do next, Kunesh said that's still being determined. But those steps could include what the restaurant did during the first closure - keeping sick workers at home, cleaning and sanitizing, and throwing away food that may have been contaminated.

http://www.bellinghamherald.com

Three Restaurants, St. Petersburg, FL. March 2014

Three Bay area restaurants temporarily closed down by the state, all with insect issues inside their kitchens. We begin in the Coquina Key area of South St. Petersburg and a Chinese Restaurant. A state inspector ordered an emergency closure after documenting 11 violations, including 102 live roaches found in and around the hand sink and under the prep line with the rice. Next stop was a repeat offender. This Chinese Restaurant was written up with 38 violations. The restaurant was closed down for the second time in two months, this time with roach excrement along the walls, under the prep table, and live roaches right over the cooking equipment. An employee was also written up for not properly washing their hands. The final stop was St. Pete Beach, where a Steakhouse & Bar restaurant was temporarily closed with 17 violations, including a black or green mold-like substance inside the ice machine, no soap at an employee hand washing sink, a dirty soda gun, and live roaches found inside cooking equipment. The owner arrived to provide a tour, saying his pest control company was called right away. "They immediately sent someone out, they spent several hours here, they certified to the health department that we were roach free," said the owner, who next showed us the tilt skillet where the roach problem was originally discovered. "He went into the side and there were roaches down in it," said the owner of the state inspection a week earlier. We toured the entire kitchen, including the walk-in cooler where fresh seafood is stored. "These actually just came in this morning, they were harvested yesterday," said the owner showing off some fresh seafood. Food was covered and six inches off the floor. We also found a cleaned out ice bin. The foaming soap was a little slow to come out of one dispenser we found in the kitchen, but there was no sign of any additional insects. "I'm very disappointed in what's happened here, and it won't happen again," said the owner, who invites any customer to call and arrange a tour of his kitchen facility. The steakhouse has been open on St. Pete Beach for 35 years. The state cleared them to reopen later the same day. The other two restaurants featured in this report also have been allowed to reopen

http://www.wtsp.com/restaurantredalert

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