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No Reservations

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

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Floors, Walls & Ceilings...Oh My!

Who would think that the mention of floors, walls & ceilings would elicit the response…oh my! Well, in the food service/restaurant industry it can and has. The food codes from all 50 states state the floors, walls & ceilings in the food preparation areas, food and equipment storage areas, dishwashing stations, etc. must be smooth and easily cleanable. Properly installed and maintained floors, walls & ceilings have a large role in protection from pests. Failure to install and maintain the floors, walls & ceilings properly may result in a lot of aggravation.

Before you start, consider your budget, pick the appropriate floors, walls & ceilings for your needs, and hire a professional contractor. If the floors, walls & ceilings are not installed properly at the start then there will be issues. It is important to note, during installation of the floors and the walls that the area where they meet is properly coved.

This provides an easy to clean floor, and restricts pest harborage zones. Many facilities use vinyl or quarry tiles as their choice for the floors. Vinyl tiles are inexpensive to install and repair. They are also easy to clean. Quarry tiles are a good choice for their durability and ease of cleaning. Walls can be stainless steel, painted drywall or covered with FRP (a durable plastic panel). Acoustical ceiling tiles are not approved in the food preparation and storage areas. They are also not approved in the dishwashing station. Acoustical ceiling tiles are not considered smooth and easily cleanable.

One thing to consider when using quarry tile is the grout. Here is where the maintenance comes into play. Over time the grout will start to wear away and the tiles may start to chip and break. The floor will no longer be considered to be smooth and easily cleanable, and the facility may receive a health code violation on their health inspection report. This issue also creates a potential insect harborage zone. When there is a gap between the tiles, moisture and debris may accumulate and promote breeding of flies. Flies will breed in moist organic debris that accumulates between and under the tiles. A damaged floor is normally considered a minor violation on a health inspection report, but it may lead to a critical violation if the floor becomes a pest harborage zone. Also, when holes or gaps are identified they should be repaired as soon as possible. Mice can fit into a hole/gap that is ¼ inch high and rats can fit into a hole/gap that is ½ inch high. Remember, one of the leading causes for foodservice/restaurant closure is pest harborage and infestation.

The maintenance of the floors, walls & ceilings is an important job. The life for floors, walls & ceilings in a food service facility/restaurant can be hard. They are subjected to a lot of abuse and require proper and timely maintenance. The last thing anyone wants is for their floors, walls & ceilings to potentially contaminate their food or food contact equipment.

Pathogen Spotlight: Anisakiasis simplex

Anisakiasis simplex is a worm-like parasite found in certain fish and shellfish. An illness can develop when raw or undercooked seafood containing the parasite is eaten.

Food commonly associated with this parasite is raw and undercooked herring, cod, halibut, mackerel and pacific salmon.

The symptoms common with Anisakiasis are tingling in the throat, and coughing up worms for the non-invasive type. The invasive type of this illness people will experience stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and will require surgery to remove embedded worms from the walls of the stomach or small intestines.

It is critical to cook fish to the required minimum internal temperature (145°F for at least 15 seconds). The fish must be purchased from approved reputable suppliers. If the fish is to be served raw or partially cooked it must be purchased as sushi grade fish. Sushi grade fish has been frozen by the supplier to the proper time-temperature requirements. *Note: Freezing will kill parasites, but remember refrigeration and freezing will not kill bacteria or viruses.*

Anisakiasis simplex:





Bakery, Santa Ana, CA. (Follow Up) February 2015

Independent lab tests of the holiday bread sold in early January by a Santa Ana, CA, bakery and linked to reports of dizziness, palpitations and other symptoms show that it was probably deliberately contaminated with synthetic cannabinoid, an artificial version of the main chemical ingredient in marijuana.

"The levels in the cake are not small," said Neil Spingarn, a pharmacologist with S&N Laboratories who tested the sample. "What is most striking is that this was not inadvertent," he added.

More than 40 people in Southern California were reportedly sickened after eating the special holiday bread called Rosca de Reyes. The sweet bread contains candied fruit and a little baby Jesus figurine inside and is traditionally eaten on Jan. 6 to celebrate the Latin American holiday of Three Kings Day (or Epiphany Day).

Local health officials said several people complained of various symptoms, including dizziness, blurred vision, anxiety, palpitations and numbness, after eating the bread from the bakery in Santa Ana, CA.

The bakery was closed and had its permit suspended Jan. 7 after an investigation found traces of a cockroach infestation and other problems. However, the permit was reinstated on Jan. 20 after a re-inspection by Orange County Health Care Agency officials found those problems had been fixed and that all "open package ingredients of the Rosca de Reyes bread product have been voluntarily condemned and destroyed."

The independent lab tests were done at the request of the Orange County Register. The chemical found, JWH-122, is used to make synthetic pot, which is also called "spice," "incense" and "K2." It is commonly diluted with water, sprayed onto herbs and smoked like marijuana.

The side effects of using synthetic marijuana can be more severe than those from using real marijuana and include hallucinations, aggressive behavior and hypertension. Smoking the synthetic marijuana known as "spice" has sent thousands of people, mainly teenagers, to hospital emergency rooms across the country, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

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5 Hepatitis A Cases/2 Restaurants, Napa County, CA. March 2015

Officials with the Napa County, CA, Public Health Division are investigating an unusual outbreak of Hepatitis A cases in the past two weeks, reportedly the first there in more than five years. The suspected source has not yet been announced.

Two of the five confirmed cases are employees at one restaurant and another at a hotel in Napa, CA. The other three are not connected to the restaurants or other public places, health officials said.

People who ate or drank at either restaurant between Feb. 9 and Feb. 26 may have been exposed to the Hepatitis A virus and should monitor their condition for about 50 days, health officials said.

"We continue to assist Napa County Public Health and are taking all appropriate measures to ensure the safety of our guests and associates," said the general manager of the hotel.

Those experiencing Hepatitis A symptoms are advised to contact a medical provider immediately. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, jaundice or yellowing of the eyes or skin.

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