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No Reservations

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

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First In First Out (FIFO)

First In First Out (FIFO) is a policy used in the restaurant/foodservice industry to keep the food safe and maintain a high standard of quality. Facilities that have trained staff in purchasing will facilitate this process and will save money by reducing food waste. Food is money, and when food must be discarded because it has gone past the required or recommended shelf life, it affects the bottom line. Of course, safety is the number one goal. Foods that have gone past their shelf life are subject to pathogen growth/toxin formation and may cause a foodborne illness.

FIFO is achieved in several ways. By placing the newer products behind the older products in the storage rooms and on shelving is one way, and another way is to label the products with their receiving, preparation, thawing or freezing dates.

Non-potentially hazardous food (canned goods and many dried goods) may be already labeled with a "use-by", sell-by, or "best by" date. In most instances these are quality statements, but it is the responsibility of the facility to validate that the date on the label is a quality statement.

Ready-to-eat (RTE) potentially hazardous food (PHF)/ Temperature control for safety (TCS) prepared and stored onsite for greater than 24 hours must be properly labeled and dated. The food code (please refer to your local jurisdiction) allows the facilities to hold the PHF/TCS for seven days if it is held at 41°F or less. If the PHF is frozen that will extend the shelf life of the product, but remember as soon as the product is thawed the above mentioned rule still applies. Commercially (food processing plants) prepared RTE-PHF/TCS (that are inspected by the appropriate regulatory agency) are subject to the same rules once they enter the restaurant/food service facility.

There are several pathogens to be concerned with, but two are of particular concern with pre-packaged (especially Reduced Oxygen Packaging-ROP/ Modified Oxygen Packaging-MAP foods) foods. They are Clostridium botulinum (causes botulism) and Listeria monocytogenes (causes listeriosis). Clostridium botulinum grows in an environment where there is no oxygen and produces a toxin that may be deadly. Listeria monocytogenes grows at temperatures less than 41°F, and may cause a flu-like illness or it may be fatal to people in the "high risk categories." This pathogen is typically controlled at the food processing plants that maintain a strict sanitation program throughout receiving, storage, preparation, packaging, etc., and at the retail level by adhering to the use-by/sell-by dates.

In summary, using the FIFO policy will provide higher quality food, increase the bottom line, and most importantly, reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

Pathogen Spotlight: *Listeria monocytogenes*

***Listeria monocytogenes*: Onsite time: 9-48 hours for gastrointestinal illness, 2-6 weeks for invasive disease, Duration of illness: Variable**



Listeria monocytogenes is naturally found in soil, water, and plants. Unlike other types of bacteria it can grow in cool, moist environments such as in a refrigerator.

Foods most commonly associated with the pathogen are raw beef, unpasteurized milk and milk products, RTE food including: deli meats, hot dogs & soft cheeses. Some foods we might not suspect can be contaminated with *Listeria* and cause sickness and outbreaks, such as cantaloupe and celery.

Listeriosis can cause serious complications for pregnant women, such as stillbirth. Other problems can manifest in people with compromised immune systems. Listeriosis can also cause serious flu-like symptoms in healthy individuals.

The critical prevention measures are to discard any product that has passed its use-by or expiration dates, and avoid using unpasteurized dairy products. The risk may also be reduced by following recommendations for safe food preparation, consumption, and storage. To reduce the bacteria in food, the raw meat must be cooked to the minimum internal temperature for that type of food. Lastly, prevent cross contamination between raw or undercooked and RTE food. *Note: Listeria is among the top five pathogens contributing to domestically acquired foodborne illness resulting in death. Most people found to have Listeria infection require hospital care and about 1 in 5 people with the infection die.*

Source: CDC Bad Bug Book, CDC.gov, raglandjones.com

Vietnamese Restaurant Boise, ID.

April 2015

An Idaho restaurant was reportedly shut down by local health officials on Thursday due to ongoing health code violations and its suspected connection with a recent foodborne illness outbreak.

The Vietnamese restaurant located in Boise, has been linked to a recent *Salmonella Schwarzengrund* outbreak that has sickened at least five people. The source of the bacteria has not yet been identified.

According to a local TV report, inspectors from the Central District Health Department found four health code violations at the restaurant on Thursday, including two which were repeat violations.

Officials had met with the restaurant owner on Tuesday to work on food safety education involving storage and preparation issues. Their reasons for pulling the restaurant's license two days later were not entirely clear, and efforts by **Food Safety News** to contact health department sources were unsuccessful Thursday night.

The latest inspection report for the restaurant was not immediately available, although inspection reports from 2011-2014 indicated previous violations related to physical and hand-washing facilities, as well as food contact surfaces, thermometers and food segregation. While some of the previously cited violations were considered "critical," the restaurant had apparently fixed them since follow-up inspections days later showed that no violations were found.

Before the shutdown, the restaurant owner told a Boise newspaper that she didn't know what had happened to cause the outbreak.

"We try to be careful," she said. The restaurant's management now has 15 days to change operations in order to meet local health codes.

The first *Salmonella* case related to this outbreak was reported in late February and the most recent one was reported this past Thursday, Christine Myron, the department's public information officer, told **Food Safety News** for an April 2 story on the outbreak.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people infected with *Salmonella* bacteria develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps between 12 and 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most individuals recover without treatment.



In some cases, however, diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. In these patients, the *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other body sites. In these cases, *Salmonella* can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics. The elderly, infants, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

Salmonella bacteria are commonly found in raw or undercooked foods such as eggs, egg products, meat, meat products, unpasteurized (raw) milk, or other unpasteurized dairy products such as cheese. Thorough cooking and processing will effectively kill *Salmonella* bacteria.

http://www.foodsafetynews.com

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