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# No Reservations

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

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## Temperature Control From Start To Finish

Rightfully, food safety training puts much emphasis on the importance of cooking foods to a safe internal temperature. However, in a foodservice establishment, there are multiple opportunities for time-temperature abuse to compromise the safety of the food being served. Even before food is delivered to your kitchen, it is your responsibility to protect your customers from food safety hazards. As such, choose only reputable suppliers that meet or exceed your own standards of excellence. When your food order arrives, check the air temperature of the delivery truck and review the temperature records to ensure that safe temperatures were maintained during transport. Once the food enters the kitchen, take the extra time required to adequately check the temperature of perishables and put the products in the cooler or freezer as quickly as possible.

To ensure that foods are being stored safely, equipment used for refrigerated and frozen storage must be fully operational and set at proper temperatures. As a rule-of-thumb, coolers should remain between 35ºF and 38ºF and freezers between 0°F and 10°F. To maximize the efficiency of the cooler/freezer do not overload the unit, use open shelving (do not line shelves), keep unit doors closed, and schedule regular equipment maintenance. Check the temperature of the equipment at least once per shift and, to ensure the accuracy of the external digital readout, place an additional thermometer in the warmest part of the unit. Lastly, randomly sample the internal temperature of refrigerated foods to ensure foods remain at or below 41°F. Upon food leaving cold storage, time is of the essence. Of course, never thaw food at room temperature and do not let any food get warmer than 41°F. To facilitate proper cooking, avoid overloading ovens and fryers and let the temperature of the equipment recover between batches. Always cook food to a safe internal temperature and use an appropriate food thermometer for verification. Once the food is cooked, serve as quickly as possible and make sure that foods held for later service remain at or above 135°F.

Control and monitor the temperature of food from the time it is delivered until the moment it is served……the safety of your food and the health of your patrons depend on it.

Reference: National Restaurant Association. ServSafe® Coursebook 5th edition 2010 Chicago, IL

## Choosing The Right Thermometer

The food thermometer is the most important tool you have to help prevent time-temperature abuse. However, choosing the right type of thermometer is essential for obtaining accurate measurements.

Bimetallic stemmed thermometers are the most common type of thermometers used in the foodservice industry because they are inexpensive and versatile. This type of thermometer can measure the temperature of anything from incoming shipments to the internal temperature of food on the line, in storage, or in hot or cold holding.

Thermocouples are more expensive than bimetallic; thus, some restaurants only have one unit which they keep at the cooking station. Thermocouples have interchangeable probes, such as immersion, surface, penetration, and air. Correct utilization of different probes will allow the user to measure the internal temperature of almost any food, the surface temperature of cooking surfaces, and the air temperature inside refrigerators or ovens.

Infrared (laser) thermometers are fast and easy to use but have limited capabilities. While they can measure the surface temperature of food and equipment they cannot be used to measure air temperature or internal temperature of food.

No matter what type of thermometer you have, it is important to: calibrate it regularly (according to the manufacturer's recommendations); clean and sanitize the stem between uses; train employees on correct usage; and encourage food handlers to check temperatures frequently. Nevertheless, if the wrong type of thermometer is used, your diligence may be in vain.

Reference: National Restaurant Association. ServSafe® Coursebook 5th edition 2010 Chicago, IL

*By: Ellen Steinberg*

## Pizza Chain Restaurant, Walnut Creek, CA. June 2012

The pizza restaurant closed abruptly Thursday evening after tests by county health officials revealed the presence of norovirus. Three employees and two customers tested positive for the disease. The county's environmental health director, said they've received reports from 60 people now who said they became sick after eating at the restaurant. The victims ate at the restaurant between June 7 and June 13. The director said her department gave the go-ahead to reopen after the restaurant staff cleaned the facility on Friday and the specialty company scrubbed it down on Saturday. The director said the department also trained three restaurant employees on norovirus awareness and cleaning. Only those three staff members were allowed to work on Saturday. Another dozen employees were trained over the weekend. A training in Spanish will be held on Wednesday. Only employees who've gone through the training will be allowed to return to work. The director said the restaurant will be on probation for one year. County health officials will make additional surprise inspections during that time period.

Reference: http://pleasanthill.patch.com/articles/california-pizza-kitchen-reopens

## Indian Restaurant, NYC, NY. June 2012

The Indian restaurant in Brooklyn has been closed by the New York City Department of Health following an inspection on June 8, 2012. This is the second time this year that this Indian restaurant has been ordered closed by the NYC Health Dept. The restaurant has fared miserably in the June 8, 2012 NYC Health Department inspection with 72 violation points. Here's the list of sanitary violations at the restaurant uncovered by the NYC Health Dept during its June 8, 2012 inspection: 1) Cold food item held above 41º F (smoked fish and reduced oxygen packaged foods above 38 ºF) except during necessary preparation. 2) Evidence of mice or live mice present in facility's food and/or non-food areas. 3) Filth flies or food/refuse/sewage-associated (FRSA) flies present in facility's food and/or non-food areas. Filth flies include house flies, little house flies, blow flies, bottle flies and flesh flies. Food/refuse/sewage-associated flies include fruit flies, drain flies and Phorid flies. 4) Personal cleanliness inadequate. Outer garment soiled with possible contaminant. Effective hair restraint not worn in an area where food is prepared. 5) Food not protected from potential source of contamination during storage, preparation, transportation, display or service. 6) Food contact surface not properly washed, rinsed and sanitized after each use and following any activity when contamination may have occurred. 7) Wiping cloths soiled or not stored in sanitizing solution. 8 ) Facility not vermin proof. Harborage or conditions conducive to attracting vermin to the premises and/or allowing vermin to exist. 9) Covered garbage receptacle not provided or inadequate, except that garbage receptacle may be uncovered during active use. Garbage storage area not properly constructed or maintained; grinder or compactor dirty. 10) Plumbing not properly installed or maintained; anti-siphonage or backflow prevention device not provided where required; equipment or floor not properly drained; sewage disposal system in disrepair or not functioning properly. The restaurant was allowed to reopen on June 21, 2012.

Posted by : NY India.US

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